

AEA reflects on 100 years of Equity News (See inside, p.4 and a nod to the original masthead here)

EQUITY

The Official Organ of the Actors' Equity Association

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f t www.actorsequity.org

2015 Annual Election Gets Underway

All members wishing to run for Council must submit petitions

The 2015 Equity election is just around the corner, and now is your chance to step up and be a part of the action. Active members ensure that Actors' Equity continues to be a strong member-driven union. Consider running for a seat on Council to have a voice in representing your fellow actors and stage managers.

16 Council and Eight Officer Seats Open

Seats Available

There are a total of 16 Council seats open in this year's election. In the **Eastern Region** Principal category, there are eight seats for three-year terms. Also in the East, under the Chorus category, is one seat for a three-year term. There are two Eastern Stage Manager seats available this year, also with a term of three years. In the **Central Region**, there is one three-year Chorus seat and one three-year Stage Manager seat available. (There are no Principal seats available this year in the Central Region.) In the **Western Region**, there are three, three-year Principal seats available. (There are no Western Chorus or Stage Manager seats available this year.)

This year, in addition to the Council seats, the eight officer

seats are also open. There are five national officers: president, first vice president (a member qualifying in the Principal category), second vice president (a member qualifying in the Chorus category), third vice president (a member qualifying in the Stage Manager category) and secretary/treasurer. There are also three regional officers, one regional vice president for each of Equity's geographic regions (Eastern, Central and Western). All officers serve for a term of three years.

Candidate Qualifications

General Criteria: In order to be eligible to run for and hold a seat on the Council, a member must have been a member in good standing for the two years prior to nomination and currently be in good standing at the time of the election. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, and not be in a conflict of interest, or be under fine or suspension. Candidates must reside in the region from which they are seeking election and must meet employment category qualifications for the position they seek.

Principal Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the Principal category



Actors' Equity Association President Nick Wyman (right), along with Actors' Equity Foundation President Arne Gunderson (center), stand with the Foundation's 2014 Joe A. Callaway Award winners, Suzanne Bertish (left) and Paxton Whitehead and the St. Claire Bayfield Award winner, Amanda Quaid. To read the full stories, go to actorsequity.org.

must be a member in good standing, who has performed Principal work under no less than two Equity contracts or who has worked no less than one Equity contract performing principal work for no less than ten weeks.

Chorus Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the chorus category must be a member in good standing who has performed Chorus work within five years preceding the nomination or appointment to office (for the 2015 election, this date is June 1, 2010), provided the member has not worked as a principal performer for a total of 52 weeks within two years prior to such nomination or appointment to office (for the 2015 election, this date is

June 1, 2013).

Stage Manager Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the Stage Manager category must be a member in good standing, who has worked as a stage manager five years preceding the nomination or appointment to office (for the 2015 election, this date is June 1, 2010): (1) under Equity contract for at least 30 weeks solely as a stage manager or assistant stage manager; or (2) under no less than five Equity contracts solely as a stage manager or assistant stage manager.

Becoming a Councillor

All nominations to hold a seat on the Council shall be made by petition on the Official Equity Nomination Petition Form, which

can be picked up in person at any Equity office or is available for download at the Equity website (www.actorsequity.org), beginning Friday, February 6, 2015, at 12 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. If you wish to be nominated, you must obtain the signatures of 17 members in good standing from the region in which you reside. In addition to the petition, you must submit all administrative forms found in the packet, as well as a letter of intent, requesting such consideration, to the Equity office in your geographic region. Your letter of intent should state (1) you are a member in good standing resident in the applicable region; (2) you are eligible to run in accordance to the Constitution and By-Laws;

(continued on page 2)

Tax News: At VITA, It's all about IDs, Health Insurance Info...and Other Updates

By Sandra Karas, Director, VITA Program

Social Security cards will still be required.

If you use VITA services this season, you'll have to bring your Social Security card — or a photocopy of it — along with your paid-up union card and a current photo ID. SS cards must be provided for you and anyone else who is listed on your return, including your spouse and your dependents. This is the same procedure we've been fol-

lowing, so nothing's changed in that regard, and it remains the rule, even if you've had your taxes prepared at our center in the past. If you cannot locate your SS card or those of your spouse and/or dependents, you may obtain another from the Social Security Administration by visiting an office or going online to ssa.gov. VITA must comply with this procedure, so be prepared when you come in for your taxes or risk being turned away.

Health insurance forms will also be required.

This year, the Affordable Care Act provisions begin to appear on your tax returns in the form of a declaration of your health insurance coverage for the past year. If you enrolled for coverage on the exchange, sometimes referred to as the marketplace, you'll have to provide the preparer with Form 1095-A, which you'll be receiving in the mail at the same time you receive your W-2 forms and

other tax statements. Taxpayers who are covered by an employer or other plans must declare their coverage on the tax returns as well, but won't be receiving the marketplace form in the mail.

Your forms are online. As a reminder, you may access the IRS and VITA worksheets online at actorsequity.org if you want to save a trip to the office. Either way, completed IRS and VITA forms will be required to get your returns done.

What's new?

(continued on page 2)

Filing Status	10%	15%	25%	28%	33%	35%	39.6%
Single	\$0	\$9,076	\$36,901	\$89,351	\$186,351	\$405,101	\$406,751
Married Joint	\$0	\$18,151	\$73,801	\$148,851	\$226,851	\$405,101	\$457,601
Married Separate	\$0	\$9,076	\$36,901	\$74,426	\$113,426	\$202,551	\$228,801
Head of Household	\$0	\$12,951	\$49,401	\$127,551	\$206,601	\$405,101	\$432,201

Index	
Equity Pension & Health	3
2015 Election Calendar	3
President's Column	3
Equity News turns 100	4
National News	5

EQUITY NEWS

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Area Liaison Hotline system

Call 877-AEA-1913

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

(1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

(2) Dial your city extension:

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

2015 Election

(continued from page 1)

and (3) if elected, you will serve. Additionally, if you are a member who already holds Emeritus status on Council, you must indicate that you will be resigning that status in order to stand for election. You must submit your petition, signed by at least 17 members in good standing resident in the applicable region, along with the

	East	Central	West	Total
PRINCIPAL	8	0	3	11
CHORUS	1	1	0	2
STAGE MANAGER	2	1	0	3
TOTAL	11	2	3	16

other administrative forms found in your Candidate Packet by **Friday, March 6, 2015 (by 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time; 1 p.m. Central Standard Time; 11 a.m. Pacific Standard Time)**. If a document is mailed,

emailed or faxed, there will be no presumption that it has been received by the union before the deadline. Therefore, the candidate who chooses to mail, email or fax his/her Nominating Petition is urged to do so with

sufficient time for receipt by the established deadline and to check with the appropriate office to ensure that the Nominating Petition has been received.

Nominating Petitions received after the deadline will not be accepted and the untimely receipt of a Nominating Petition will invalidate the person's candidacy.

For questions, email elections@actorsequity.org.

Tax News

(continued from page 1)

1. New tax rates are in effect for 2014.

2. Affordable Care Act (ACA): As noted above, this provision is in effect for the 2014 tax year. For most taxpayers, it is a "check the box" requirement. For those who purchased through the exchanges, qualified for subsidies, received any advance reduction in premiums or who were uninsured for any part of the year, you will have additional reporting to include on your tax returns. Some may be getting additional refunds, while some may face penalties for underinsurance. The IRS expects millions of additional telephone inquiries during the filing season and reminds taxpayers that the waiting time on these calls may be an hour or more.

3. Same-Sex Marriages, while recognized federally, might not be recognized in the

state in which you live. As of press time, about 30 states accept same-sex joint filing and about 20 do not, but legislation and litigation will result in some changes in 2015, so check with your state's laws to determine how this may affect you.

4. Standard Mileage Rates for 2014. Business mileage is 56¢/mile; medical and moving mileage is 23.5¢/mile; Charitable mileage is 14¢/mile. In 2015, the rates for business mileage will be 57.5¢/mile, medical and moving will decrease to 23¢/mile. Charitable mileage remains at the statutory rate of 14¢/mile.

5. Social Security Tax wage base is at \$117,000 and will rise to \$118,500. The rate stays the same at 6.2 percent.

Extended Provisions for 2014:

A. Cancellation of mortgage debt that was secured by your main home (your principal residence) can be excluded from income, provided it was completed before the end of 2014.

B. Educators' above-the-line deduction of \$250 (for K-12 teachers) is still in effect for those who qualify for this deduction for 2014.

C. Charitable donations from IRAs. Those taxpayers over 70 1/2 years old, who made direct contributions of their IRA to charities, may exclude those contributions from your taxable income again in 2014.

D. Energy Credits. Those popular tax credits for installing new windows, doors, furnaces, insulation materials and other energy-saving improvements to your home are still available through 2014.

E. Expensing your business and related equipment remains at the \$500,000 maximum for the year. Be aware that you may only claim 100 percent of the cost if there is no personal use of the item. Otherwise, you apportion the business deduction for the amount you use the item for business.

F. State and Local Sales Tax

Deduction remains available for 2014.

G. Tuition and Fees Deduction above-the-line is still allowed for 2014 up to a maximum of \$4,000. Don't forget that tuition and other valuable education credits remain for taxpayers who attend college and pay out-of-pocket. See which method is better for you this year.

H. Interest on Mortgage Insurance Premiums continues as an itemized deduction in 2014.

If you have any questions about these or other tax matters, stop in your nearest VITA office. The New York office is located on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street. Hours are 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday or call 212-921-2548.

Sandra Karas is Director of the VITA Program, Secretary-Treasurer of Equity and a NY Local Board member of SAG-AFTRA.

Equity Works

Birmingham, AL: City Equity Theatre and Actors Theatre of Alabama will merge and present a four-show season with the goal of bringing more professional theatre to the area.

Munster, IN - Theatre at the Center (TATC), operating on the CAT Agreement, will celebrate its 25th anniversary beginning January 2015.

New York, NY - Dream Catcher Theatre Company, founded by Equity Member Natalie Caruncho, will be producing its first SPT project, *Into The Woods*, in Caruncho's hometown of Miami, Florida, at the Carnival Studio Theater at the Adrienne Arsht Center.

Tracking What You're Owed

New York, NY - AEA secured one week of health pay for members on a cabaret contract who were called to an early rehearsal prior to start of scheduled rehearsals.

Touring

Equity negotiated a Special Agreement with Troika Entertainment for the tour of the new musical *Around the World in 80 Days*. This ground-breaking event will take place in a created venue in major markets across the country.

Resources Available for Actors Subjected to Sexual Harassment

Discrimination and sexual harassment are illegal, and no one should have to tolerate it. Yet, some Equity members working on contract might not be aware of the options that are available to them if they've been subject to sexual harassment or discrimination. Your union is here to protect you from violence, harassment and discrimination in the theatres where you work. If you believe that you have been subjected to working conditions that cross the line, here's what you should know.

Sexual harassment and discrimination are against the law, which means that if you have been subjected to unlawful behavior, it's possible to file an individual lawsuit against an employer for violations of the law. Moreover, in some of the more extreme circumstances, conduct may rise to the level of a criminal violation. Sexual assault, for example, is punishable as a criminal offense, whether or not

it occurs in the workplace. For many reasons, however, people who've been victims of sexual harassment and discrimination may not wish to file charges or a lawsuit. If those individuals are union members, they have additional options.

All Equity collective bargaining agreements contain provisions that prohibit discrimination and sexual harassment. In cases where those provisions are violated, Equity can pursue remedies through the grievance and arbitration procedure of the contract. The grievance process is a private process and information is held in the strictest confidence. While arbitration provides a final and binding remedy, the private nature of the proceeding means that there are no public records that can be accessed by anyone. The investigation, as well as any decision or resolution is kept confidential and is completely private.

In addition, your union can

help direct you toward other resources to assist members who have found themselves in difficult circumstances. Equity works closely with The Actors Fund to ensure that members have access to counselling and other services when they need them the most.

Remember that if you're ever in the situation of being the victim of violence, harassment or discrimination in a theatre while working on an Equity contract, your union is ready to stand by you. Any member who has questions or concerns should not hesitate to contact his or her business representative, in strict confidence. Equity will maintain confidentiality of all sensitive information, and the union never pursues a matter without explicit authorization from a member. Letting Equity know if something happens to you is important. You may not be alone, and by reaching out to us, we may be better able to protect other members who are in the same situation.



EQUITYNEWS

Editor: JOSH AUSTIN

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2015 Annual Election Calendar

Friday, February 6, 2015	Candidate Packets available beginning at 12 p.m. Eastern Standard Time via Equity's website or by contacting your regional office
Friday, March 6, 2015	Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (materials due in all three regional offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time) List of all nominated candidates will be available on Equity's website by 5:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
Tuesday, March 10, 2015	Deadline to submit eligibility protests
Wednesday, March 11, 2015	Deadline for Candidates' Statements for <i>Equity News</i> , Equity website, and Ballot Brochure (due in all three regional offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time)
Friday, March 20, 2015	Deadline for registration to vote electronically
Friday, April 10, 2015	Annual National Membership Meeting (all regions via teleconference) Candidate speeches
Monday, April 13, 2015	Distribution of Ballots (from balloting company)
Tuesday, May 12, 2015	Deadline to request replacement paper ballot from balloting company
Wednesday, May 20, 2015	Deadline for Receipt of Ballots
Thursday, May 21, 2015	Tabulation Day
Thursday, June 4, 2015	Deadline to submit election protests

Additional information about the elections process, including candidate packets available for download, a complete copy of the election rules, and further information about how to run is all available at members.actorsequity.org.



Wait 'Til This Year!

By Nick Wyman

In baseball, the cry of those who do not win the championship is "wait 'til next year!" After several championship-level years, my fantasy baseball team set a league record for futility in 2014. Well, it's a new year, and in my own quiet presidential way, I'm excited — at least about Actors' Equity. For one thing, *Equity News* turns 100 this year. Like our industry, our union periodical has changed a lot in the past century. (If you're reading our mobile-friendly version on your mobile device: #EquityWorks! Tweet me @YmanNick).

Equity News is now just one of the ways AEA communicates with its members. Membership meetings, our AEA website, snail mail, email blasts, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram all give the leadership and staff of Actors' Equity a variety of ways to inform the membership. Members use many of these same methods to communicate with AEA, and we are reaching out even more in 2015. We are surveying members, using focus groups and holding town-hall-style meetings, all in an effort to solicit and develop new ideas,

strategies and solutions for 2015's initiatives.

After (appropriately) spending eighty-some years communicating with 20th-century methods, AEA is embracing the technology of the 21st century to elicit the concerns and suggestions of our members and to inform them of our plans and goals and the progress we are making toward those goals. It's this progress that has me excited.

Nationally, we are gearing up for the negotiations of our flagship contract — the Production Contract. Contract proposals and suggestions are being solicited not just from the Production Contract Committee members, but from everyone who has worked on the Production Contract in the past two contract cycles. We are holding not one, not two, but three special informational Town Hall meetings in the next two months: one on Touring, one on Stage Management and one for Broadway casts.

In Chicago, our informational, consciousness-raising campaign about whether the touring musical in a local theatre's "Broadway" series has professional Equity performers or not — #AskItIsEquity — has

been so successful that Council is looking at expanding it nationally.

In Los Angeles, we are building the future, physically and metaphorically. We have constructed a gorgeous new Actors' Equity building with offices, meeting rooms and state-of-the-art audition facilities. We have hired a new Western Regional Director, a brilliant labor professional from SEIU named Gail Gabler. We continue to solicit the input of our members about the local Equity contracts and agreements. We held a special Town Hall meeting, attended by myself and four of your other elected officers, on January 12, 2015, about the 99-Seat Theatre Plan. We have taken steps to consolidate and streamline our committee structure. Our national contracts now have one national committee — rather than three regional committees — so a question or a concession request doesn't get three different answers. We are taking advantage of telephone and video connections to make member participation on committees easier from outside the office cities.

It's a New Year. It's a whole new ballgame.

Annual Report to the Council from the Equity Pension & Health Trustees

The Equity-League Pension plan remains in the "green zone" and is well funded. The most recent actuarial valuation shows that as of June 1, 2014, our plan has a funded percentage of 120.7 percent with an actuarial value of assets of \$1.6 billion.

After the global market meltdown of 2008, the trustees of the Equity-League Pension Trust Fund voted to take advantage of the Pension Relief Act of 2010 that offered an extended time period to recognize the losses of 2008-09. We were not permitted to make pension improvements while operating under that legislation. However, we will soon exit from that status and are beginning the process of working with our actuarial advisors to consider our options.

Meanwhile, we continue to struggle with multiple issues to keep the Health Fund sustainable. We are currently stable with 17 months of reserves. These reserves are critical. We are a self-insured plan. CIGNA administers the claims but our Fund pays them on a dollar-to-dollar basis.

Guidelines for self-insured plans recommend a minimum of 12 months of reserves to protect the Funds from various cost overruns. Actuarial projections show a gradual decline in reserves in the next few years and steps must be taken to keep the funding at an adequate level.

There are a number of factors which could affect our ability to maintain our current stability. The first, and most critical, is the excessive cost of health care in the United States. Unlike the rest of the developed world, our system is primarily a fee-for-service arrangement with no accountability for outcomes. All group health plans struggle with high claims. Our Fund's costs are further impacted by extremely high out-of-network usage, particularly in musculoskeletal claims.

The Affordable Care Act brings its own set of cost drivers, such as the elimination of annual and lifetime limits on claims and the requirement for funds to pay certain per capita fees, which are costing us nearly a half million dollars in the current plan year (June 1,

2014 - May 31, 2015). In the near future, we will also be required to pay for all preventative services as well as for experimental treatments.

Another significant cost driver has been our Self-Pay After COBRA (SPAC) benefit, which has allowed Fund participants with at least ten (10) years of pension credit to remain on the Equity-League plan once COBRA ran out by paying a designated premium. Now that the Affordable Care Act has eliminated pre-existing conditions as a basis for denial of coverage, the SPAC benefit has been modified and will only be available to those who meet certain new criteria. The FAQs on this can be found at equityleague.org.

The trustees have a federally mandated fiduciary duty to manage employer contributions to provide benefits for as many working members as possible. Despite the challenges described previously, it is our goal to maintain the current benefits for those who achieve eligibility under our contracts.

Previous annual reports, which have been published in

Equity News, have detailed the many initiatives that the Trustees have taken to contain costs. We will continue to work with the fund's professional advisors to analyze data with an eye toward maintaining stability.

We remind the Council that the Equity-appointed Union Trustees comprise one half of the Equity-League Board of Trustees. There are also Employer Trustees who are

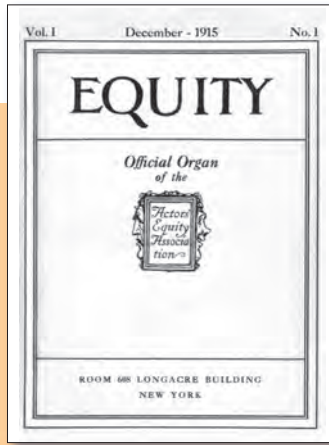
appointed by The Broadway League. We are jointly committed to providing quality benefits.

On behalf of the Equity Trustees: Nick Wyman, Ira Mont, Doug Carfrae, Brian Meyers Cooper, Thomas Joyce, Francis Jue, Mark Zimmerman, Mary McColl and Steve DiPaola, I submit this annual report.

Fraternally yours,
Madeleine Fallon

What Region Are You In?

Eastern Region	Central Region	Western Region
Alabama – AL	Arkansas – AR	Alaska – AK
Connecticut – CT	Illinois – IL	Arizona – AZ
Delaware – DE	Indiana – IN	California – CA
District of Columbia – DC	Iowa – IA	Colorado – CO
Florida – FL	Kansas – KS	Hawaii – HI
Georgia – GA	Kentucky – KY	Idaho – ID
Maine – ME	Louisiana – LA	Montana – MT
Massachusetts – MA	Michigan – MI	New Mexico – NM
Maryland – MD	Minnesota – MN	Nevada – NV
Mississippi – MS	Missouri – MO	Oregon – OR
New Hampshire – NH	Nebraska – NE	Texas – TX
New Jersey – NJ	North Dakota – ND	Utah – UT
New York – NY	Ohio – OH	Washington – WA
North Carolina – NC	Oklahoma, OK	Wyoming – WY
Pennsylvania – PA	South Dakota – SD	
Rhode Island – RI	Wisconsin – WI	
South Carolina – SC		
Tennessee – TN		
Virginia – VA		
Vermont – VT		
West Virginia – WV		
Canada		



Happy Birthday, Equity News!

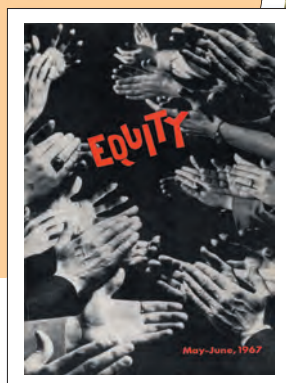
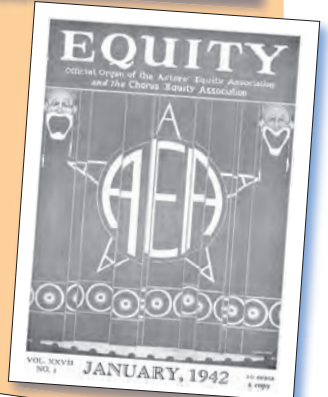
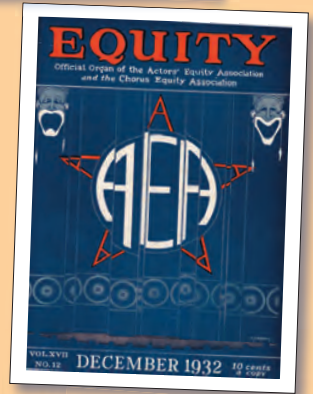
First published in December of 1915, this marks the 100th anniversary of our publication! Along with the actorsequity.org website, *Equity News* continues to be a crucial resource for historical documentation, important updates on policy and union activity, stories about what makes the association tick and much more.

As we continue to work toward keeping our content, design and thinking current and growing at a pace alongside the industry, we continue to look for the best ways to connect with the membership. Social media, of course, has been a great part of this — but I also know that there’s nothing like a newspaper to provide a tangible public record of our events, initiatives, challenges and achievements.

I joined Equity the summer I graduated from high school. I remember the intense pride I had when I received my first card and then my first copy of *Equity News*. I suddenly knew that I had joined a community of artists bonded together by our devotion to a life in the theatre; a community that had my back. I hope you will always feel that pride and connection, too, every time you see on the masthead (whether digital or paper): “Actors’ Equity: Standing Up For Our Members.”

Happy Birthday to us all!

Christine Toy Johnson
Chair, *Equity News* Committee



NATIONAL NEWS



Heidi Bohnenkamp

Chanhassen, Minnesota

Performing for a Good Cause

Over the holidays, the cast members of Chanhassen Dinner Theatres' *Hello, Dolly!* took up donations to support the annual national initiative of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Fostered by professional members of the entertainment industry, this organization

promotes, funds and encourages public support for programs and services to benefit people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. With the company's help, a total of \$4,184.32 was collected, a 20 percent increase over last year's campaign.



Deborah Jean Templin

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Membership Meeting

By Tom Helmer

The Philadelphia Liaison Committee held its annual membership meeting at the Twisted Tail restaurant on Monday, November 17, 2014. AEA President Nick Wyman and Eastern Regional Director/Assistant Executive Director and General Counsel Tom Carpenter made a round-trip from New York City to meet

with a small, but hearty and inquisitive group.

The committee reviewed the past year's activities, reminded members to utilize the Members Project and Fringe Arts Codes. Three members volunteered to join the committee: Cathy Simpson, Ross Beschler and Peter Andrew Danzig. The committee looks forward to its service to the Philadelphia membership.

Detroit, Michigan

New Venue and New Faces at the Detroit General Membership Meeting

With a new meeting location, the Detroit General Membership Meeting was held on Nov. 17, 2014, at the Performance Network Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which meant that, along with active members, enthusiastic and excited new members were also in attendance.

Central Regional Director Sean Taylor and Senior Business Representative Cynthia Hanks were the meeting's special guests. Both engaged members in a discussion that included the "Ask If It's Equity" initiative, the importance of encouraging members to represent our Equity brand and a reminder that there are

no more Deputy packets, as it's online in the Member Portal.

Additionally, two members were re-selected for the liaison committee for two-year terms: Trudy Mason and Milfordean Luster.

Members, along with the Chicago Equity office, contributed to the fund for the annual "Adopt-a-Child" event in December. "Equity and Friends Fight AIDS," the program to support local AIDS organizations, also gathered some green.

The local members remain dedicated to promoting Equity and the work of the liaison committee within the community. "Equity Works!"

New York City VITA Office Opens February 2

AEA's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) office in New York City will open on Monday, February 2, 2015. AEA members in good standing may take advantage of the free IRS-sponsored tax assistance program, which helps members to prepare and file tax returns.

The VITA program is available in-person by appointment or walk-in (first come, first served and dependent on available time slots) in the Equity Building at 165 West 46 Street on the 14th floor. The hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tax worksheets are now available for download in the VITA section located on the Member Portal. These worksheets, which comply with IRS law, are required for the VITA program and must be completed before your appointment.

If you are not able to visit VITA, you may still use the worksheets to organize your personal records and file your tax returns. Consult with your own tax preparer as to what you are required to do. Members with tax questions can call the VITA office at 212-921-2548 and speak to a member of the tax assistance team.

Other tax assistance is provided in Orlando at the Equity office and in Los Angeles at the Actors Fund VITA office.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, February 16, 2015, in observance of Presidents' Day.

West

Bloomfield, Michigan

Celebrating 25 Years

In 1989, the Jewish Ensemble Theatre was established with the mission "to produce theatre of the highest professional standards and to provide a stage for the exploration of ideas that confront issues of humanity and community from a Jewish perspective." In honor of the company's quarter-century, AEA presented the theatre with a proclamation, congratulating the organization for its efforts and continued hiring of Equity members.

JET Executive Director, Christopher Bremer, reiterated that



sentiment when asked why JET continues to produce as an Equity theatre: "Since this theatre's inception, we have known the value of the true professional, which is epitomized by the Equity actor. We see working with Actors' Equity as a stamp of quality that our patrons can utilize when making their theatre going decision. JET is extremely proud of our continued relationship with the union and looks forward to a mutually beneficial relationship for the next 25 years."

Los Angeles & New York City

Broadway Gets Immunized For 2014-15

As the flu season arrived this winter, Broadway, Off-Broadway and beyond were prepared. Physician Volunteers for the Arts provided over 5,400 free seasonal flu vaccinations this fall and winter to the theatrical community. This annual free flu shot program, now in its 18th year, is sponsored by Actors' Equity Association and funded by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Dr. Barry Kohn, medical director of Physician Volunteers for the Arts, made "house calls" to over 170 venues, including Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, nonprofit theatre companies, theatrical union offices and other theatre related offices, such as TDF, The American Theatre Wing and The Broadway League.



Dr. Barry Kohn giving a flu shot to Nick Wyman, president of Actors' Equity.

Free flu shots were also provided to all members of the theatre community on a walk-in basis at Actors' Equity offices in New York and Los Angeles on pre-designated days over the fall and winter.

The cost of the flu vaccine was funded by a generous \$60,000 grant from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.



Volunteers from the Mount Sinai Institute for Advanced Medicine Young Adult Program along with Arne Gundersen and Dianne Eyerman.
Stephanie Masucci

New York City

Spreading Holiday Cheer with the Falat Basket Project

When Dianne Eyerman first started volunteering with the Stephen J. Falat Basket Project in 1997, she remembered filling 250 children's baskets. This year, for kids only a couple of months to 15 years old, 838 kids baskets were completed for the cause.

Beginning in 1985, the volunteer-run Stephen J. Falat Basket Project has filled gift baskets (clothing, candy, toys, toiletries and more) and delivered them to nearly 20 local New York hospitals and organizations to brighten the holidays of men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS. This season, volunteers brought 3,243 baskets to people in need.

The mission began when actor Stephen J. Falat visited a handful of patients at St. Luke's Hospital, donating Christmas baskets supplied through his own generosity. The next year, he organized the project through Actors' Equity Association and donated 150 baskets to other

AIDS charities. Falat passed away from complications from AIDS in 1991 and the Basket Project has been proudly continued in his memory.

For numerous volunteers, like Arne Gundersen, chair of the committee, and Greg Kayne, a coordinator, who have been part of the project since its inception, each year is like reuniting with family.

"Working alongside of our fellow volunteers has turned into a family as the years have passed," said Eyerman, a Barry Manilow fan, who began volunteering when Manilow asked his International Fan Club to assist his production, *Harmony*, in getting to New York City by supporting Broadway in some way.

"We keep coming back because we are committed to working on the baskets for children who might not receive any gifts and might not otherwise know the joys of the holiday," said Eyerman.

New York City

Auditions Announced for AEA Scholarship Program at Singers Forum

After a brief hiatus, the AEA Scholarship Program at Singers Forum, under the auspices of EMGCollective, which administers the program, has returned to offer scholarships to Actors' Equity Association members living in the New York City area.

The scholarship, which is a funded endowment from the organization, offers subsidized vocal training exclusively to members who apply, audition and are accepted. The subsidy covers almost 50 percent of the voice lesson, including a studio and accompanist. Without regard to age, ethnicity, gender and, for the most part, financial need, the scholarship is offered to qualified

applicants to assist them in their quest for successful careers while maintaining the vocal health, strength and flexibility to attain long-term musical goals.

New program members, once accepted, are permanently connected to the scholarship, if they choose. This means a student leaving on tour for a year is welcomed back into the program upon return to the New York City area.

This year, auditions will be held on:

Monday, February 9 from 3:30 - 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 12 from 10 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Friday, February 13 from 2-6 p.m.

Callbacks will be held the week of February 16, 2015, and auditions will be held at Times Square Arts Center at 300 W. 43rd Street, Suite 508.

"Being able to study on a regular basis has bolstered my technique as well as my confidence," said Scott Tucker, a student within the program. "I have been able to work on music and material that would have been difficult to master without the eyes and ears of an amazing teacher, and I've been able to set performance goals and meet them."

To schedule an audition, contact Lynn Kearney at EMGCollective@aol.com.

Email submissions should include a photo/resume and should indicate any known conflicts with the listed audition times. Please put "Scholarship Audition Request" in the subject header.



Former Equity Membership Candidate Nick Verina speaks to current EMCs at the National EMC Meeting, which linked all three office cities together.
Stephanie Masucci

East Haddam, Connecticut

Goodspeeds' Holiday Inn Leads BCIEFA Week Fundraising



The company at Goodspeed Musicals in East Haddam, Connecticut proved their hearts overflow as they raised \$23,936 during their run of *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn* through audience appeals and signed poster sales. Company members took turns giving the curtain speech after each performance and there was no shortage of help amongst the group. "We had a wonderful campaign," said Equity member Tally Sessions, who played the role of Jim Hardy and helped spearhead the fundraising. "We

routinely received donations topping \$1000 per performance from a house of only 390 seats. So our audiences were very responsive and generous. But we couldn't have done this without our stage management team."

Production Stage Manager Bradley G. Spachman was more than eager to jump into the campaign. "It was a true pleasure to see the generosity not only of the audiences but also the whole team at the theater," he said. "The casts are the driving force behind this and we couldn't help so many without everyone pitching in." Connecticut is home to eight social service agencies who received grants from BC/EFA in 2014 totaling over \$75,000.

New York, Chicago & Los Angeles

EMCs Network Across the Nation

In social and business situations get to know the person next to, behind, in front, diagonally or even across the room from the you: The person nearest (or farthest) from you might provide the means for your next work opportunity. And with over 90 Equity Membership Candidates (EMC) in attendance at the December 8, 2014, National EMC Meeting, the topic of networking was front and center. Kevin McMahon, Equity Councillor, welcomed EMCs via a national video hook-up which linked Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City.

Nick Verina, former EMC and Equity member since 2005, gave advice to the future members for their journey toward Equity membership. Verina, who appeared on Broadway in the revival of *Follies*, and was seen across the country in the national tour of *Grease* and in the Chicago

production of *Altar Boyz*, shared four pillars for making it in the business: handling misconceptions, dealing with control issues, having a personal story and operating a small business.

- Do your best to keep a realistic perspective on the business — it's easy to allow misconceptions to cloud one's judgment. Every career will have ups and downs.
- Take a step back from control. Ask yourself, "what can and what can't I control?"
- Be yourself — that's the key element directors and casting directors want to see.
- Focus on longevity; don't get bogged down with day-to-day challenges.

Verina also encouraged EMCs to go to every audition that they can: "You have no idea what doors it could open in the future." For Verina, an open call is how he got his Equity card.

The National EMC Meeting

provided EMCs with information regarding the union, the EMC program itself and organizations that are available for assistance, such as The Actors Fund. Locally, each city covered auditions and EMC protocol, the website and participating with the union's social media.

New York City

ActorsFCU Announces 2015 Annual Meeting

The Actors Federal Credit Union will host its Annual Meeting on Friday, Feb. 27, 2015, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the New York Equity Building in the 14th floor Council Room. Aside from more than \$500 in door prizes, included on the afternoon's agenda are board elections, credit committee elections and the state of the union address by ActorsFCU President, Jeff Rodman.



Settling in with the Seanachai Irish Theatre of Chicago

We asked the staff at the Irish Theatre of Chicago to tell us about the company; this is what they had to say:

How did Seanachai Theatre Company, one of Chicago's oldest itinerant Equity theatres, decide to celebrate its 20th Anniversary season?

How else? It changed its name. Hard to pronounce (and even harder to spell), Seanachai finally gave up the ghost and became (insert fanfare here) the Irish Theatre of Chicago. In a long-planned rebranding that happened to coincide with its twentieth year producing theatre in the Chicagoland area, Seanachai Theatre has now gone the way of the dodo and the Irish Theatre of Chicago has properly taken its place.

As if to properly usher in this new era, the company also picked up the much coveted "Best Ensemble" award at the 2014 Equity Joseph Jefferson Awards for its production of Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer*, directed by Matt Miller. This prestigious award, of which Actors' Equity Association

is a sponsor, caps the company's most successful season to date and the publicity surrounding the

tremendous honor brought a lot of attention to the company and allowed us to spread the word

Kenyon and Carolyn Kruse and ran through January 4, 2015. *The White Road*, staged by Robert



From left to right, Peter Bradley Armacost*, Ira Amyx, Dan Waller*, Shane Kenyon and Kevin Theis* in Seanachai Theatre's production of *The Seafarer* by Conor McPherson. *Denotes AEA member.

award went a long way toward assisting the company in spreading the word about its name change.

"Winning the Ensemble Jeff Award could not have come at a better time," said Michael Grant who, with fellow Co-Artistic Director Ira Amyx, is guiding the company through this transition. "We were worried about getting the news about our new name out to the community and the city at large. Receiving this

about the launching of ITC that much more quickly."

This year's season, consisting of Conor McPherson's *Shining City* and founding ensemble member Karen Tarjan's *The White Road*, the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition across Antarctica, kicked off this past fall at the Den Theatre. *Shining City*, directed by Jeff Christian, featured ensemble members Peter Bradley Armacost, Coburn Goss, Shane

Kauzlaric, will begin performances on April 30 and continue through June 15, 2015.

Born in 1994, the Irish Theatre of Chicago has enjoyed a long and wild ride over the past two decades. The premiere production *And Neither Have I Wings to Fly...* by ensemble member Ann Noble, was the sleeper hit of the '94 season, playing to sold-out houses during its initial run and eventually moving to the Griffin Theatre for

an even more successful extension. The play would go on to win the American Theatre Critic's Association's Best New Play Award.

Since then, the company has staged a variety of original productions, traditional offerings, historical dramas and modern comedies, the majority of which have had a distinctly Celtic theme. Its original name, the Gaelic word "Seanachai", translates to "storyteller" and despite the new moniker, the ensemble's shared goal of telling stories that bring out the complexities and compelling truths about the human experience remains at the heart of the company's mission.

A proud Equity theatre since 1997, ITC has reaped its share of awards over the years as well and — despite comparatively small budgets — the company has often gone head-to-head with some of the largest theatres in the city and emerged the victor.

The next goal, which is finding and securing a performance space of its own, is a long wished-for dream that the company is hoping to finally bring to fruition some time in the next two years.

For now, the Irish Theatre of Chicago (nee Seanachai) is proud to head into its 20th season with a new name and, to burnish their reputation even further, a top honor at this year's Jeff Awards.

A LOOK BACK

75 Years Ago Jan/Feb. 1940

In the January issue of *Equity Magazine*, the editorial "It May be Necessary to Fight Again" details that the Council and members will need to fight to enforce the Ticket Code, which is fully titled the Code of Industry Regulations for the Sale of Theatre Tickets. It reads: "A test of Equity's intentions with regard to the code may develop at any moment...But once again, as it happened in the past, it may be necessary to fight!"

Equity enters into a working agreement with SAG and the American Federation of Radio Artists regarding the administration of television, which contains numerous clauses, having the separate unions work together on behalf of all performers.

50 Years Ago Jan/Feb. 1965

The Actors' Equity Foundation assumes the sponsorship of the Department to Extend Professional Theatre with hope that the department will establish better relationships

with universities, community theatres, arts councils and cultural centers under the Foundation's guidelines.

Equity President Frederick O'Neal and First Vice-President Theodore Bikel testify before House and Senate sub-committees, urging for federal aid for the arts.

25 Years Ago Jan/Feb. 1990

New York Governor Mario Cuomo announces a budget that has substantially cut funding for the arts, eliminating \$5.6 million from the 1989 arts appropriation of \$54.8 million. Along with letters from President Colleen Dewhurst and Executive Director Alan Eisenberg, the union urged its 16,000 members in New York City to write to their senators.

10 Years Ago Jan/Feb. 2005

Executive Director Alan Eisenberg announced that he will not seek another term when his contract expires in 2006. Eisenberg, who will have served for 25 years, is the longest running chief executive the union has had.

Fayetteville, Arkansas Arkansas' Theatresquared Joins In National Fundraising Efforts

With only 174 seats, the five-person company of *Around the World in 80 Days* at TheatreSquared in Fayetteville, Arkansas showed just how big they actually are by raising \$1,564 in just six performances during BC/EFA Week in December. Equity member Gil Brady, who played the leading role, Phileas Fogg, led the enthusiastic company — all of whom never missed an opportunity to jump in and fundraise. "It was a tremendous success," said Brady. "The people of Fayetteville were incredibly generous. We



expected to get maybe a couple hundred bucks total, but we'd come back with much more each show. It fueled our energy to do it again."

Money raised from the

company's efforts will come back to the community through BC/EFA's National Grants Program. Donations were given to the Arkansas AIDS Foundation in Little Rock,

which received a \$7,500 grant for its Meals Program and the Hot Springs AIDS Resource Center, which received a general assistance grant \$15,000 last year.



How I Got My Equity Card

Tony Danza



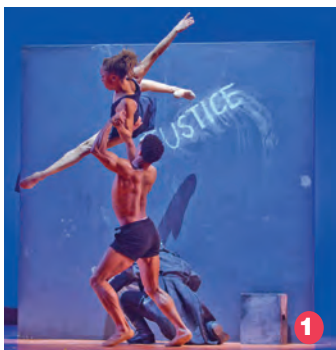
In 1993 I got my Equity Card not the way most actors do. I was a television star and my show, *Who's the Boss*, had just ended after eight years. I was at the Sunset Gower Studios cleaning out my office when I got a call from Garry Marshall. I had known him from when I was doing *Taxi* and he was doing his great show, *Happy Days*.

I ended up playing shortstop for the *Happy Days* Baseball team; we traveled and played all over the country. He said that he had written a new four-character play titled, *Wrong Turn at Lungfish*, and wanted me to play the part of Dominic De Caesar, the tough boyfriend of the lead in

the play — which was eventually played by Laura San Giacomo and then Jami Gertz. Then, he hit me with the big news: maybe the greatest American actor would be playing the other lead. I asked who that was and, proudly, he said, "George C. Scott."

Rounding out the cast was Kelli Williams, who played the nurse. We did the play for six weeks in Los Angeles at the Coronet Theater [now the Largo at the Coronet] and then moved to New York City for a run at The Promenade Theatre [now closed] on 76th St. and Broadway. It was a great run, and working with and becoming friends with Scott was a revelation. Thanks for making me recall my beginning.

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS Breaks Records with Gypsy of the Year



\$464,559 – together raised more than \$1 million.

The company of Disney's *The Lion King* took honors for best onstage presentation with an emotional, socially-charged dance, created by cast member Ray Mercer (1).

Beginning with the word "Justice" written on a chalkboard wall, in a flurry of movement and flying chalk dust, the wall was transformed into a dove of peace as dancers personified the struggles of racism, justice and inequality. The cast of *Pippin* earned cheers and runner-up honors. Nicolas Jelmoni and Charlotte O'Sullivan mesmerized the audience with incredible feats of strength and hand acrobatics.

The show's opening number celebrated the 40th anniversary of *The Wiz*, one of the first big-budget Broadway musicals to feature an all-black cast and

winner of seven Tony Awards in 1975. Triumphant returning to the yellow brick road, Dee Dee Bridgewater, André De Shields and Ken Page, among others, were met with rapturous applause (2). In a fitting tribute to the groundbreaking show, Alton Fitzgerald White returned to close *Gypsy of the Year*, leading the "celebration cast" in a powerhouse rendition of "Home," the finale from *The Wiz*.

This year's *Gypsy of the Year*



also featured the cast of *Cinderella* performing a spirited ensemble tap entitled "The Rifferdancer." A parody of the heart-wrenching ASPCA public service announcements came with a *Avenue Q* spin, seeking help for puppets who are "suffering alone, waiting for you to help." The cast of *Kinky Boots* presented their show as if it were directed by John Doyle, while

Wicked imagined the recent television production of Peter Pan with Lady Gaga as Tinker Bell (3).

Sixteen national touring shows playing across the country raised more than \$1.7 million of the campaign's grand total. A special dance presentation, representing the tours' remarkable fundraising efforts nationwide choreographed by Adam Fleming told the story of relationships sustained and broken on the road. This year's top musical



Day tour raised \$242,756. Top Broadway musical fundraiser was *Kinky Boots* with \$233,544 (4), followed by *Cabaret* with \$217,699; *Beautiful* with \$195,773 and *The Book of Mormon*'s \$193,181. The Broadway play runner-up was *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, earning \$115,980. Among the Off-Broadway shows, *Avenue Q* earned top honors, raising \$19,237.

More than 250 Equity members came together December 8-9 for the 26th Annual *Gypsy of the Year Competition*. Sixty-four Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring companies worked together to raise a record-breaking \$5,229,611 in the six-week fall fundraising campaign leading up to the event. The grand total was announced by Hugh Jackman, Nathan Lane and Judith Light after two performances of original dances, songs and skits at the New Amsterdam Theatre.

The top fundraiser was *The River*, starring Jackman, raising \$549,725. For the first time in history, the top two fundraising plays – *The River* and Terrence McNally's *It's Only a Play* with

fundraiser was the tour of *Kinky Boots*, raising an incredible \$329,734 followed by *Wicked*'s Munchkinland tour with \$257,880. *The Book of Mormon*'s Letter



Across the Nation

BC/EFA Makes Special Gift to The Actors Fund in Honor of Stage Management Community

Following the record-breaking success of its six-week fall fundraising campaign leading up to December's *Gypsy of the Year Competition*, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS made a special \$100,000 gift to The Actors Fund in honor of the community of Equity stage managers on Broadway and Off, and on the road, who make these extraordinary audience appeals possible. This remarkable team of skilled

Monica Simoes



theatrical professionals — who also work very closely with The Actors Fund — make an entire company's support possible. They also work closely, and graciously, with the BC/EFA staff and volunteers in a way that makes the appeals appear effortless to audiences, encouraging their great generosity.

This gift complements the more than \$73,000,000 granted by BC/EFA to The Actors Fund since 1988, supporting its various initiatives, residencies

and centers.

BC/EFA has also spearheaded — in memory of stage manager Beverly Randolph — the creation of the Stage Managers' National Health Directory, a single reliable directory of primary care doctors, specialists and other health care providers that can be used by Broadway and Off-Broadway theatres and other live performance venues. And just last month, BC/EFA honored the memory of Stage Manager Andrea "Spook" Testani with a special gift that supports outreach to stage managers around the country.

Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid-up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered for publication in *Equity News*, provided that they are no greater than 175 words in length. Letters selected for publication may be edited for space requirements. Actors' Equity Association reserves the right to decline to publish letters at its sole discretion. When multiple letters on the same topic are submitted, the Editor may decide to select a smaller number of representative letters for publication. Letters must be signed and must provide preferred contact information for verification purposes, but names may be withheld from publication in certain limited circumstances, at a member's request. Opinions expressed in *Letters to the Editor* are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.



WITH LOVE

Dear Editor:

As an Equity member, what am I thankful for? Alhambra Theatre & Dining, the oldest operating dinner theatre in the U.S., which opened in 1967.

My first audition there was in June 2009, exactly 11 weeks before its untimely closing due to financial concerns. I had no

idea at the time. Months later, when I found out, I was deeply saddened because of the rich history of stars that had paraded across its stage over the years.

Thankfully, others were saddened as well, namely Craig Smith who, along with his "Theater Partners," put their money on the line and saved this Jacksonville, Florida icon.

The theatre re-opened in December 2009 with producer/director Tod Booth at the helm once again.

Currently mounting its 45th production since, I send my love and gratitude to all my dear friends who have kept this wonderful theatre alive and employing actors.

Michael Strauss

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

My dear wife, Robin Ann Stockdale, passed quietly on January 11, 2015, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at the age of 89.

In 1946, she played the leading role in *Soldier's Wife*, a production of the Kalamazoo Civic Players. That May, she joined a 14-member theatre group, The Village Players, which morphed into Jack Ragotzy's famed Barn Theatre of Augusta, Michigan. I was also in that company, just discharged from the Navy. We fell in love almost instantly and were married a year later

on July 4, 1947.

We were together for 68 years. Robin was never a stereotypical housewife or mother; she was so much more. She was my lover, my strength and support. She was editor for everything I wrote, including five published books and articles published in *TheaterWeek*. When I was "young, drunk and 21 and knew I could never die" (a quote from Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*), Robin was my "lost lane into heaven." Without that "lane" of support, I don't believe I could have accomplished much.

Joseph Stockdale