

Illinois Theatre Association

Table of Contents

[2013 Award Recipients](#)

[40th Annual Convention - We Want to Thank YOU](#)

[Keeping the "Community" in Mission of Community Colleges](#)

[Do Community Theatres "Lead," "Follow," or "Get Out of the Way?"](#)

[Guerra: A Clown Play](#)

[Colin's Corner - Review of "Next to Normal"](#)

[So... I Made Myself a Producer](#)

[TED Talks](#)

[ITA Member Spotlight: John Nesbitt, A&B Photo & Print](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Please Visit ITA's Corporate Sponsors:

[A&B Photo and Print](#)

[Broadway Costumes](#)

[Chicago Spotlight](#)

[DesignLab Chicago](#)

[Grand Stage](#)

[Intelligent Lighting Creations](#)

[USITT Midwest](#)

ITA Links:

[ITA Home Page](#)

[About the ITA](#)

eFollowspot August, 2013

ITA Announces 2013 Award Recipients

CONGRATULATIONS to the Illinois Theatre Association's 2013 Award of Excellence and Honor Recipients!

ANNE THURMAN MENTORSHIP AWARD

SSSShhhh....It's a Surprise!
(announced at the 9/21 Convention)

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Excellence in College/University Theatre
Rock Valley College Starlight and Studio Theatre

Excellence in Community Theatre
Floyd A. May

Excellence in Creative Drama
Nancy Alban

Excellence in Professional Theatre
UIC School of Theatre and Music at Chicago

Excellence in Secondary School Theatre
Cyndee Brown

Excellence in Theatre for Young Audiences
The Penguin Project

AWARDS OF HONOR

Award of Honor to a Non-ITA Member
Joyce Piven

Award of Honor to an ITA Member
SSSShhhh.... It's a Surprise!
(announced at the 9/21 Convention)

For more information about ITA's Annual Awards of Excellence, [click here](#).

BACK TO TOP

ITA's 40th Annual Convention Features Recognition to All ITA Members, Corporate Sponsors, Past and Present Award Recipients, Volunteers, and Leaders Throughout the Years. Please let us THANK YOU! REGISTER TODAY.

[Advocacy](#)[Board of Directors](#)[Job Postings](#)[Audition Announcements](#)[ITA Divisions](#)[eFollowspot](#)[Join the ITA](#)[Membership Directory](#)[Performance Calendar](#)[Twitter](#)[Join the ITA on Facebook:](#)[ITA Fan Page](#)[IHSTF Fan Page](#)[ITA's 40th Annual Convention](#)[College/University Group Discussion](#)[Community Theatre Group Discussion](#)[Creative Drama Group Discussion](#)[Professional Theatre Group Discussion](#)[Secondary School Theatre Group Discussion](#)[Theatre for Young Audiences Group Discussion](#)

**Illinois
Theatre
Association**

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

**Illinois
Theatre
Association**

40th Annual Convention



September 21, 2013

A pub-crawl style day of theatre around Chicago!

Classy coach bus transportation around the city with stops at: Black Ensemble Theater, Broadway Costumes, Emerald City Theatre's new Little Theatre, Redmoon Theatre, and The New Facility at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Free parking will be available for the day at Niles North High School where the buses start and end the day, or ride Chicago's public transit system to join the buses at their first stop of the day!

FEATURING

- ◆ Lunch from Blue Sky Bakery
- ◆ Play Time! (an opportunity to participate in a breakout session of your choice – stay tuned for details)
- ◆ Special recognition of ITA's Corporate Sponsors and Lifetime Members
- ◆ ITA's Annual Meeting and Board of Directors elections
- ◆ ITA's Annual Awards of Excellence Ceremony
- ◆ *4,000 Miles* at Northlight Theatre (optional evening performance)
- ◆ Networking, raffle prizes, games, and more!

Early Bird Registration (7/21/13 deadline): \$100 (member) \$120 (non-member) \$80 (student)
Regular Registration (7/22/13-9/16/13): \$115 (member) \$140 (non-member) \$95 (student)

Special group hotel rates provided by: Hampton Inn & Suites, Skokie - \$129

**SPACE IS LIMITED...
Reserve Your Spot Today!**



This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the

CONVENTION SPECIAL: *Playwright!*

A Panel of Prominent Playwrights You Simply Cannot Miss:

David Barr, Ron Hirsen, Mia McCullough, and Elaine Romero

BACK TO TOP

Keeping the "Community" in Mission of Community Colleges

By Allan Kimball,
ITA College/University Theatre Division Representative

"Southeastern Illinois College enhances lifelong learning by providing quality accessible educational programs, cultural enrichment opportunities, and support for economic development. We are the catalyst for academic excellence, community service, and economic growth in the communities we serve."



I can't believe that another semester is starting. It seems like yesterday that we were all standing in the halls of "B" Building preparing to march in for Commencement 2013. And now it is fall and our students are returning to campus. As I prepare for this new beginning, I am reminded

123 Mill Pond Dr.
 Glendale Heights, IL
 60139
 312-265-5922 (office)
 800-898-6897 (toll free)
 312-265-6101 (fax)
 www.illinoistheatre.org
 info@illinoistintheatre.org



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

of one of the missions that our President lifts up to us each new school year. Yes, we are to keep office hours... Yes, we are to teach our classes... Yes, we are to serve on committee after committee after committee. But we are also charged with serving our community and our feeder schools. I started thinking about the things we do each year to reach out and "Build Bridges" to community members and the area schools. I thought I would share some of these projects in the hopes that others out there would share, via the ITA's Group Discussions on Facebook (see links to the left) ideas and projects that have proven successful on your campuses.

An ongoing project we do each year in the Theatre Department is to open up our auditions to the community and the area high schools. Community members and high school students are encouraged to audition for roles, sign up to help out with scenic construction or other technical elements, and/or play in our orchestra for our musicals. In addition to giving them the experience of being involved in live theatre, they are also enrolled in our THTR 280 or MUS 280 classes which offer free "Community Theatre" credit to participants who are not currently SIC students.



Having this wide range of ages and experiences is a valuable learning experience for our theatre majors. It is also essential that we keep in touch with the instructors from the schools that feed into our programs.

Southeastern Illinois College (SIC) hosts an annual workshop day each fall. It is called WIN (Writing Improvement Network). We spend the day meeting with the English, Communication and Drama instructors from our feeder schools. We use this time to work on aligning the high school courses with our curriculum. This is designed to help smooth out the transition students make as they move from Senior English into ENG 121 (which is required of all students). During our day-long workshop, we discuss issues that relate to both institutions (the biggie now is Common Core). We also spend time with our GIFT (Great Ideas For Teaching) round tables. SIC instructors and high school teachers are asked to bring ideas that they use in their classes to share with others. This is a great way to get new ideas for approaching writing, speaking or drama lessons. It also allows time for the instructors to talk about the lessons and how they might be applied in their particular school setting. Communication is the key to successful working relationships with our fellow instructors. The final big project we tackle each year is DramaCon. DramaCon is a day-long workshop we host for the theatre and musical students from our area schools. The day features our theatre majors getting a chance to become the instructors. We divide the day into five areas. Four of these areas are workshops lead by our students. The high school students are divided into groups and rotate into each of our sessions (Acting, Dance, Scenic Design, and Make-Up). The fifth and final session is a full length

production of the show we are currently working on. Past shows have included *Tartuffe*, *You Can't Take It With You*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Many of our feeder schools have very limited (if any) drama or musical theatre offerings. We feel that this workshop fills a MAJOR need for our local schools. It is also a great learning experience for our theatre majors. They get an opportunity to put into practice many of the skills they have been learning.

So.....what do you do? Please take a few minutes and share ideas and projects you use to keep the connection to your communities. With so many high schools looking at cutting the Arts as a money saving move, we (Community Colleges, Senior Institutions, and ITA members) are going to increasingly have to fill the voids left in these schools. The more ideas we have in our "bag of tricks," the better off we all will be.

Have a great start to your school year!

BACK TO TOP

What's All the Excitement?

**An Illinois Theatre Festival for
COMMUNITY THEATRES!**

We want **YOU** to **JOIN US**
in the Creative Process

**August 25th or September 8th
at 7:00PM**

via online video conference

share your ideas

Illinois
Theatre
Association

aaot
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY THEATRE
*Improving Communities
One Theatre at a Time*

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE SEPTEMBER 8TH DATE!](#)

BACK TO TOP

Do Community Theatres "Lead," "Follow," or "Get Out of the Way?"

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

Who sets new directions for audiences?
Do season plans reflect what audiences
want - and what we hope will increase
ticket sales - or does a community
theatre have the responsibility to take
audiences in new directions, away from
the tried and true?

A frequent practice in our theatres is to
"ask audiences to suggest which plays
they would like to see on their stage." Predictably, the shows listed will
include a musical, a comedy, and perhaps a drama. The very fact that
audiences have familiarity with theatre literature is a good sign, but what



would happen if a different kind of survey was available? How would audiences respond if they were asked questions like these:

- What is an issue in our community?
- How do we as a community create "community pride?" "Spirit?"
- What issues in our community should we talk about but don't?
- Which aspects of aging are the scariest? Most rewarding?
- How can we connect the various cultures within our community?
- How can we connect the various generations within our community?

Answers to those questions can point to new directions for audiences and community theatres alike. Is an increasing violent crime rate an issue? Find a play that deals with it. Is teen suicide an issue? *Night, Mother* and a panel discussion might be the way to go. I'm sure that there are a myriad number of plays to select from that provide insight to each of the above questions. In Ocala FL, the Ocala Civic Theatre recognized that bullying in schools was a growing problem. Part of that theatre's work is to tour plays about bullying in local schools.

If audiences have always been asked to suggest titles of plays they'd like to see in a new season, moving in a new direction requires planning in order to familiarize audiences with this new process. And audiences themselves may help formulate the survey!

Traditionally, we have identified these purposes of theatre: to entertain, motivate, think, and educate. The time has come to make our community theatres leaders in exploring sociological, economic and cultural issues in each community in which a community theatre resides. That doesn't mean familiar scripts need to be abandoned, but it does mean we need to find ways to use those familiar titles so that they provide new insights for audiences.

The following is most definitely true: community theatres need to assume the role of "Leaders" when it comes to acting responsibly so that audiences get their season ticket's worth! If any ITA community theatre members are already taking this direction, how did you do it and with what result? We'd like to copy your model!

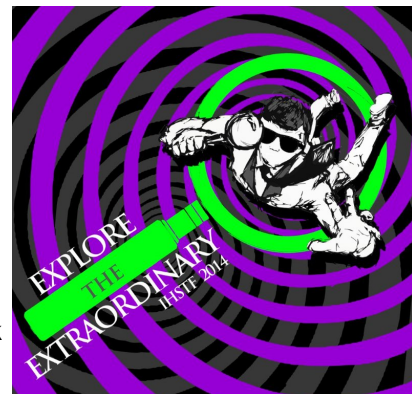
BACK TO TOP

An Open Invitation

By Demetrios Pappageorge,
Illinois High School Theatre Festival
Executive Director 2014

Hey everyone...

We want you to *get moving!* *Get involved!* And above all, *get excited!* The 39th Annual Illinois High School Theatre Festival will need you to think beyond the 4th wall. This year you are invited to "*Explore the Extraordinary!*"



What does that mean?!?

-Try something crazy with your sets or costumes and bring that show to the Festival!

-Direct a bizarre play or one about an extraordinary event or character and bring that show to the Festival!

-Design a fresh or unique workshop and bring that to the Festival!

-Send photos of the incredible set pieces, props, costumes, make-up or lighting designs done by your students for a "Salute to Extraordinary Talent" slide show.

-Be extraordinary by responding to a show or making a significant donation to the Festival.

Also, get registered, get involved, and get excited because this Festival is going to be a bit different. We want it to be, well... EXTRAORDINARY.

In what ways?!?

-Not so many "talking heads" at an Opening Ceremony; in fact **there will be no Opening Ceremony!**

-We're having a **staggered start to the Festival**, so your school can attend one of several big performances or professional workshops that best fits your scheduled time of arrival.

-Our **All-State** show is *The Grapes of Wrath*, a **play** about ordinary folks in extraordinary circumstances.



THE GRAPES of WRATH

-We're having **several professional theatre companies** on board to perform and run workshops throughout the Festival.

-AND we're having a **Closing Ceremony** to bring us all together for a showing of the official **Festival-Created Video** and a **High-Profile Professional Performance**.

Of course, we will still have all of the amazing vendors, colleges, and activities you have come to love. The Executive Planning Committee is very excited for you to join us!

The IHSTF takes place January 9-11, 2014 at Illinois State University. Registration is now available. Visit www.illinoistheatrefest.org for details. I hope to see you there!

BACK TO TOP

***Guerra: A Clown Play* at Adventure Stage Chicago**

By Betsy Driver Williams, ITA First Vice President

On Saturday, August 3rd, a production of *Guerra: A Clown Play* was staged at [Adventure Stage Chicago](http://www.adventurestagechicago.com). This unique performance represented a partnership between Chicago-based theatre artists Devon de Mayo and Seth Bockley and La Piara, a theatre company from Mexico City. The result was a three-person clown play depicting a society's relationship to violence. If that last sentence made you pause, it was intentional. In a talkback after the show, the artists involved in the project talked about the desire to use humor and silliness to draw the audience into the world of the clowns and then, as the action devolved into more graphic violence, to force us to question the line between comedy and cruelty.



And it was funny. There were moments that were absolutely ridiculous and had the audience laughing hard. The trio of characters themselves is absurd: the self-important General, his buffoonish assistant, and a reluctant new military recruit. At one point, the assistant to the General requested a medal for his mundane office activities, was awarded a small pink binder clip to attach to his tie, and wore it with such pride he looked like a four year old who had just been given a huge ice cream cone. But then a moment would come when the tone of the performance would change directions, and the audience would catch themselves laughing at something shocking. Like when the new recruit returns from the battlefield, shell-shocked from what she has seen, only to have the General and his assistant playfully call out, "Did you see? Did you see?" and enact urban battle scenes for her to compare with her war experiences.

During the entire play, the three actors moved fluidly from nonverbal communication to speaking in English, Spanish, and French, bringing a universality to their performance. It was not about one war or one nation, but rather the culpability of all people in our culture of violence. As Tom Arvetis, the Artistic Director of Adventure Stage Chicago, wrote in a letter to his company's subscribers, "With *La Piara* and *Guerra: A Clown Play*, we welcome international artists whose talent transcends language barriers. What they've created for our viewing pleasure will entertain us while at the same time get us to think more deeply about the world we live in."

Guerra: A Clown Play capitalized on the strengths of clowning (stock characters, physical comedy, repetition) to bring attention to the absurdity of war and violence. It was a performance in which humor and horror dance together, and one that was not easily dismissed or forgotten.

BACK TO TOP

Colin's Corner Play Review

"Next to Normal"

Opulence Shimmers in Oakbrook

Don't call Chicago the "Second City" when talking about excellent theatre. From its small storefront venues to its flashy Broadway in Chicago productions, we have it all. And once

again Drury Lane Oakbrook has demonstrated why it was the recent recipient of the Illinois Theatre Association's Excellence in Professional Theatre Award. This Equity house consistently offers the highest quality musicals and comedies, and their current presentation of Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey's Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning musical drama ranks as one of their finest productions to date.



Colin Douglas

Artistic Director Bill Osetek made a brave decision to include this powerful, nontraditional musical among Drury Lane's season of more conventional works. It was risky to present a show that might not appeal to everyone, especially many of the theatre's faithful season subscribers; but for the serious theatre-goer this chance to experience excellence truly pays off. It's said of musical theatre that characters break into song when emotions become too great for mere words. Kitt's gorgeous rock score elevates Yorkey's words and the characters' feelings right up to the stars. Like Jonathan Larson's "Rent," this might better be called a rock opera because it's sung-through with minimal dialogue. However, what floods over the audience is a moving, character driven story crafted from raw feelings.



Without destroying the dramatic surprises hidden within this moving piece of theatre, suffice it to say that it's a survival story about a family dealing with secrets: mental illness, drug addiction, loss and love spill out onto the stage. It examines how parents and children learn to cope with what life throws at them, which isn't always pretty. Bill Osetek has directed a flawless production, ably supported with choreography by Tammy Mader that seamlessly flows throughout the story. Ben Johnson's talented pit orchestra, highlighted by Tom Yang on strings, provides a musical canvas upon which this story is painted. Scott Davis' gorgeous two-level set is sleek and modern. Employing a black-and-white palette accented with chrome and glass, it also incorporates a revolve that enables quick auxiliary scene changes. Heather Gilbert's terrific lighting design provides the perfect focus and color. And, unassuming as Mader's choreography, Sally Dolemba's contemporary costume choices artistically define each character.

And the characters, around whom this play revolves, have been brought to life by Chicago's finest actor/singers. In the role of Diana, Susie McMonagle lays it all on the stage. Gifted with beauty, a natural acting style and a sublimely powerful singing voice that enabled her to play such versatile roles as both Mrs. Wilkinson and Mum in the National Tour of "Billy Elliot" and Donna in the tour of "Mamma Mia," this was the role that Ms. McMonagle was born to play. Diana's journey can be plainly seen all over the actress' lovely face as well as in her songs like the wistful, "I Miss the Mountains." She's ideally matched by Rod Thomas' exquisitely acted and sung Dan, a man trying to balance his family's needs while coping with his wife's mental difficulties. Thomas' anguish and frustration, hope and devotion are palpable. And, never sounding greater, this is the performance for which Rod Thomas will be remembered for many years to come.

Josh Tolle makes his welcome Chicago debut as Gabe, bringing power and passion to this very difficult role. Onstage (literally all over Davis' multilevel set), Tolle perfectly commands the audience's attention, but his presence is equally strong even when, unseen, he's simply being referenced by other characters. Callie Johnson, a standout in Porchlight's recent production of "Pal Joey," reaches a new level of excellence as

daughter, Natalie. Making the most of this very challenging role, Ms. Johnson proves, especially in numbers like "Superboy and the Invisible Girl," that she's a rising star to be watched. Another talented actor making his Drury Lane debut is Skyler Adams in a realistic, beautifully understated portrayal of Henry, Natalie's stoner boyfriend. Mr. Adams has impressed Chicago audiences as Claud in "Hair," Motel the Tailor in "Fiddler on the Roof" and as Danny in "Grease." But in this role Adams excels by providing the strong, dramatic support that's so necessary to the story. And handsome Colte Julian, also making his Drury Lane debut in the dual roles of Dr. Fine/Dr. Madden, brings his magnificent soaring voice and professional calm to roles that, in lesser hands, might've become stereotypes. Mr. Julian, however, makes them his own.

For audiences ready to pack away their light, fluffy summer entertainments with their flip-flops and Bermuda shorts, in favor of an emotionally demanding musical, or who are simply looking for a more dramatic, grittier experience that will touch their their souls and make them think, they won't find a finer production. Once again Bill Osetek's suburban gem proves it deserves its place among America's finest regional theatres with a production that shouldn't be missed. It's hard to imagine that any other musical this season will top the multi-layered excellence found in Oakbrook's "Next to Normal."

Presented August 22-October 6 by the Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace, IL.

Tickets are available by calling the box office at 630-530-0111 or by going to www.drurylane.com.

The ITA is thrilled to announce that Colin's Corner will be a regular feature in its eFollowspot, weekly announcements, and on the ITA website. To view all of Colin's recent reviews, [click here](#).

BACK TO TOP

So...I Made Myself a Producer

By Stacy Deemar,
ITA Creative Drama Division
Representative

I never gave becoming a producer much thought. My energies have always been drawn to acting, playwriting and on special occasions, even directing. But being a producer? Producing was not on my agenda until I came to the realization that our audiences have become apathetic to theatre etiquette. I wanted to reduce and/or eliminate smartphone pollution in theatres. Those incessant interruptions had become more profound even though theatre after theatre had posted signs and made the notorious announcements before the performance to turn off all smartphones.



The countless interruptions in theatres started affecting me. Too many complacent theatres had no sense of urgency to mitigate the problem. Every time I combined the words "smartphone" and "theatre" in the same sentence, I knew my friends and colleagues shared a similar feeling of frustration. The deep disappointment I felt for my fellow theatergoers did not dissipate. In fact, my desire to help spread the message "to turn off your smartphone in the theatre" started to intensify.

With social media, there are now many inexpensive avenues to utilize in order to reach a large audience. I pondered using Facebook, writing a personal blog, tweeting, and YouTube to disseminate my ideas, but I

discovered that the perfect venue for me was radio. At a glance, I thought a thirty-second public service announcement would be easy to create and simple to distribute. Since I had seen many people make short films on their iPhones, surely a thirty second sound clip would be a cinch and inexpensive. To my amazement, I underestimated the craft and cost in developing a professional public service announcement. And after going through the process of producing my own public service announcement, I now have the greatest reverence for sound designers and producers.



The creation of *Smartphone Pollution* began with learning how to write a public service announcement. The guidelines and format of a public service announcement were foreign to me. I read and listened to numerous public service announcements from a multitude of media outlets. Although the examples were informative in nature, it was not enough to write my own public service announcement.

The Community Tool Box, a global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx> is where I gathered some valuable information on how to write a public service announcement. On the Community Tool Box website, I went to the article entitled "Preparing Public Service Announcements" contributed by Chris Hampton and edited by Phil Rabinowitz and Kate Nagy at http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1065.aspx. This article was an excellent resource because it was comprehensive and easy to follow. The topics addressed in the article included the definition of a public service announcement, when to consider using a PSA, how to write a PSA, how to produce a PSA, how to get your PSA on the air, and how to tell if your PSA was effective.

Many public service announcements have a sponsor. Having a sponsor can give a public announcement validity and/or clout. The sponsor's name can be addressed at the beginning or end of the announcement. As a proud member of the American Alliance of Theatre and Education (AATE), I asked the president of the AATE if the organization would sponsor my public service announcement. The organization was supportive of my contribution and authorized me in a letter to use their name "American Alliance of Theatre and Education" in my PSA. The organization however, did not assist me in funding the project.

I had numerous discussions with professionals in the field about my PSA message and how to achieve the greatest impact with only sixty words and sound effects. Taking into consideration the constructive criticism I received, I rewrote several drafts of *Smartphone Pollution* and then I applied for a copyright.

In order to achieve the most professional product, I chose to use SAG-AFTRA actors. Since I was unfamiliar with the policies and procedures of hiring union actors, I contacted Jamie Marchi, Director of Freelance at the SAG-AFTRA Chicago office, to inquire about my project. Ms. Marchi listened attentively to my desire to create *Smartphone Pollution*. She provided me with a plethora of information so that I could proceed with my project and was instrumental in assisting me with *Smartphone Pollution*. Without Ms. Marchi's guidance, knowledge, and patience, my public service announcement may not have been brought to fruition.

SAG-AFTRA had to first approve my project. The organization requested copies of the following documents: script, authorization letter from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, American Alliance of Theatre and Education 501 (c), (3) letters, names and social security

numbers of my actors, and my session date.

Once SAG-AFTRA approved my project, I needed to hire a company that would act as my signatory because I am not a company nor do I own a company. As the producer for my own project, in addition to being the writer and one of the actors, I was not eligible as a signatory to the applicable industry collective bargaining agreements.

The third party signatory is responsible for maintaining the session detail, talent advice, production report, spot units, AFTRA Employment Contract for Radio Commercials and the accounting. I found Extreme Reach to be the perfect partner for my project because they were extremely helpful in guiding me through the process.



After securing a third party signatory, I booked a studio to record my public service announcement. Some of the questions I asked when interviewing a studio included hourly rates, amount of time needed to complete a thirty second spot, types of sound effects available, type of equipment, and the office location. Once I was committed to Don Arbuckle, sound designer at Audio Recording Unlimited (ARU), we discussed the script and the types of sound effects prior to our recording session. As a master sound designer, Don brought creativity and enthusiasm to my project and was able record and edit *Smartphone Pollution* in two hours.

Before the recording session, I also had to retain a distributor. The distributor is responsible for sending the PSA to radio stations for consideration. Radio stations are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve "in the public interest." Although no specific amount of time is required for radio stations to donate to public service announcements, radio stations are required to disclose how much time they will donate to PSA's in their licensing and renewal applications. Because a PSA is not a revenue-making proposition, most radio stations do not track when they air a PSA. Some organizations charge a fee to distribute a PSA to each radio station. *Smartphone Pollution* benefited from the generosity of Katz Media who used their resources and distributed *Smartphone Pollution* to nearly five thousand radio stations nationally.

So...I made myself a producer by default. No one else was taking action against smartphone pollution on the radio. I had a passionate gripe that I needed to voice. The entire process of writing, producing and acting in *Smartphone Pollution* was an enriching and empowering experience. I am proud of my accomplishment and forever indebted to the generosity of Jamie Marchi at SAG-AFTRA Chicago, Don Arbuckle at ARU, Extreme Reach and Katz Media.

If I can be a producer, you can too. Go out there and let me hear your voice!

BACK TO TOP

TED Talks

By Dinah Barthelmess
ITA Board of Directors, Secretary

As I organize the strange collection of odds and ends that find their way into a drama classroom and re-examine my lessons and ideas, I find myself eager, as we all are at the start of the year, to make it the best year yet. Our Fine Arts team is in the process of doing an overhaul of the way we use our assessment tools, and we were given time to work on this during our opening institute days. A few colleagues and I found ourselves puzzling over a challenging question: Can creativity be taught? We went back and forth about what creativity is, how we draw it out of our students, how we know it when we see it, whether we can measure it, and can it indeed be taught? I'm not done pondering, but am enjoying all of this thinking and discussing, so I wanted to invite you all, the readers of ITA's e-Followspot, to join in on the fun.



First, here are the links for two wonderful TED Talks about creativity. If you don't know about TED Talks, stop what you are doing and go to www.ted.com right now! Here you will find, as described on the site, "Riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world." And really, remarkable doesn't begin to describe the collection of inspiring thinkers, doers, and imaginers, all brave and bold folks, collected on the site. There are likely many more we could share, but these two offer some great thoughts on what creativity really is, where it is, where it goes, and how we as teachers and artists can gently pull it forth from our students and assist them as they shape it into something unique and meaningful.

Here are the two that I'm sharing today:

[Ken Robinson, How Schools Kill Creativity](#)

[Elizabeth Gilbert, Your Elusive Creative Genius](#)

Second, let's chat about this. Where? Facebook! If you haven't joined the ITA Facebook Pages yet, now's the time (see the Facebook links to the upper left). This will be a great place for members to share thoughts and ideas. I'm going to start with creativity. Can it be taught? I'm eager to find out what you think!

[BACK TO TOP](#)

ITA Member Spotlight:

**John Nesbitt,
A & B Photo & Print**

Submitted by Judy Klingner,
ITA Second Vice President

What is your name and what is your involvement with A&B Photo & Print?

My name is John Nesbitt, and I am the President of A&B Photo & Print.

Please tell us about A&B Photo & Print.

We are a full service photography and printing studio specializing in promotional and audition materials for acting and entertainment professionals.



Where are you located?

You can visit us in the West Loop at 218 N. Jefferson Ave., Lower Level, Chicago, IL, or call us at 312-454-4554. Our website is www.a-bphoto.com.

In what ways does A&B Photo & Print help out the ITA and its members?

The major casting event for spring and summer roles in Chicago takes place at the ITA Professional Auditions. We support the ITA by extending discounts on photos with resumes to college students and other actors who need affordable photo-resumes in order to participate in these auditions.

In addition to headshots/resumes, what other theatre-related services are available at A&B Photo & Print?

We print show placards, stage bills for plays, banners, business cards, and even "thank you" postcards.

Do you plan to offer promotions at other events ITA events as well?

At the ITA's Illinois High School Theatre Festival (January 2014, at Illinois State University in Bloomington), A & B Photo will shoot actual headshots for participants without charge in order for students to see how they may look. We will also provide the students with a set up (typesetting the name). Last year, we shot 90 Theatrefest participants. The actors sign a release and pay for any reprints of the photos taken.

What is the biggest challenge A&B Photo & Print has to overcome?

We're constantly looking to get better photo-producing equipment. This year A & B acquired such a printer, so now we can produce better prints and resumes, and stay price competitive, too.

Why did you decide to become a Corporate Sponsor of the ITA?

It's our way of giving back. Discounts through the ITA didn't exist when I participated in high school musicals. It's neat that we can support high school, college, and professional actors today!

BACK TO TOP