

The First Membership Meeting of the 2010-2011 Season will be held on

Friday, October 8, 2010 – Eastern Region (2 p.m.)
Monday, October 11, 2010 – Central Region (7 p.m.)
Monday, October 11, 2010 – Western Region (11 a.m.)

The **Eastern Regional Meeting** will convene at 2 p.m. on Friday, October 8, 2010 in the Council Room (14th Floor) of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY.

The agenda will include the following:

- Presentation of the Paul Robeson Citation.
- Report of the Eastern Regional Director.
- Report of the Eastern Regional Vice President.
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws.

A sign interpreter will be present on request. Equity's TDD telephone number—Telecommunication Device for the Deaf—is (212) 302-4306.

The **Central Regional Meeting** will convene at 7 p.m. on Monday, October 11, 2010 in the Member Center at the new Equity Building, 557 West Randolph Street, Chicago, IL.

The agenda will include the following:

- Report of the Central Regional Vice President.
- Report of the Central Regional Director.
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws.

There will be a "Sneak Preview" with tours of the new Equity Building. Light refreshments will be served.

The **Western Regional Meeting** will convene at 11 a.m. on Monday, October 11, 2010 in the Bellamy Board Room (5th Floor) in the Equity office, 6755 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, CA.

The agenda will include the following:

- Report of the Western Regional Director.
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws.

Future Membership Meetings will be held on: Friday, January 7, 2011 (Monday, January 10, 2011 in the Central and Western Regions) and Friday, April 8, 2011 in all Regions.

Central Region Hosts Panel at TCG National Conference on Breaking Down Barriers

Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for professional not-for-profit theatres, held its 2010 conference in Chicago from June 17-19, 2010. Equity played a pivotal role at the event, hosting a panel on "Breaking Down Barriers," the focus of the I AM PWD (Inclusion in the Arts & Media of People With Disabilities) Campaign, the tri-union global initiative launched in 2008 by Equity, AFTRA and SAG.

Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey welcomed participants and introduced Equity member Robert David Hall, who acted as Facilitator and also gave a brief overview of the I AM PWD Campaign.

The panel included Mr. Hall, along with Michael Patrick Thorn-



Panelists at the TCG Conference are: (l to r) Michael Patrick Thornton, Anita Hollander, Christine Bruno, Alana Wallace, Michael Ervin and Robert David Hall.

ton (Equity Member/Producer); Anita Hollander (Equity Member, National Co-Chair of the PWD Committee and the I AM PWD Campaign); Christine Bruno (Equity Member, Disability Advocate for Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts); Michael Ervin (Equity Member); and Alana Wallace

(Dancer/Performer and Founder of *Dance>Detour*, Chicago's first professional "diverse-abilities" dance company comprising multi-talented artists with and without disabilities).

Discussion centered on: what the I AM PWD Campaign is do-

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Career Transition For Dancers Celebrates Silver Anniversary

Equity is there at the beginning

Career Transition For Dancers (CTFD) is celebrating a milestone in 2010. It's the 25th anniversary of the organization that provides emotional, financial and educational assistance to dancers to help them define their career possibilities and develop the skills necessary for the "next step."

Equity played a major role in the creation of CTFD as Edward Weston, a former Chorus Councillor and Second Vice President, and then Western Regional Director, served on the Advisory Committee that developed and presented a Conference on Career Transition For Dancers, which convened in 1982 at Lincoln Center. Mr. Weston served as Project Director; Agnes de Mille was Honorary Chairman. The purpose of the Conference was to recognize and discuss the trauma facing professional dancers both during and at the end of their careers, with the goal of consider-

ing ways of assisting them into professions that would make use of their unique backgrounds, talents and skills. Many questions were raised: What is transition? What is the full scope of the problem? Is assistance to dancers who can no longer dance a form of charity or a right

tions continues to this day.

Since its inception, CTFD has provided more than 4,600 dancers in 47 states with approximately 46,000 hours of various forms of career counseling. In addition to counseling, CTFD sponsors Career Conversations on such subjects as *Starting Your*



Attending the 1982 conference on Career Transition For Dancers are Edward Weston and Gwen Verdon.

to which they are entitled? In response to an open dialogue among participants, including Margaret Lawford of the Dancers' Resettlement Fund in London, a consensus was reached on how to proceed with fundraising and establishing in the United States, a model program to begin assisting dancers transitioning into rewarding new professions. In 1985, Career Transition For Dancers, Inc. was established in New York City with generous seed money from AEA, AFTRA, AGMA and SAG. Funding from these organiza-

Own Business, How to Balance Your Personal Life and Work Schedule, What You Need to Know Before Returning to School, and more. Since 1989,

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Meetings Set for 2010-2011 Season

The following dates have been set for membership meetings in 2010-2011:

Eastern Region

Friday, October 8, 2010 – 2 p.m.
Friday, January 7, 2011 – 2 p.m.

Central Region

Monday, October 11, 2010 – 7 p.m.
Monday, January 10, 2011 – Time TBA

Western Region

Monday, October 11, 2010 – 11 a.m.
Monday, January 10, 2011 – Time TBA

All Regions

The Annual Membership Meeting is Friday, April 8, 2011 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time, 1 p.m. Central Time and 11 a.m. Western Time. The Regions will be connected by telephonic hook-up in order that members in all Regions may hear the statements of candidates running for election.



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Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered and published as soon as possible. The Editor reserves the right to limit letters to 150 words and to select one or two representative letters when many similar letters are received. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request for those letters which may affect members' employment. Signatures will not be withheld on letters antagonistic or accusatory, either implied or expressed, against other members. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.



OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

Dear Editor:

I was delighted to see the story of "How I got my Equity card" in the July/August issue of Equity News.

I was pleased, too, to see mention of my Joy Through Art Foundation, which was created to improve the quality of life specifically for residents of nursing homes through regular interaction with professional artists trained in music and theatre. These residents are typically unable to leave their facilities to attend "live" musical or theatrical performances, so it is our mission to bring the arts to them. It is our hope—and plan—to "hire" professionals, including Equity members, and pay a small stipend when they visit patients and residents to help enrich and brighten their lives. Singers, musicians and story tellers are welcome. The smiles of appreciation on the faces of the nursing home residents are heartwarming.

Twenty years ago I worked as a recreational staff member in a nursing home. It was a life-changing experience. I would bring my guitar, sing songs and share stories with the residents. They joined in and became like family. I hope that some Equity members will want to join us, too.

Dominic Chianese

THANK YOU

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for highlighting Weathervane The-

atre in the July/August issue of Equity News along with other Equity summer stock theatres celebrating milestones. The entire company was delighted.

We have nine Equity Membership Candidates working alongside us this summer. The mother of one of the actors mailed him his EMC card, which had been sent to his home address. He was so proud when he read the article on our house's community bulletin board.

Performing rotating repertory with friends, in the midst of struggle, is a beautiful way to live.

Deborah Jean Templin

REMEMBERING PATRICIA NEAL

Dear Editor:

Two decades ago, I met Patricia Neal on a Theatre At Sea Cruise for Philip and Marilyn Langner's Theatre Guild. She seduced me with those big brown eyes and sexy voice and I was in love with her ever since. Her zest for life and wicked sense of humor joined us for the rest of her life. In spite of the tragedies she had endured, her love of adventure, generosity, curiosity and kindness towards her fellow man overcame the past.

It's important to know that she was always a working actress until the last few months of her life. She did a condensed reading of her autobiography, *As I Am*, which was always received with a standing ovation and handkerchiefs full of tears. There were also readings of Capote's *A Christmas Memory* and Gurney's *Love Letters*, among others. I'll never forget her transformation into a lovesick teenager with a reading of Juliet's monologue from *Romeo & Juliet*. She would sing in that beautiful baritone of hers. "The Dark Town Strutters Ball," "September Song," "Three Coins In The Fountain" and, of course, her signature song, "Send in the Clowns" (no one has done it better). To witness her extraordinary talent during those evenings was overwhelm-

ing. No wonder she was the first Tony Award winner and Academy Award winner. She also was a hell of a Bingo player.

How I treasure every moment we were together these past 20 years sailing the world, spending glorious evenings in her beautiful East End Avenue apartment and her charming home on Martha's Vineyard.

Dear Patricia, death is not final where you're concerned. You live in all the thousands of hearts you touched, especially mine.

Lee Roy Reams

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

I wish to let friends and colleagues of Alta McKay (1924-2010) know of her death this last June 22.

Alta was a wonderful presence in my life for nearly half a century. We played seasons of summer and winter stock in Chicago and Palm Springs in the '50s. She joined my late husband Barnard Hughes and me in the national company of *Da* in 1980. Barney and I were privileged to count her as a close friend for decades. She was a graceful, forceful, witty actress who worked in regional theatre, Off Broadway, and on television. In 1950, she appeared on Broadway with Judith Anderson in Robinson Jeffers' *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*.

Alta's immediate survivors are her three nephews, Bob, Jeff and Bill Wilson and her niece, Jeana Burton. Contributions may be made in her memory to The Actors Fund.

My son Doug and daughter Laura join me in loving memory of Alta's talent, taste and exceptional gift for friendship. It was a privilege to know her.

Helen Stenborg Hughes
New York City

Dear Editor:

I was saddened to hear of the death of Edgar Rosenblum.

My first Equity job after leaving college was at the Long Wharf Theatre. I had been hired

to do a show there called *The Changing Room*. When I arrived at Long Wharf, I had to meet with Edgar to negotiate my contract. As we were discussing the terms and the salary, a whopping \$150 a week, I mentioned in passing that my grandfather's last name was Rosenblum. Without batting an eye, he said: "All right. I'll give you \$151," which he did.

Of course *The Changing Room* moved to Broadway and proved to be a magnificent experience for me and the other members of the cast, but one of the most memorable moments for me was that first encounter with Edgar Rosenblum. He and Arvin Brown made the Long Wharf one of the most important theatres in America, one in which many actors aspired to work. I was happy to be there at that time and proud to be a member of that wonderful rugby team in *The Changing Room*.

Ron Siebert, New York

Dear Editor:

Sad to relate, Carol Provonsha passed away on March 27, 2010, at the age of 50, after a long battle with liver cancer.

She touched the hearts of her South Florida theatre friends and colleagues, and those of us who knew her and worked with her will never forget her professionalism, dedication to her craft and high spirits, combined with a no-nonsense practicality and the great interest she took in aspiring young actors in one of her favorite roles—teacher and coach.

Carol was held in such great esteem and affection that her friends in Florida and all across the country on two occasions came to her aid and raised substantial sums to assist her as her illness slowed her down and work became impossible.

Her multifarious theatre career included work in more than 100 productions, which included *Menopause: The Musical* and *Nunsense*. In addition, she created her own one-woman show, *The Fat Lady Sings* in which, in an exhibition of wild vocal versatility and artistry, she channeled Peggy Lee, Nell Carter, Liza Minnelli, Mama Cass, Rosemary Clooney and others through some of their best-known numbers.

John Felix, Hollywood, FL

Dear Editor:

I'm writing to acknowledge the passing, in April 2010, of adorable, talented Sharon Howard. Sharon and I first met as young actors when we vied for Tab Hunter's attention in *The Tender Trap* 30 years ago. We bonded there in Cockeysville, MD while attempting to play tennis at high noon in order to develop our tans, while eating al fresco on the patch of front lawn in the house we shared with other company members, and while sipping wine watching the famous Maryland "Hunt Cup." Well, I was sipping; Sharon didn't drink alcohol.

Sharon, who I endearingly called, "the twit," was a no-frills kind of gal, whose acting was as direct and honest as her character. Innately good and gentle, she would then surprise you with her quirky sarcasm. As we in the theatre are so fortunate to experience, a few intense months out of town in a show, if the vibes are right, can make a friend for life.

Donna Sorbello

Area Liaison Hotlines

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has established a National toll-free hotline system for members who live in Area Liaison and office cities. The new 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

Council Adopts Resolution On Committee Membership

At an Eastern Regional Membership Meeting on April 9, 2010 with a quorum present, Eastern Regional members in attendance approved the following resolution:

Observers on Committees will automatically become Committee members after having attended three meetings or six months having passed, whichever occurs first.

At its regularly scheduled meeting of July 20, 2010, the

National Council considered the resolution and, following an in-depth debate, the Council voted to deny the resolution from the membership meeting. In response to the members' concerns, the Council approved the following resolution:

In keeping with existing practice, a Chair of a Committee will formally consider an Observer for full membership on a Committee immediately following an Observer's attendance at three working

meetings of a Committee. The Chair will consider such factors as the size and composition of the Committee and the member's experience or expertise in the Committee's area. The appointment to full membership will not be withheld unreasonably.

It was noted in debate that Council has previously endorsed the principle that Equity Committees operate best when Chairs, Members and

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ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITYNEWS

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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.

Breaking Down Barriers

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ing to demystify the process of rehearsing and performing with disabled Actors; strategies that currently exist and new methods that should be implemented to promote inclusion and accuracy in the theatrical landscape; how to encourage development of

new works featuring accurate portrayals of disability.

"Events and discussions like this are critical," said Luther Goins, National EEO Coordinator. "There is so much work to be done. Understanding and acceptance takes years."

CTFD Celebrates Silver Anniversary

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over 1,500 dancers have attended these seminars in New York and Los Angeles, and in 2009, archival videos of the seminars were placed on the CTFD website (www.careertransition.org) to make them more accessi-

grams both in the United States and abroad.

One of the newest programs is the National Career Network, a searchable mentoring database for dancers looking to connect with a transitioned dancer or



Equity members and hosts for CTFD's Broadway Dancer Get Together at Sardi's in April 2010 are (l to r) John Selya, Caitlin Carter, Priscilla Lopez, Nick Adams, Judine Somerville, Kelly Bishop and Keith Roberts.

ble nationwide. Another service is CareerLine, a nationwide toll-free telephone service giving dancers across the country the ability to connect with CTFD counselors over the phone to receive individual career counseling. Since 1995, this service has provided 972 dancers in 29 states with more than 2,160 hours of individual help.

In addition, focus and support groups in New York and Los Angeles have drawn over 300 dancers. The National Outreach Project has taken CTFD's services "on the road" to 30 cities with a significant dance presence. This fall, they will visit Cleveland, OH; Las Vegas, NV; Charleston, SC; and New Orleans, LA.

Educational scholarships remain a hallmark of the organization and are the only financial support system in the nation exclusively for dancers from all disciplines and performance venues. CTFD grants provide eligible dancers with the funding necessary to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees, vocational certification or acquire important new skills. CTFD also provides seed money to entrepreneurial dancers to create new businesses. In 2009, \$428,000 in scholarships and grants was awarded. Dancers who participate in the CTFD programs have successfully transitioned into new non-dance careers running the gamut from A to Z, from advertising to zoology.

Since 1985, CTFD has awarded over \$3.7 million in educational scholarships for tuition, books and related expenses, enriching the lives of hundreds of dancers who are attending or have graduated from more than 170 colleges, universities, conservatories and certification pro-

grammatic.

Career Transition For Dancers looks ahead to its next 25 years with a three-fold purpose: (1) helping dancers realize that transitions from one career to another are normal developmental stages in anyone's life; (2) educating dancers (and their artistic directors, teachers and families)

Career Transition For Dancers' 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee is Monday, November 8, 2010 at 7 p.m. at New York City Center. Angela Lansbury hosts the event that features prominent artists from America's greatest dance companies along with Equity members Bebe Neuwirth, Ann Reinking, Chita Rivera, Tommy Tune and Karen Ziemba. In addition, Equity will be honored, along with CTFD's other founders, with an award for Outstanding Contributions to the World of Dance. For information, call 212 764-0172 or visit www.careertransition.org

as early in their training and careers as possible to the necessity of planning for their inevitable transition; and (3) assisting them in this process with the means to help fulfill the educational goals that are so important to establishing rewarding futures.

"We are extremely proud of our accomplishments so far and we look forward to the next quarter century of helping dancers 'step up and step ahead' to rewarding careers," says Alexander J. Dubé, CTFD's Executive Director. "Life after dance can be, and should be, a new beginning."

From the PRESIDENT

The Fall of the Twin Tiers

By Nick Wyman

In case you were still suffering from the delusion that you had elected an intelligent, responsible President, well-versed in the rules and traditions of our noble Association, I offer the following story as a wake-up call and cautionary tale.

Shortly after I was elected, a reputable NYC director (not realizing that my yearly salary from AEA, like that of my fellow Officers and Councillors, is in round numbers, zero) called me up to ascertain if I was still acting. If so, he had a job offer for me: to play Lady Bracknell in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Well, I love being offered a job; I love *Earnest*; I hadn't worn a dress onstage since my 1986 turn in *Off-Broadway's Angry Housewives*; and yes I said yes I will yes.

The producing organization was a brand-new theatre an hour southeast of Buffalo called the Twin Tiers Theater Festival in Olean, New York. AEA staff told me it was operating under the "Buffalo Rochester Special Agreement" and that I might well be the only Equity actor in the show. I had some reservations about being the sole professional frog in the non-Equity pond, but my concerns were allayed when I heard the names of several other reputable AEA actors who had been cast. At the sub-unemployment salary, it would clearly not be a moneymaking job but rather (in the words my poker buddies use to describe an unprofitable night of cards) "fun with my friends."

The day before rehearsals were to start, an e-mail — with a "Performer Contract" on Twin Tiers Theater Festival letterhead as an attachment — arrived explaining that they'd just gotten the cast list and that Equity contracts would be forthcoming in a couple days. I had some quibbles with this unsigned attachment (no health contribution?!), so I treated it as a deal memo pending a battle for health weeks.

A couple of days into rehearsal the producer — who was also the set designer — drove down to bring checks to AEA and stopped off at rehearsal to show us set drawings (sort of) before heading over to pick up contracts at AEA. Oops, he didn't have the right sums or the right sort of checks, so he wasn't able to get the contracts.

After some (arguably unintentional) missteps by the producer, our stage manager was finally able to pick up contracts from Equity, which our producer wanted us to sign and overnight to him for his signature. Well, there were significant discrepancies between the contracts and the "deal memo" — though still no health contribution, which began to seem unattainable given the increasingly apparent fly-by-night nature of this theatre — and Equity insists the producer sign first, so I didn't accede to this plan.

Then, due supposedly to the "misunderstanding" with Equity, the first week's paychecks were delayed. When they did arrive, they were for the wrong sum and no taxes, etc. had been

taken out. (Mine was actually unsigned!) Rather than wait for corrected checks, some cast members deposited these checks. They started to bounce. We heard that the cast of *Into the Woods*, the show rehearsing up in Olean, was having similar difficulties. It became clear that our contractual and payment problems were not inadvertent and anomalous glitches but a pattern that, as Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg told me, betrayed the classic signs of a theatre going under.

As I write, the situation is still evolving. The theatre has cancelled the rest of its season; and the town fathers — who had hoped the theatre would be an engine of economic recovery and still hope it can be revived for next summer — are striving to raise enough money to pay off the theatre's debts. Malfasant producers and actors not being paid for rehearsals are reminiscent of the issues that drove professional actors to band together in "the Equity" almost 100 years ago. Although "Special Agreements" provide fewer protections and benefits than more standard contracts, even these protections disappear if you haven't signed a contract. Also, Equity can't help you if it doesn't know you're working. AEA gets many inquiries about the possibility of using Equity actors and usually the first inkling AEA has that an agreement is being used is when a contract is actually filed. So take a tip from your chagrined President, make sure you have a signed contract by the first day of rehearsal; if not, give a call to Equity.

Health Fund to Cover Dependents to Age 26

The Equity — League Trust Fund Trustees have elected to make coverage under the new Age 26 Dependent Rule, as described in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act under President Obama's Health Care Reform Law, available effective October 1, 2010. The law would ordinarily take effect June, 2011, but the Trustees have elected to make this coverage available earlier.

The law's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires all plans that offer dependent coverage for children to make such coverage available to a participant's adult child, married or unmarried, until the child reaches age 26, even if

the adult child no longer lives with the parents, is not a dependent on a parent's tax return or is no longer a student. However, the extended eligibility does not apply to the adult child's spouse or children.

The change in the Equity-League dependent coverage will take effect October 1, 2010 with a special one time enrollment opportunity through September 15, 2010. There will also be an opportunity to enroll dependents during the Health Fund's regularly scheduled Open Enrollment Period in November 2010 for coverage beginning January 1, 2011. Members will still have to self-pay for this coverage. This new option pertains to both the Point of Service (POS) CIGNA

Plan and any HMO participants are currently enrolled in. Please note that under this transition rule, if the adult child has another offer of employment-based health coverage other than the Equity-League coverage, dependent coverage for that child will not be available.

At press time, the Equity-League Trust Fund office had sent a letter to all participants. You can download Enrollment forms and self-pay dependent rates from the website, www.equityleague.org. Proof of dependent status must be provided by attaching a copy of the adult child's birth certificate to the enrollment form.

If you have any questions, contact the Funds office at either 212-869-9380 or 800-344-5220 and a customer service representative within the Health Department can assist you.

U.S. House Designates “Arts in Education” Week

On Monday, July 26, 2010, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.Con.Res.275 designating the second week of September as “Arts in Education Week.” Authored and introduced by California Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA), this resolution is the first Congressional expression of support celebrating all the disciplines comprising arts

education. This is a very positive showing of support for arts education and comes at a key time when Congress is making plans to overhaul federal education policy.

The resolution seeks to support the features of arts education that are recognized as instrumental to developing a well-rounded education, such as creativity, imagination, and cross-cultural understanding.



H.Con.Res.275 also highlights the critical link between those skills and preparing children for gaining a competitive edge in the global economy. This is an important message for policy makers to acknowledge as they prepare to reauthorize federal education policy.

Philadelphia Cultural Budget Cut by 35%

On July 14, 2010, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter announced the latest round of cuts to the city budget, including \$1.1 million (35%) from the cultural fund.

Mayor Nutter's revised budget for 2010-2011 includes substantial cuts to the police

and fire overtime budgets, as well as reductions to most other city departments. The latest cuts come after a bumpy budget season in which the Mayor and City Council couldn't agree on how to balance the books.

In May, Mayor Nutter announced \$20 million in cuts after the Council passed a \$3.7

billion budget that excluded his proposed soda tax. A few weeks later, officials said they were looking to cut an additional two to four percent due to weak tax revenues.

In all, there has been \$47 million in cuts, including \$1 million from the city's community college payment, \$1.8 million from the Department of Parks and Recreation, and \$1.8 million from the Department of Human Services.

Proposition 8 Unconstitutional

On August 4, 2010, Proposition 8, the controversial law in California that banned same sex marriages, was

declared unconstitutional. The U.S. District Chief Judge stated Prop 8 violated the federal constitutional rights of gays and

lesbians to marry the partners of their choice, further adding that the law enshrines “the notion that opposite-sex couples are superior to same-sex couples.”

New law in Massachusetts Creates State-Sponsored Cultural Districts

On Wednesday, July 28, 2010, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed a bill into law that allows communities to create state-sponsored cultural districts to stimulate new arts and cultural activity and attract creative businesses.

The law directs the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) to create a new program that designates local districts to attract artists and cultural enterprises to a community, encourage business and job development, establish tourist destinations, preserve and reuse historic building, enhance

property values, and foster local cultural development.

The legislation includes no new funds for MCC, so the program will offer no grants or other financial rewards to communities, at least in its first year. It directs MCC to work with other state government agencies to identify state incentives and resources to enhance cultural districts. The MCC will work over the coming months to create guidelines for the program with input from those agencies, the cultural community, and the broader public.

Commuter Benefit in Jeopardy

The Transit Commuter Benefit may not be renewed by the end of the year and this will affect millions of public transportation commuters across the country. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed in 2009 included a provision to raise the monthly limit a commuter can deduct from his/her paycheck on a pre-tax

basis to pay for their commute and accrue savings. If Congress fails to extend the benefit or make it permanent at the current \$230 level, and returns it to the \$120 level, it's going to cost the commuting public and employers alike. For more information, go to the Equity website, www.actorsequity.org, and look at the Advocacy pages to find out what you can do.

Council Adopts Resolution

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Staff work cooperatively in their assigned roles. Chairs are responsible for populating Committees, subject to the approval of the Council or Board. Council also held that Chairs are responsible for encouraging diversity of opinion and healthy debate within a Committee.

However, it is important for Chairs to be able to assess the compatibility of a Member with a Committee, a determination which may rest on various factors including the size of a Committee and a Member's qualifications, understanding of the Committee's scope of responsibility, ability to work in a group environment and comfort with different points of view.

The Council believes that Committee service is one of the most important roles a Member can play within the life of the Association. Committees are the incubators of the Union's policies and positions. Committee appointments should always be made in a timely fashion, with the greatest care,

and an eye toward producing the most effective Committee work. Consequently, Council holds that such appointments should be neither arbitrarily withheld nor automatically granted.

In accordance with Equity procedures, the votes of the individual Councillors are listed below.

Voting in favor: Ms. Price, Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Ames, Mr. Bateman, Mr. Brody, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Denmark, Mr. Dunn, Ms. Flender, Mr. Hirsch, Ms. Horne, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Jue, Mr. Knapp, Ms. Kramer, Mr. Ludwig, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Moreland, Mr. Moye, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinette, Mr. Roddy, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Ms. Smith, Mr. Smith, Ms. Snodgrass, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Williams, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Carfrae, Mr. Cahn, Ms. Ground, Mr. Herzog, Ms. Marty, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Moriarty, Mr. North, Mr. Willet.

Voting against: None.

Abstentions: Ms. Borts, Ms. Roberts.

Theatre Authority: Clearing Benefit Performances Since 1934

Can union performers and stage managers donate their time and talent in support of a good cause? Absolutely, if the benefit has been registered and approved by Theatre Authority. Theatre Authority (TA) is the charitable arm of the performers' unions, created in 1934, to regulate free appearances of union members interested in helping to raise money for legitimate charitable organizations. TA has the “authority” to authorize union members' participation in benefits on behalf of AEA, AFTRA, SAG, AGMA, and AGVA. Benefit clearance allows performers/stage managers to be supplied with waivers so that they may participate without being in violation of union rules for working without a contract. Theatre Authority describes a benefit as:

An event of one or two performances whose proceeds will be donated to a registered charity. A registered charity is a non-profit organization that is registered with the IRS under tax code 501(c)(3). Such charities should be able to provide a letter from the IRS to confirm their non-profit status.

An event that requires no more than 25 hours of rehearsal time.

An event where all participants are donating their time and talent. The producer may offer an honorarium to the participating performers and stage managers if he/she wishes. However, if an honorarium is provided, it *must* be provided to everyone who is participating.

An event that is not taped or recorded, other than for news footage.

Theatre Authority doesn't just support the use of artistic talent for fundraising purposes. Through its partnership with The Actors Fund of America all monies collected in the form of fees and additional donations are used solely to benefit needy, sick and indigent performers. Do Benefit performances occur, involving union performers and stage managers that have not been cleared by TA? Unfortunately, yes. While TA can capture a number of these events, it can't do it without the help of the very people it exists to protect. Here are two key points to remember:

When you are requested to participate in any fundraising event, be sure to check with Theatre Authority. Also, tell the organization requesting your services that they will need Theatre Authority clearance and unless they receive it, you

will be unable to participate.

Nothing in a Theatre Authority clearance abrogates any performer/stage manager's right to be paid his/her usual fee, if they so desire. A Theatre Authority Clearance Agreement simply ensures that expenses incurred in connection with the appearance are paid; rehearsal time is limited; and future broadcasts, tapes, recordings or films of the original function are prohibited.

Theatre Authority is here to protect your rights! Check out the AEA website (www.actorsequity.org/Benefits/theatreauthority) for more information about what Theatre Authority can do for you, or to download an application.

East of Omaha, please contact:

Theatre Authority, Inc.
c/o Actors' Equity Association
165 West 46th Street
New York NY 10036
Attn: Jeff Morris
(212) 869-8530 x308 or via e-mail jmorris@actorsequity.org

West of Omaha, please contact:

Theatre Authority, Inc.
430 Clipper Way
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5958
Attn: Peter and Judy Bailey
(562) 598-3283 or via e-mail tawinfo@aol.com

Save the Date

Monday, October 11, 2010
Members Only “Sneak Preview” of the new
Actors' Equity Building
Tours begin at 6 pm – Bring your Equity card
Membership Meeting starts at 7 pm
557 West Randolph Street, Chicago, IL

POSTCARDS from the Regions

New York

Shubert Alley Welcomes "Broadway Barks"

New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg proclaimed Saturday, July 10, 2010 "Broadway Barks Day" and the Empire State Building was illuminated in purple. With founders Bernadette Peters and Mary Tyler Moore returning to host, thousands filled Shubert Alley to see their favorite Broadway stars help scores of four-legged, furry friends of all sizes and varieties find "forever homes" and spread the message of the importance of spaying and neutering.



Sean Hayes with a furry friend.

"I'm so happy that the Broadway community embraces *Broadway Barks* each year and so grateful to our friends at Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS for joining me in producing the event. It's a sweet day for all of us, but especially for the



Bernadette Peters kicks off BC/EFA's pet adoption drive.

animals that find wonderful homes, many of them with folks working right here on Broadway," said Ms. Peters.

Sean Hayes, Katie Finneran, Tony Goldwyn and Brooks Ashmanskas (*Promises, Promises*); Gina Farrell, Beth Leavel and Judy McLane (*Mamma Mia!*); Tony Shalhoub, Brooke Adams and Jan Maxwell (*Lend Me a Tenor*); Corbin Bleu (*In The Heights*), Chad Kimball (*Memphis*) and over 20 other Equity members served as "celebrity dog walkers," presenting lovable mixed breeds and pups of every variety, as well as a few friendly cats, from 28 New York City shelters and rescue organizations.

Since 1998, over 300 formerly homeless dogs and cats, puppies and kittens, have been adopted after making their Broadway debut on the outdoor stage at *Broadway Barks*. But

perhaps George Bernard Shaw said it best in *Misalliance*: "I like a bit of a mongrel myself, whether it's a man or a dog, they're the best for every day."

For more photos visit www.broadwaycares.org.



Chad Kimball helps out.

Rosetta Le Noire Award from Actors' Equity. Most recently, it was recognized when *Memphis*, originally developed at NSMT, received the 2009 Tony Award for Best New Musical.

Despite its impressive heritage, the beloved theatre went bankrupt in 2009 after several failed attempts to raise funds. Although this was seen by many as a symbol of the down economy and depressed arts funding, the true story was more complicated. Ticket sales had already declined when a disastrous fire shut the theatre down in 2005. NSMT was able to finish that season's scheduled productions by borrowing Boston's Shubert Theatre, but repairs and renovations left NSMT with a \$5 million debt. This only increased as ticket sales continued to decline. Long-time Artistic Director Jon Kimbell left in 2007 and many see the

San Francisco

Team BAAC Participates in First AIDS Walk

By Kelly Ground
BAAC Chair

Team BAAC (Bay Area Advisory Committee) proudly joined in the annual San Francisco AIDS Walk on July 18, 2010. Organized by BAAC members Stephen Pawley and Phoebe Moyer, Team BAAC included AEA members, Membership Candidates and special friends, and ranked 151st out of approxi-

ald Cross was an inspiration to the entire team for his dedication. Yes, he and all members of the team did finish the six mile trek.

Begun in 1987, AIDS Walk San Francisco is the largest AIDS fundraising event in Northern California and is a crucial source of funds for San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) and more than 50 other local AIDS service organizations. On



Team BAAC (standing, l to r) Molly Noble, Wayne Lee, Bob Lieberman, Donald Cross, Phoebe Moyer, Michael Gaffney, Danielle Perata (EMC), Cynthia Bassham, Stephen Pawley, Monica Cappuccini (EMC); (kneeling) Deborah Del Maestro, Mauricio Urbina (guest), Brian Yates Sharber, Les Reinhardt, Steve Virga (guest).

mately 1,000 groups in fundraising, bringing in, to date, \$2,270 in donations. Not bad for AEA's Bay Area membership's first ever effort.

Walkers met on a beautiful, warm, overcast San Francisco day and were given AEA signs donated by Stephen Pawley to carry along the walk identifying Actors' Equity to the thousands of spectators lining the six mile route. Many a shout of "Go Actors' Equity" was heard from the crowd and senior member Don-

Walk day more than 25,000 people came to Golden Gate Park, sending a vibrant and vital message of commitment and hope.

Many thanks to the Team BAAC walkers; those AEA members assisting us to obtain a meeting table; the AEA members, EMCs and friends for helping us get the word out; and finally to those folks who supported the walkers, the cause, and the memories of loved ones lost with gracious donations.

Beverly, MA

North Shore Music Theatre Gets a Well-Deserved Second Act

By Alexandra MacAaron

When the North Shore Music Theatre (NSMT) reopened in July, patrons all over the greater Boston area were thrilled to welcome it back. Opening night of *Gypsy*, the first of four musicals planned for the 2010 season, included speeches by local politicians, floodlights, and a live local radio promotion. Most of all, it included a communal sigh of relief.

NSMT has been an institution for nearly 65 years—bringing a robust combination of Broadway caliber performances, innovative new productions, children's theatre, and live music and comedy to the community. For

many, the 1,500 seat theatre-in-the-round provided a memorable first exposure to live performance, and the theatre has always enjoyed a loyal following of season ticket holders.

Since 1955 when it was an open-air stop on the straw hat circuit, NSMT has become one of the most attended theatres in New England, with approximately 300,000 patrons annually. With a national and regional reputation for artistic achievement, NSMT has received dozens of awards including Elliot Norton Awards, IRNE (Independent Reviewers of New England) Awards, the Moss Hart Award and, in 2003, the

2008 decision to replace a beloved *Christmas Carol* with a stage version of Disney's *High School Musical 2* as the final nail in NSMT's coffin. Deeply in debt, the theatre was forced to cancel its 2009-2010 season and was eventually acquired by Citizens Bank. The theatre, along with acres of woods and a restaurant, was closed and more than 4,000 subscribers, who had already paid for the season, were left without refunds.

Enter Bill Hanney, the successful owner of a chain of movie theatres and an entrepreneur who had already proven himself a regional theatre angel with the purchase and restoration of Matunuck RI's Theatre By the Sea. Earlier this year, he purchased NSMT for \$3.6 million, and is deeply invested in the theatre's revival, hand selecting this year's shows, hiring a much reduced but

passionate staff, and taking on everything from the lobby to the restrooms to the gourmet stocked concession stands. He clearly has the community's support – 70% of the season ticketholders have resubscribed.

Beating the economy and the odds, for now at least, "everything's coming up roses" at North Shore Music Theatre.

(Editor's note: NSMT operates under an Equity COST agreement and it is anticipated that for the 2010 season, there will be 394 workweeks for approximately 70-75 Equity members.)

Alexandra MacAaron is a longtime NSMT subscriber from Marblehead, MA. She has written for trade publications and local newspapers and is the Creative Director of B. Direct Marketing Communications, and author of *The New Marketing Conversation*.

South Florida

Stage Managers Meet and Network

By Irene Adjan
South Florida Equity Liaison

The South Florida Equity Liaison Committee was proud to sponsor a special event for regional Stage Managers on July 26, 2010. As Carl Waisanen of Actors' Playhouse said, "Actors network and talk all the time, at rehearsals and auditions, but Stage Managers are pretty solitary in their jobs." South Florida is a tri-county area, and the theatres that make up our region range from the Maltz Jupiter Theater down to Actors' Playhouse, GableStage, and New Theatre in Coral Gables, almost 100 miles away. We thought it would be a great idea to give our Stage Managers a chance to get to know one another in a social setting and share ideas and thoughts on their very important job that has unique challenges. And the event proved to be a great success.

Suzanne Clement Jones, one of the Stage Managers at Florida Stage hosted and moderated the meeting. Other attendees included James Danford, Caron Grant, Amy London, Marjorie O'Neill-Butler, George Kapetan, Jeanette Taylor, and Ed Limia. Food and drink were provided by Equity.

Attendee Caron Grant said, "It was most enjoyable and I think we all came away realizing that we face many similar challenges.

It was great being able to discuss those challenges with others in our profession – something we rarely get to do." James Danford added, "I thought it was really interesting and



Attending the Stage Managers' get-together in South Florida are (l to r); Ed Limia, Carl Waisanen, George Kapetan, Suzanne Clement Jones and James Danford.

informative on many levels. Those of us who work almost exclusively under one contract were able to share ideas with, and learn from, other Stage Managers working under entirely different contracts. We had people in attendance who had worked LORT, Production, SPT, LOA, URTA and Special Appearance contracts. Nine Stage Managers gathered for an evening of community, fellowship, support, and good food. Thank you AEA for sponsoring this event. It looks like it's going to lead to our own networking circle."

Host Suzanne Clement Jones

shared her thoughts on the event: "Every day we navigate that narrow tightrope between protecting and supporting the Actors, while at the same time, servicing the needs of the producers, directors and designers in the productions that employ us. Unlike our fellow union Actors (who see each

other at auditions, perform in shows, and meet in classes), we rarely get a chance to network together. The opportunity, then, to sit and talk about our mutual challenges, seek solutions, share stories, and provide information about the myriad of contracts that we all work under, made for more than a good time. What we found as a result of our get-together, was a contingent of like-minded AEA Stage Managers more than ready to support each other, as we all navigate our individual jobs in the South Florida theatre community. Suddenly, it doesn't feel quite so lonely."

New York

Annual Free Flu Shot Program to Begin in September

Swine Flu Vaccine Included in This Year's Vaccine

The 2010-2011 flu season is approaching and the time to get a shot to protect against flu is September-December. Each year for the past 13, the annual Broadway and Off-Broadway Free Flu Shot Program is brought to you by Physician Volunteers for the Arts, funded by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, and sponsored by Equity.

Volunteer physician services are provided by Physician Volunteers for the Arts (PVA). Dr. Barry Kohn, medical director of PVA, founded this annual flu shot program in 1997.

Every winter from late

flu. People who get the flu shot develop a natural immunity to these strains of influenza and are protected from getting flu.

The flu vaccine is essential for certain high risk groups, including everyone over age 50; pregnant women; people with diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, other respiratory illnesses; immune defects; and HIV. It is also *highly recommended* for people who live or work with anyone at high risk as well as for people who are exposed to large groups or work in close quarters such as backstage. Receiving the flu shot can protect you from flu and help you avoid time off due to illness this winter. The flu shot is safe for everyone except those who are allergic to eggs. This year, the recommendation is that



Dr. Barry Kohn gives a flu shot to Kristin Chenoweth backstage at Promises, Promises as Tony Goldwyn lends support.

everyone over six months of age receive the flu shot, if supplies permit.

PVA has ordered enough vaccine to immunize the entire theatre community. Dr. Kohn and other volunteer doctors will be visiting theatres and theatre companies and

December through March several strains of respiratory flu circulate around the world. These highly contagious viral respiratory illnesses can spread rapidly through casts, crews and office staffs causing many lost workdays. The symptoms of flu include high fever, chills, relentless cough, discolored sputum, hoarseness, and shortness of breath. Each year the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta determines the three strains of flu most likely to circulate and new flu vaccine is manufactured containing these three strains. This year the H1N1 "Swine Flu" strain is included as one of these three strains. The vaccine contains inactivated, chemically altered portions of these viruses that can stimulate immunity but cannot cause the

union offices throughout the fall.

In addition Dr. Kohn will be on the 14th Floor at the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street, from 10 am-3 pm on Thursday, October 14, 2010; Thursday, November 11 and Thursday, December 16 with flu shots for any and all members of the theatre community who come.

If you have any questions regarding the flu vaccine, you can discuss them with Dr. Kohn when he and other volunteer physicians visit your theatre, office or theatre company. Check with your stage manager or office manager for scheduled times or call Equity for open dates for flu vaccine.

If you have specific questions, you can reach Dr. Kohn at (323) 207-6822.

New York, Los Angeles

Fund Sets Seminars—East and West

The Actors Fund has scheduled the following seminars in **New York**:

Where are the Jobs and Who's Getting Them?

(Guests: A labor market analyst from the State Department of Labor Research and Statistics and a temp employment recruiter.) Wednesday, September 15, 2010, 5:30-7 pm in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor at 165 West 46th Street. Information: blevinson@actorsfund.org.

Housing Seminar: Monday September 20 from 5:30-7 pm at The Fund offices, 729 Seventh Avenue, 10th Floor. Information: (212) 221-7300, ext. 119 or kborg@actorsfund.org.

Creating a Production Company: Thursday, September 30, October 14 and 28 from 2-4 pm. Location TBA. Participants must first attend an Actors Work Program orientation. Information: (212) 354-5480, ext. 104.

The World of Arts in Education: Wednesday, October 20, 5:30-7 pm in the Equity Council Room, 14th Floor, 165 West 46th Street. Information:

blevinson@actorsfund.org.

In **Los Angeles**, the following groups are coming up:

Are you on the Fence with Life in the Industry? A free, confidential eight-week group for industry professionals between the ages of 27 and 60. Wednesdays, September 29-November 17, 2010, 1-3 pm at The Fund office, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400. An interview is required. Information: (323) 933-9244, ext. 17; akeating@actorsfund.org.

Managing Cash Flow: a four week workshop on Tuesdays October 5-26, 5-7 pm at The Fund office, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard; Information: (323) 933-9244; lzimmerman@actorsfund.org.

Encore: A Support Group for Industry Members 60 and Over: A ten-week group on Wednesdays, October 13-December 15, 2-3:30 pm at The Fund office, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard. Interview is required. Information: (323) 933-9244, ext. 30; fsalamone@actorsfund.org.

Living Well in the Industry: A Group for Women: An eight-week group, Mondays October

18-December 6 from 4-5:30 pm at The Fund office, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard. Interview is required. Information: (323) 933-9244, ext. 17; akeating@actorsfund.org.

For information on all groups, seminars and activities of The Actors Fund in New York and Los Angeles, visit the website www.actorsfund.org.

New York

Kostroff to Reprise Audition Psych 101

Equity member Michael Kostroff is returning to Equity with his popular series, Audition Psych 101, on Thursday, September 23, 2010 from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. in the Second Floor Audition Lounge at the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street. Sponsored by the Eastern Region Membership Education Committee and back by popular demand, this free seminar, which is open to AEA members and EMCs, demystifies the audition process and helps performers at every level deal with insecurities and nerves and teaches them to learn to love the audition process.

RSVP: outreach@actorsequity.org.

S. Florida

Florida Stage Moves

Florida Stage has moved from its home in Manalapan, Florida to the Rinker Playhouse at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach. The Grand Opening at its new home—a 255-seat theatre—will take place on October 29, 2010. The partnership between Florida Stage and the Kravis Center

will provide Florida Stage with a higher profile performance venue and better theatrical and audience facilities, while retaining the intimate setting that has been a Florida Stage hallmark.

"The debt that American theatre owes to Florida Stage, one of the few theatres dedicated to new work, is inestimable," said playwright Nilo Cruz, who received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2003 for his play, *Anna in the Tropics*.

Denver

Equity Members Honored With Henry Awards

By Shelly Gaza
Liaison Committee Chair

The fifth annual Henry Awards, celebrating excellence in Colorado theatre, were presented on July 19, 2010. Sponsored by the Colorado Theatre Guild, this year's ceremony was held at the Space Theatre, located within the Denver Center for the Performing Arts complex.

Equity was a proud sponsor of this year's Awards. Because of the contribution, the Denver area AEA community received wide recognition and exposure within the wider Colorado theatre community.



Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield (l) with Billie McBride (Lead Actress in a Play).

Notable among the evening's winners were AEA members Billie McBride (Lead Actress in a Play); EJ Zimmerman (Lead Actress in a Musical); Kevin Vortmann (Lead Actor in a Musical); Jean-Pierre Serret (Supporting Actor in a Play);

The Arvada Center, which received several honors for its production of *Miss Saigon*, and The Denver Center Theatre Company, with multiple nods for its production of *Mariela in the Desert*. Also honored this year was Bill McHale, who received the Henry Award for Lifetime Achievement. Mr. McHale was the founder of Denver's Country Dinner Playhouse, and is often credited with bringing Equity theatre to Colorado.

The Henry Awards are named for Henry Lowenstein, and honor his long time commitment to Denver area theatre. Mr. Lowenstein was a 30-year fixture at Denver's Bonfils Theatre, which, in 1985, was renamed the Lowenstein Theatre. Mr. Lowenstein is also the founder of the Denver Civic Theatre and the Colorado Theatre Guild.

New York

Performers for the Cure Helps Fight Breast Cancer

For the 16th consecutive year, a team of performers and their friends, including Equity, AFTRA and SAG members, will come together to run and walk in the Komen New York City Race for the Cure® on Sunday, September 12, 2010. Last year, there were approximately 25,000 female and male participants in the Race, including over 1,600 survivors and their families.

At last year's Race, the Performers team raised over \$3,300. Altogether, more than \$5.21 million was contributed to fund education, screening and treatment programs for underserved women in the tri-state metropolitan area and to support the national search for a cure.

The Komen Foundation, established in 1982, is an international organization with a

network of volunteers working through local affiliates and Komen Race for the Cure® events to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. The largest private source of breast cancer research funding in the United States, the Foundation has raised more than \$1.5 billion since its inception.

To register as a member of the Performers for the Cure team (registration fee is \$40), e-mail Team Captain Anne Fizzard at a.fizzard@verizon.net. For more information about the mission of Komen Greater New York City and other opportunities to support them (donations are accepted year-round), or to find out about upcoming events or sign up for their mailing list, visit the Komen website at www.komennyc.org or call (212) 560-9590.

New York

Fire Island Festival Fills Coffers for BC/EFA

Dancers Responding to AIDS—a fundraising program of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS—returned to the Fire Island Pines for a 16th year with its signature event, the Fire Island Dance Festival.

This year's festival featured members of 12 dance companies and outstanding artists, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, ABT principal Marcelo Gomes and a host of Equity dancers, as well as celebrity host and Equity member Bruce Vilanch, whose performances against the backdrop of the Great South Bay were highlights of the event.

Opening the show was a special piece created by choreographer and Equity

member Shea Sullivan. Sullivan and her company, including Equity members Reed Kelly (pictured) and Giovanni Perez and Tommy Scrivens set the tone of a bright and sweaty July weekend with a rousing athletic treatment of Cole Porter's "Too Darn Hot." Not to be outdone, Equity member and *So You Think You Can Dance* contestant/choreographer Travis Wall stopped the show with a performance of a remix of the Ben E. King classic, "Stand By Me."

The three sold-out performances were an artistic and financial success, drawing a record-breaking crowd of over 1,000, raising \$260,000 and



bringing the cumulative FIDF event total over the last 16 seasons to \$2 million. Hats (and shirts) off to the Equity dancers who have participated in what The New York Times has called "one of the 12 best parties of the year."

Orlando

Pam Galbraith Retires: A Fixture at the Equity Office Since its Opening in October 1990

Pam Galbraith, Assistant Business Representative in Equity's Orlando office, has retired after 20 years of meeting and serving Equity members at Disney World.

In October 1990 she answered an ad for an administrative assistant for a new union office in Orlando. Though she knew nothing about unions, Equity or actors, she was hired and began work in "the office"—the spare bedroom in the apartment of the Equity Business Rep. Since then both the office and the staff have grown, and Pam's responsibilities have grown as well.

Describing her job, Pam notes that she's very much a "people person" and loves meeting all the new performers at Disney World and introducing them to the benefits of Equity. "It's a high," she says.

However, since Florida is a right-to-work state, union membership is not mandatory and recruiting new members is not a slam-dunk. And it's getting even more difficult because of the economy. Performers receive the benefits of the collective bargaining agreement whether they join Equity or not. Some realize that working at Disney can be their whole professional career; others find acting opportunities limited in Florida, so why pay initiation and dues to the union? Nevertheless, Pam says, currently Equity membership averages around 60% of the total performers working at Disney under the bargaining

agreement—"a good percentage for a right-to-work state." The number was higher before 9/11, following which a number of Disney shows closed permanently.

Some performers come to Disney specifically to get their



Pam Galbraith.

Equity card and Pam is happy to help them fulfill their dreams. She has been the first "face of Equity" to all newly hired performers for the past 20 years, so her aim has always been to be pleasant, helpful and positive. An aim she more than achieves.

She also enjoys following the careers of the many members she has signed up and given their Equity cards. Montego Glover, a 2010 Tony-nominee for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical for her role in *Memphis* received her Equity card from Pam in 1999.

Pam says retirement is "bittersweet." She still loves her job after all these years, but it's time now to move on. The entire Equity family wishes her well.

New York

ActorsFCU Edges AEA for Softball Championship



The ACFU championship team: (back row, l to r) Pete Shayne, Steve Sobotta, Scott Sowers, Justin Kirsch, Danny Sherman, Angelo Gonzales, Alex Emanuel, Eric Diaz, Terrence Jenkins, Albert Pero, Dino Oliveres; (front) Rich Ford, Katchi Pritchett, Audrey Hasson, Joe Shayne, Erin Roberts. Not shown: Greg Coutinho, Jamila Webb, Andy McLeavy. (Photo: Kaara Radon)

Actors Federal Credit Union took home the Koehler Division Championship with a 7-6 victory over Actors' Equity in the Broadway Show League title game on August 19, 2010.

Following a 2009 season which saw only one victory,

ActorsFCU posted a 6-3 record in 2010 regular season play and went undefeated in the playoffs to claim the championship.

"We joined the League in 2002 as a way for the Credit Union to actively participate in

the community we serve," said Steven Sobotta, Director of Marketing. "Our goal in those first years was to have a team that finished the season. Nine seasons later we couldn't be prouder to be the sponsor of the winning team."

Sullivan, IL**Cast of "Annie" Raises Money for Orphans of the Storm**

On July 19, 2010, just 48 hours prior to the opening of *Annie* at The Little Theatre On The Square in Sullivan, Illinois, a storm with winds clocking over 100 mph attempted to topple the small town. While no damage was done to the theatre, company housing and

the rehearsal studio sustained over \$200,000 in major structural and water damage. Cast members had to be relocated to hotels 30 minutes out of town, along with the theatre's costume shop being moved to nearby Millikin University. With the help and

support of the Central Illinois community, the show opened as scheduled on July 21. To assist with the repairs of the company housing and studio, and the theatre's neighbors in need, the cast of *Annie* collected for "The Orphans of the Storm," raising \$4,200.

In Praise of a Producer

By Jack Hallett

In 1962, Max Traktman owned a grocery store on the corner of Grove and Bleecker Streets in New York's Greenwich Village when he struck up a friendship with a customer, writer Peggy Simon. Peggy was working on a musical for children called *Absolutely Time*. Max offered to produce it and that was the beginning of Maximillion Productions. Max soon sold his

grocery store and went on to produce original children's theatre plays and musicals for the next 38 years, hiring hundreds of Equity Actors and Stage Managers. Peggy wrote most of the scripts and lyrics and directed each production. She and Max later married. Maximillion Productions operated out of a storefront on 29th Street off Park Avenue in New York for 25 years and became the most respected children's theatre company in the business. Maximillion Productions booked shows all over the eastern U.S. and as far west as Michigan and would have an average of five or six shows touring each season. Max Traktman died on March 31, 2010 of a stroke at the age of 86. AEA member Joan Jaffe performed in 13 Maximillion productions and remembers, "Maximillion Productions was important and Max very instrumental as the first President of the Producers' Association of Children's Theatre in signing the first Children's Theatre Contract with Equity in 1969."

Max Traktman had a keen eye for talent and loved actors. AEA member Richard Bell, a Maximillion veteran of 11 productions, fondly recalls Max and Peggy's Thanksgiving open house buffets. "Max supervised every detail and would assure one and all that 'everything's fresh.'" Many an actor, including myself, got their Equity cards through Maximillion Productions. Once hired, an actor was treated like a member of the family and would most likely be hired for other shows. Max had great taste and an uncanny

knowledge of how to improve a performance. He did so in a gentlemanly manner and the actor and the shows were the better for it.

Max and Peggy celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Maximillion Productions with their normal generosity, style and grace by hosting a reunion for their former employees at Sardi's. They retired in 2000 and Peggy passed away soon after. Max honored her memory by never losing the love of people and passion for life they shared. Max Traktman served his country in World War II with distinction and was awarded a Purple Heart. This "Brooklyn kid" loved everything about New York City, especially the Mets! Max could be seen in recent years walking to his corner newsstand, Artie's Deli, or Zabars in his upper west side neighborhood. He stayed current, cheerful and independent up until his final weeks. He is survived by his children, son Terry, and daughters, Susan, Ronnie and Abigail.

Actors' Equity has lost an honorable and fair producer and the membership a colorful and dear friend.

Jack Hallett received his Equity card through Maximillion Productions in 1970 in a production of *Are There Alligators in the Sewers of the City of New York?*

Theatre Moves Up

The Mosaic Theatre in Plantation, Florida has moved up from a Special Appearance Contract to an SPT, Category 5.

A LOOK BACK**75 Years Ago
September 1935**

On September 4, *Moon Over Mulberry Street* opens at New York's Lyceum Theatre starring **Cornel Wilde**. It runs for 303 performances.

The Night of January 16 opens on September 16 at the Ambassador Theatre. Ayn Rand's play depicts the trial of a woman charged with murdering a financial wizard. Members of the audience are the jury. There are alternative endings to suit either a guilty or an innocent verdict. **Walter Pidgeon** and **Doris Nolan** are in the cast.

At Home Abroad opens at the Winter Garden Theatre on September 19. The Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz revue features **Beatrice Lillie**, **Eddie Foy, Jr.**, **Ethel Waters** and **Eleanor Powell**. Vincente Minnelli stages and designs.

Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset*, based on the Sacco and Vanzetti case, opens at the Martin Beck Theatre on

September 25. **Burgess Meredith** and **Margo** star. The show runs for 195 performances and wins the Drama Critics' Circle Award.

**50 Years Ago
September 1960**

Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* opens at the Cort Theatre on September 20 and plays for 16 weeks.

Irma La Douce opens at the Plymouth Theatre on September 29 and runs for 524 performances. The cast includes **Elizabeth Seal**, **Keith Michell**, **Clive Revill**, **George S. Irving**, **Fred Gwynne** and **Elliot Gould**.

**25 Years Ago
September 1985**

Song and Dance, music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Don Black and Richard Maltby Jr., opens at the Royale Theatre on September 18 for 474 performances. **Bernadette Peters** stars.



ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

**How I
Got My
Equity Card**

Chris Chalk



By Chris Chalk

I came to New York out of school weeks before September 11, 2001. My Ma was asking me to come home in her silences on the phone. I was depressed and jobless. I didn't leave my house for six months, "job searching on the internet." I worked at a hotel. Then booked a gig with the Keen Company doing the character "Blossom" whose eight lines were "Blossom," because it's the only English word the character knew. Loved it, by the way. I was the only non-Equity person in the cast. They made a little money, but I made like \$100 for eight weeks of work. In that moment, I was excited for the work, but felt that non-Equity was for the birds. I still didn't know how to get my card though. Time passed and I was invited to the LAB Summer Intensive and we read *John Patrick Shanley's Defiance*, his brilliant play following Doubt. I came home from the intensive hype and saw on *Playbill* that there was a reading of the play at Vassar as well and was like... "Oh, well, I must've been super

impressive since I'm not in that reading." Life continued into August when Manhattan Theatre Club asked me to do the *Defiance* reading for producer folks at the theatre, which paid me \$50 for three hours (half of what I had made in my eight weeks as the non-Equity "Blossom") and a few weeks later the gig was mine. *Defiance* by John Patrick Shanley, and directed by Doug Hughes, hooked me up with my Equity card. I have been a fan ever since.

Chris Chalk most recently starred as "Cory" in the Broadway revival of August Wilson's *Fences*, receiving the 2010 Theatre World Award and a Drama Desk nomination as Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play. His theatre credits also include the MTC production of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Ruined*; *Unconditional* at the LAByrnth Theater Company; and *The Overwhelming* at the Roundabout, among others. He has film and TV credits, as well. He is a member of the Public Theatre's LAByrnth Theater Company.

**Calling All
Gypsy Robe
Recipients****Gypsy Robe
is 60**

On Monday, October 25, 2010, the Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs (ACCA) will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Gypsy Robe. The ACCA would like to hear from any and all Gypsy Robe recipients, especially anyone who received a Robe between 1950 and 1982. We would like to update our records to make sure that all who received the Gypsy Robe are invited to this special celebration.

Contact Business Representative David Westphal at (212) 869-8530 ext. 412 or (dwestphal@actorsequity.org) and let Equity know when you received your Gypsy Robe.