

Illinois Theatre Association

In This Edition...

[ITA Announcements](#)

[ITA Events and Other
Events of Interest](#)

[Job Postings & Audition
Announcements](#)

[Featured Performance](#)

[About the ITA](#)

[ITA Links](#)

[ITA's 41st Annual
Convention](#)

[Oh...This is Truly My Loss](#)

[How Does One Get Bitten
by the Theatre Bug?](#)

[Calling all Illinois High
School Student Writers](#)

[Post Mortem:
Deconstructing the
Production](#)

[NCAS and the Search for
Enduring Truths about
Drama](#)

[The Audience That Listens](#)

[ITA Member Spotlight](#)

ITA ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Community Theatre
Fire on the
Prairie Festival Update:
CALL FOR
PRESENTERS!**

The "FOP" Planning Committee is now putting out a call for Workshop Presenters! If you would like to share your expertise at the "hottest" Festival in the state, please [click here](#) to fill out a Request to Present form.

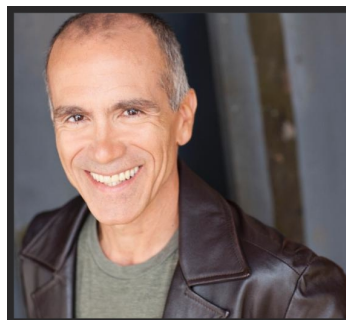
eFOLLOWSPOT June, 2014

41st Annual Convention

**Illinois
Theatre
Association** Step Up  & Stand Out  
A Symposium Exploring Excellence in the ITA!

Saturday, September 13 (10a-3p)

GOODMAN^{THEATRE}



Featuring Henry Godinez

- Engage your professional ideals at the keynote address by award-winning Goodman Theatre Director Henry Godinez
- Connect with valued colleagues while dining at at Petterino's Restaurant
- Celebrate the 2014 Winners of the ITA's Awards of Excellence
- Enjoy additional break-out workshops in one of the most dynamic theater districts in the country
- Expand your experience with an optional add-on tour of the Goodman Theatre

Registration

\$55 student/\$65 member/\$75 non-member
Save \$10 with Early Bird Registration!
Registration available this week. Stay tuned...

[Back to Top](#)

Petterino's

Oh....This Truly Is My Loss

By Dr. Joan E. Kole, ITA Community Theatre Division Representative

In the meantime, Actors, Directors, Technicians, Administrators, Playwrights and more... individual registration will be available shortly. Get ready for the heat...a full weekend of high quality presentations, top notch workshops, special events, and more!
Hoogland Center for the Arts, Springfield (10/24/14-10/26/14).

Interested in Hosting ITA's Annual Convention in 2015? Yes, we're already making plans for Convention 2015... The ITA is looking for a generous host in the central Illinois region. [Click here](#) for more information and to fill out a Request to Host form. We thank you in advance for your consideration!

Board of Directors:
The ITA is seeking to fill the following Board position for the 2014-2016 term: Professional Theatre Division Representative. If you are interested, please fill out the [Board Interest Form](#).

The 2017 Illinois High School Theatre Festival is accepting submissions for Executive Director! The deadline for all applications has been extend! [Click here](#) for details.

ITA EVENTS

September 13, 2014
Step Up and Stand Out: A Symposium Exploring Excellence with the ITA
Goodman Theatre,
Chicago
(10a-3p)
Registration available this week!

This is the last Community Theatre column I'll be writing for e-*Followspot* as the Community Theatre (CT) Representative on the ITA Board of Directors, and I truly regret it.

I had one specific goal at the time I was elected: resurrect an Illinois Community Theatre Festival. *Fire on the Prairie* - with six community theatres' productions featured on the main stage - is happening October 24-26, 2014. Not since 2004, when the Main Street Players of Belvidere was the host theatre, have Illinois community theatres come together like this.



As to the future, I wish the returning and soon-to-be elected CT reps the best as they continue to share the direction of this division. Here is what I hope to see happen within the ITA's Community Theatre Division:

- Encourage more community theatres to submit nominations for the ITA's Annual Award of Excellence. This year the Board approved self-nominations, and that makes perfect sense to me since no one better than your own CT knows about your successes and achievements.
- Build on the momentum of our current Community Theatre Festival (*2014 Fire on the Prairie*). Consider having a post-festival event at which participants: discuss the unique benefits of being a part of Festival, share the requirements for submitting presentations (it can be easy!), learn of the significant value of the adjudication process, discover creative fundraising ideas to underwrite the costs of participating, and hear inspiring stories about what actors, technicians, and staff sacrificed in order to be a part of their theatre's entry.
- Keep hosting events and providing resources geared specifically to various community theatre artists and organizations. For example, the state organization in Michigan does an annual weekend long "seminar" during which specific theatre arts are the focus.
- Create more awareness of the importance and value of serving on the ITA Board of Directors to represent the Community Theatre Division. Greater recognition of the role of CT throughout the state requires greater statewide participation and representation.
- Take advantage of the ITA's regional structure to establish community theatre committees throughout the state that explore and discuss issues facing CT in their specific regions. These committees would submit ideas to the CT Board reps for action items. The current CT Group on Facebook is the perfect place for such discussions.
- Keep providing direction to and support of the ITA. It is a phenomenal theatre organization.

October 24-26, 2014

Illinois Community Theatre
Festival

Fire on the Prairie
Stay Tuned for Info

January 8-10, 2015

Illinois High School
Theatre Festival
Ignite the Passion Within
U of I Urbana Champaign

[Submit an Event!](#)

JOB POSTINGS

**Oak Park and River
Forest High School** seeks
a part-time theatre
technician.

**Naperville North High
School** seeks a full-time
Auditorium
Manager/Technical
Director.

Franklin Fine Arts Center
seeks a full-time Dance
Teacher.

Libertyville High School
seeks a Director for its
freshman/sophomore play
in March, 2015.

[Click here](#) for details on
all of the above.

**AUDITION
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Lincoln College has
limited number of Theatre
Scholarships available for
2014-2015 academic year

[Click here](#) for audition
details.

**FEATURED
PERFORMANCES**

**Community Children's
Theatre of the Peoria
Park District**
*RAGTIME - SCHOOL
EDITION*
July 10 - 13
(Thurs - Sun)
Peoria, IL



challenge is on!

[Back to Top](#)

My term is up. My word limit is maxed out. But before I finish, there is one more very important statement I feel compelled to make, and it is this: I did not appreciate what the ITA had to offer, and the breadth of what this organization does throughout Illinois for each and every kind of theatre, until I was elected and saw firsthand the unique opportunities that the ITA provides. I have truly enjoyed my service on the Board. I encourage everyone to get involved. The

How Does One Get Bitten by the Theatre Bug?

By Cynthia Bringer, ITA Theatre for Young Audiences Division Representative

Do you remember when it first "bit" you? That theater bug. That instant the dramatic infection took hold of your body and you knew you were a goner? I'm writing this article on my phone while I'm in New York City for Easter weekend (Do you wonder why I'm writing this?). I'm here for family, but I also met up with a former student of mine who was my Student Director when she was in eighth grade. She now has her degree in



Technical Theatre (sorry, Dad) and has had work in Texas and now in NYC. We chatted over coffee, and she started telling me about why she got here. Yes, being the Student Director was fun, but that wasn't it. She remembered coming back to the middle school once she was in high

school to help teach the students how to run the spot lights ("No spillage on the sides of the stage!"). She took notes and then stood up there and delivered them. And all those kids believed in her, believed that she knew what she was talking about. That's when she thought that theatre was something she might want to do with her life.

Hey, I'm just a lonely drama teacher at a middle school. The more hands the merrier. I couldn't be everywhere at once and this was my idea of free labor. Who knew it would make difference? That's just it. You never know. The right choice of words, that look, a pat on the back. Making a connection with the next generation and passing the "bug." It's how theatre survives.

[Back to Top](#)

Calling All Illinois High School Student Writers

By Marty Lynch, ITA University/College Theatre Division Representative

High school students of Illinois, this is your last call for scripts! Whether just graduating, or are the Class of 2017, you are eligible to have your script performed at our Festival. Scripts are due by July 1, so send in your scripts as soon as you can!

What: [Illinois High School Ten Minute Play Festival](#)

**Summer Repertory
Theatre at Blackburn
College**
FINNEGAN'S FAREWELL
July 18 - Aug 3
(Fri - Sun)
Carlinville, IL

[Click here](#) for all show details.

Want your performance to be featured here?
Be sure to list your performance on the [ITA Performance Calendar!](#)

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[Board of Directors](#)

[Job Postings](#)

[Audition Announcements](#)

[ITA Divisions](#)

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[College/University Group Discussion](#)

[Community Theatre Group Discussion](#)

[Creative Drama Group Discussion](#)

[Professional Theatre Group Discussion](#)

Where: [Eureka College](#) at Eureka, IL

When: November 21 & 22, 2014 at 7:30 PM (Tickets are free.)

Who: Open to all Illinois high school students (we want at least one script chosen from the classes of 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017)

Why: You have a voice and we want to hear it!

How:

1. Write a ten minute play. Then go to Step 2. Confused? Details can be found at the [Illinois High School Ten Minute Play Festival page](#).
2. Send the script to Marty Lynch by July 1.
3. Repeat (There is no limit to scripts you may send.)

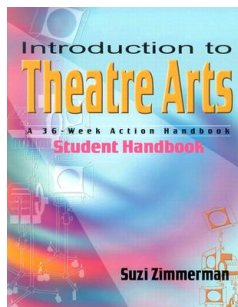
Prize: Six scripts will be chosen and produced. Playwrights are invited to attend and we will film it and send you a copy as well.

Cost: \$0. Submitting a script in this Festival is and always will be free.

[Back to Top](#)

Post Mortem: Deconstructing the Production

By Allan Kimball, ITA University/College Theatre Division Representative



Every semester, I fight the same battle: How do I get my Intro to Theatre students to write an effective and insightful dramatic review? As part of their course expectations, they are to see and review two live productions. Once they finally stop groaning about that, I face the next challenge: trying to explain to a group of students (most of whom are in my class because they didn't want to take Music or Art Appreciation) how to get the most out of their theatrical experiences.

We first spend time talking about the differences between descriptive and prescriptive analysis. I explain that a theatrical review is more than the bad book reports we all remember from our high school days. We do want them to comment on the "what" of the production (Here is what I saw, and this is what it was about. This is what I thought - I liked/hated it.). That much they understand, but it is the prescriptive part that has them baffled. It finally starts to sink in when I tell them they are in the role of Doctor Drama. It is their job to give the production a complete "physical," see what they think about the condition of their "patient" - both good and bad - and then prescribe what they feel would "heal" the problems they isolated. In other words, "Here is what didn't work for me, but if they would have (fill in the blank), it would have worked much better."



Secondary School Theatre
Group Discussion

Theatre for Young
Audiences Group
Discussion

FOLLOW OUR TWEETS:

Illinois Theatre Association

IHSTF



The ITA is a network of dedicated theatre artists and educators advocating quality theatre throughout Illinois. Please join us!

123 Mill Pond Dr.
Glendale Heights, IL
60139
312-265-5922 (office)
312-265-6101 (fax)
www.illinoistheatre.org

**Please Visit ITA's
Corporate Sponsors:**

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Chicago Spotlight

Grand Stage

Intelligent Lighting

Light Chicago

USITT Midwest



Before they sit down to write their review, we spend the class period after our productions going through a Post Mortem. We use this day to meet with cast and crew members (if they are not already in the class) and deconstruct the production. This gives the class the opportunity to express their opinions, ask questions for clarification, and/or get additional information to help them formulate their written responses. We start with some very basic questions:

1. What were some of the impressions you wanted to share?
2. Any specific questions you might have had?
3. Cast/crew members - your thoughts? Talk about the rehearsal process, character study, specific challenges faced by cast or crew, etc.

Once we have exhausted these, we then move on to very specific areas. We talk about the various roles in the over-all production and what they contribute to the finished product. We walk through these questions/concepts in class allowing cast, crew and production staff to comment and add information. I encourage my students to consider the following:

Acting

1. Were the actors believable, given the requirements of the play?
2. Identify the performers you considered most successful. Citing specifics from the production, note what they did well: particular gestures, lines, or moments.
3. If there were performers you did not like, identify them and explain why you did not like them. Think prescriptive- what would have made it better for you?
4. Acting is more than a collection of individual performances. The entire company needs to work as a unit (ensemble); each actor must not only perform his or her own role but also support the other performers. Discuss how the performers related or failed to relate to one another.

Directing

1. The director unifies a production. Did there seem to be a unifying idea behind the production? If so, how would you express it? (You should be aware that this can be one of the most difficult aspects of a production to evaluate, even for very experienced theatergoers.)
2. Did all the elements of the production seem to be unified and to fit together seamlessly?
3. How did the director move the actors around on stage? Were there any moments when you felt that such movement was particularly effective or ineffective? Were entrances and exits smooth?
4. Did the pace or rhythm of the production seem right? Did it drag or move swiftly? Did one scene follow another quickly, or were there long pauses or interruptions?





The Illinois Theatre Association is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Scenery

1. What information was conveyed by the scenery about time, place, characters, and situation?
2. What was the overall atmosphere of the setting?
3. Did any colors dominate? How did colors affect your impression of the set?
4. If the setting was realistic, how effectively did it reproduce what the place would actually look like?

Costumes

1. What information was conveyed by the costumes about time, place, characters, and situation?
2. What was the period of the costumes?
3. How was color used to give you clues to the personalities of the characters?
4. Did each character's costume or costumes seem appropriate for his or her personality, social status, occupation, etc.? Why or why not?
5. Did the costumes help you understand differing social groups and interpersonal relationships? If so, how?



Lighting

1. Were the actors properly lit? Could their faces be seen?
2. What information was conveyed by the lighting about time, place, characters, and situation?
3. Describe the mood of the lighting. How was color and intensity used to affect mood?
4. Was the lighting realistic or nonrealistic?

I am pleased with the reviews that I have been getting over the past few semesters. I use this format (with any necessary variations) for both our traditional dramas and our musical productions. The proudest moments of my classes are when a student tells me, "I really didn't want to see a play, but I actually enjoyed it. When is the next one?" I hope you have the same results.

[Back to Top](#)

The National Core Arts Standards and the Search for Enduring Truths About Drama

By Elisabeth Westphal, ITA Member

I had the honor of working on the National Core Arts Standards which were rolled out June 4th. (Details [here](#).) It was an eye opening experience. A group of diverse people, with a wealth of different kinds of experiences, sat down to formulate what they considered to be the key ideas of our art form. You can well imagine that this was not an easy task. The first year was dedicated to coming up with anchor standards that are shared with all the art forms and devising essential questions and enduring understandings for each anchor standard. Process components were also defined (creating, performing/sharing, responding and connecting).



I joined the process relatively late and worked on the final year of writing. I was involved in the creation of the 6th-8th grade band standards, the glossary, model cornerstone

assessments for 5th and 8th grade, and the final review before the final standards were completed. I learned from this experience, which was truly collaborative, that no one person truly writes the standards. I know there will be people who will look at the standards and throw up their hands saying, "Who wrote this?" and "I could do better." Those people should know that it was more than a two-year journey, with many people who were engaged in a real struggle to be inclusive and embrace all of what makes drama unique. I have never seen such a hard working group.

One of the most fascinating things that happened to me personally was when Jim Palmarini, the head of the theatre group, asked all of the final reviewers to create a list of what we considered to be the big ideas in theatre. I loved the experience of sitting down and attempting to put on paper what was most important to me about theatre. It is a great exercise. I feel every drama teacher should do this. For what it's worth, here is my list in no particular order. I am sure your list will look different, but it will confirm why you love theatre.

1. Theatre explores the human experience through ideas and themes.
2. Theatre has a history and traditions.
3. Theatre is practiced around the world in a variety of forms.
4. Theatre (western) has elements derived from Aristotle: character, plot, language, theme, spectacle, music (the aural experience).
5. Theatre requires participants to have developed skills.
6. Theatre has conventions that make it unique (even from its sister art, film), such as asides, soliloquy, "the fourth wall", etc.
7. Theatre uses symbols and metaphors to convey meaning in all aspects of production.
8. Theatre has great literature with many genres and styles.
9. Theatre pieces are not just created, but evolve over time.
10. Theatre can be used for change in the school, community, and society.
11. Theatre is collaborative. It has many types of artists who are co-creators (designer, playwright, actor, director, dramaturg, technicians, etc.).
12. Theatre can be a career.
13. Theatre is story, character, and/or image driven.
14. There are many methods developed by masters in movement, acting, voice, and directing that can be



- studied and synthesized to develop a personal performance style.
15. Theatre uses diverse kinds of technology.
 16. Theatre is one of the temporal arts. It exists in time and manipulates time.
 17. Theatre can be done in many kinds of spaces.
 18. Theatre is interactive and must be perceived by an audience for the ideas to be communicated.
 19. Theatre has its own unique language and vocabulary.
 20. Theatre can be transformative for many students and artists.

[Back to Top](#)

The Audience That Listens

By Stacy Deemar, ITA Creative Drama Division Representative

On the first day of a drama rotation, I give each student a Sixth Grade Grading and Rules contract. Aside from explaining the rule of my classroom, we thoroughly discuss how each student is graded. Since there is nothing tangible to take home in sixth grade drama, it is imperative for both the students and their parents to understand the expectations. I define for the class the difference in A, B, C, D and F work in their scene presentations, discussion, and audience participation and give examples from each grade level. My contract is clear, concise and most importantly, establishes very specific parameters. Once the students understand and accept how the class will operate, they are eager to participate.



I ask for a volunteer to explain proper audience behavior. A majority of hands are raised and I call on multiple students to add to the discussion. The class agrees that the audience should watch the scene, remain silent, not talk or shout at the scene, sit quietly, and applaud at the end of the scene. The class also shares the opinion that even if they do not like the scene, they should applaud for the actors because applauding is a sign of respect. Making disapproving sounds, flailing one's arms in the air and/or throwing objects at the actors are all inappropriate actions for a respectful and responsible audience member.

Our dialogue continues with the difference between hearing and listening. This is a challenging question for many of the students because they use the two words interchangeably. Most of the students are unable to define the differences between the two words. After we brainstorm together, I explain that "hearing" is to be aware of sound and "listening" is to hear something with thoughtful attention. I always get a few puzzled looks after this explanation, so I use examples to make the point more concrete. I invite the class to sit quietly with their eyes closed for one minute and listen to the sounds they hear. The class does an excellent job identifying the sounds they hear including: breathing, a train in the distance, people walking, voices in the hallway, heating system, a sneeze, etc. The students agree that they hear these sounds all of the time, but they are not fully paying attention to the sounds. Instead, the sounds are peripheral.



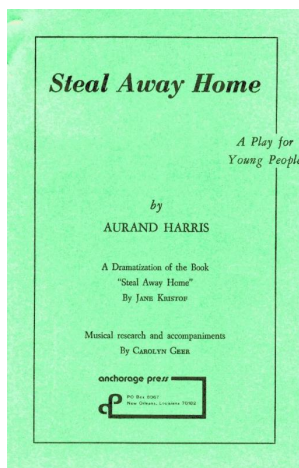
Based on their understanding of the word "hearing," students determine that during scene presentations they want the audience to listen. How can we determine if an audience member is not just hearing the scene but actually listening to it? This question baffles students, too. Listening audience members display whole body listening by sitting

erect: the feet and hands are down and still, the eyes are focused on the scene, the mouth is relaxed, and the shoulders are facing forward.

In addition to using whole body listening, analyzing a scene using a theatre/drama vocabulary word and citing a specific example from the scene is possible only when the audience member is actively listening to the scene. Students are encouraged to volunteer themselves to make a comment as opposed to being randomly selected. Empowering students lends itself to more authentic and informative responses.

On rare occasions, a student will make an ambiguous comment, which suggests he/she was not actually listening to the scene. In these types of situations, I usually prompt the student by asking questions. For example, when a student states that the improvised dialogue was good, I remind him that he needs to identify where in the scene the improvised dialogue was good. I ask the student to also explain why the improvised dialogue was good and to give an example of a specific line of dialogue that he can recall from the scene. If the student is unable to answer my questions, then I know he/she was not listening to the scene. In order to earn class discussion points, the student is notified that he/she will need to volunteer again.

Almost all of my students are listening during scene presentations, but there are moments when a student may not be fully executing whole body listening. When this occurs, I redirect the student by using examples, providing options and/or posing questions. If these tactics are unsuccessful, I revert to my elementary classroom management technique of counting to three. Although this is not my preferred method to utilize in middle school, it continues to be very effective.



There is nothing more rewarding as a teacher than witnessing students apply the skills they learned in my class to other presentations and performances. I am very pleased that most of the sixth graders who have completed sixth grade drama with me were actively utilizing whole body listening during the production of *Steal Away Home*. This was evident by the way they were sitting in their chairs with their feet on the floor and their arms down and still, their shoulders were facing forward, their eyes were looking at the stage, they remained quiet during the performance, and they applauded at the end. Finally, most of the students who

they applauded at the end. Finally, most of the students who

volunteered to make a comment about the play after the performance were able to use a theatre/drama vocabulary word and cite a specific example from the scene. Voila! Whole body listening in its finest form.

I am proud of our work!

[Back to Top](#)

ITA Member Spotlight: Susan Rothchild

Submitted by Judy Klingner, ITA Second Vice President

What is your name?

Susan Rothchild

Please describe your first experience with the theatre.

I was lucky to attend school in Evanston, the "hub" of creative dramatics. District 65 has always recognized that the arts are a vital part of every child's education. Thus, my first experience was when I was in kindergarten. I was bitten by the bug and have never recovered.



Tell us about your career path.

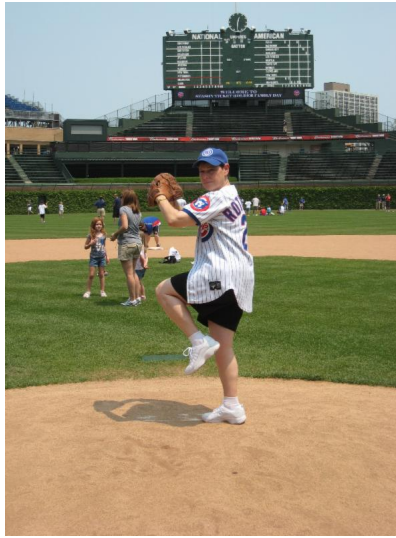
Because of my exposure to theatre early in my life, I knew when I was 5-years-old that I wanted to pursue theatre as a career. Oddly enough, in my senior year of high school, I was a Physical Education Senior Leader (it was considered "Honors PE"). That was when I discovered the joy of teaching. I realized at that time that I wanted to combine both of my loves, theatre and teaching, into one career. As I began looking at colleges, I found few had a theatre education program. Most programs required that I major in theatre and then transfer to education after two years to get my certification. Luckily, [Northwestern University](#) had the Speech Education program. Since I had always wanted to attend NU, it was a no-brainer. I was VERY lucky to find a teaching job at [Bloom High School](#) in Chicago Heights shortly after graduation. It was the late 1970s - a time where finding any teaching position was extremely difficult, let alone one in theatre/English. Four years later, I moved to [Lake Park High School](#) in Roselle, where I remained for the remainder of my 33-year career.

Of what theatrical accomplishment are you most proud?

Honestly, my proudest moments have nothing to do with anything I've personally done. We've all had those students who are very involved in our programs, but they aren't always the most talented actors. However, those students stuck with the program and work hard in every assignment and/or role they were given. Sometimes it took years, but there was that wonderful moment when those students would perform a scene in class or on stage and suddenly the light bulb turned on; suddenly, those students "got it" - they finally became "actors." Something finally clicked; they knew it and their peers knew it as well. The pride those students felt were the best moments of my teaching/theatrical career.

Please share details about a theatre project/production with which you are currently involved.

In my retirement, you will most likely find me at Wrigley Field, where I've had seats for 29 years (yes, I am a glutton for punishment). Cheering on the Cubs is my current theatrical project - believe me when I say it requires my utmost acting skills these past few seasons to stay positive and root for my Men in Blue.



What advice would you give to young theatre artists?

Learn as much about everything as possible. You never know when that knowledge might come in handy. Also, it's important to follow your passion. A career is nice to have, but it's your passion that makes life worth living.

What inspired you to become a Lifetime Member of ITA?

The math! I had been a member since I first started teaching in 1977. I knew I

would continue to be active in ITA for decades, so it was more cost-effective to pay the Lifetime Membership fee than to pay the yearly one.

Tell us about the many ways that you have been involved with the ITA.

Illinois High School Theatre Festival:

Executive Director 1980

Executive Director Emeritus 1981

Associate Director: Workshops

Associate Director: Auditions

Associate Director: Exhibits and Promotions

Play Selection Area Representative (before there were computers we did it the old fashioned way, via phone calls)

Play Selection Respondent (too many years to count)

Production Assistant for 5 All-State Productions [I believe I hold the record ☺]: Various positions, such as costumes, props, make-up, construction

Workshop Presenter numerous times

Numerous Studio and Play productions

Illinois Theatre Association:

Secondary School Representative

Secretary

Convention Chairman

Convention Workshop Presenter

Volunteer for Professional Auditions preparations

Membership Coordinator

Do you have a memory of a specific ITA event that you would care to share?

It would have to be "Camp Ramada." In 1981, the very first polar vortex occurred during the Festival. It was -80° wind chill factor. The Executive Board was stranded at the Ramada Inn in Bloomington-Normal after the festival had ended. Needless to say, with so many creative theatre people present, we managed to entertain ourselves quite well. We created a Festival board game, had a toga party, and played many

theatre games. A good time was had by all despite the weather!

Why did you decide to accept the new ITA Membership Coordinator position?

It basically fell into my lap. Char, who was the previous Membership Coordinator, moved to Texas. Since the ITA executive office is located in my hometown, Aimee-Lynn (ITA Executive Director) asked if I'd be interested in the position. I said yes!



What are your plans for the future?

I plan to enjoy my retirement. I'll continue to be a season ticket holder for the Cubs, see as much theatre as possible, and continue as the ITA Membership Coordinator. Also, my Sheltie, Eli, and I just earned our certification as a Pet Therapy Team, so we plan to visit hospitals and rehab facilities. Since Eli loves children, I hope to sign us up for as many "read to me" children's programs that we can find at the local libraries/schools.

What advice would you give to young theatre artists?

Learn as much about everything as possible. You never know when that knowledge might come in handy. Also, it's important to follow your passion. A career is nice to have, but it's your passion that makes life worth living.

[Back to Top](#)