

Illinois Theatre Association

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ITA EVENTS

**January 7-9, 2016 --
41st Annual Illinois High School Theatre Festival
Dare to Dream**
Illinois State University,
Normal

**February 6-7 2016 --
37th Annual Statewide Non-Equity Professional Auditions**

eFOLLOWSPOT November, 2015

These Volunteers are Saints

By Faye Ryan, ITA First Vice-President

If you attend theatre, dance, and music events in the Chicago metro area, you have probably run into an usher wearing a "Saints" badge. Did you ever wonder what that badge meant? The Saints are volunteers for the performing arts. They started as a volunteer arm of the old Saint Nicholas Theatre Company and were officially established in 1980 as an independent group of volunteers for the performing arts. Today there are over 2000 Saints who serve over 100 Chicago metro area theatre, dance, and music organizations, ranging in size from storefronts to world-class theatres, from seasonal musical groups to world-trotting dance companies.



The Saints members provide help to these groups for a variety of activities including ushering at performances, box office, and monitoring auditions; in , they are allowed to attend these activities and performances at no charge. Members choose the venues and performances where they want to volunteer, as often as they like. There are no minimum requirements for volunteering.

The Saints also award financial grants to not-for-profit performing arts organizations located in Chicago and the surrounding area. In 2015, the Saints will donate over \$110,000.00 in grants to over twenty different performing arts organizations.

The Saints hold General Membership Meetings several times a year. These meetings offer members the opportunity to learn more about the organization and its affairs, to meet and socialize with other members, and to participate in interesting presentations given by famous personalities from the performing arts community. The Saints members also receive a monthly newsletter, "Spotlight," which lists the numerous volunteering opportunities. These opportunities are updated twice weekly via the "CyberLine" e-mail to all members. The Saints have a group membership in the League of Chicago Theaters which means that the Saints badge allows access to industry nights.



University of Illinois
at Chicago

**March, 2016 --
Annual Creative Drama
and Theatre for Young
Audiences Conference**

**October, 2016 --
Annual Middle School
Conference**

**November, 2016
2nd Bi-Annual
Community Theatre
Festival**

JOB POSTINGS

Lincoln College seeks
adjunct theatre professor
for Sprng 2016.

The Actors Gymnasium
is offering a Marketing
Internship.

Spotlight Youth Theatre
is seeking a set
Builder/Carpenter.

**Premiere Theatre
Company** is
seeking the following
positions:
Music/Drama/Art
Instructors for upcoming
fall classes for ages 5-18.

Click here to visit the
ITA's Job Board for
details and more
postings!

**FEATURED
PERFORMANCES**

Libertyville High School
Starlight Express
November 5-7
Thurs - Sat at 7:30pm
Sun at 3:00pm
Region 2: Libertyville

Theatre on the Hill
**Six Degrees of
Separation**
November 6-22
Fri and Sat at 8:00pm
Sun at 3:00pm
Region 4: Bolingbrook

Anyone 16 years of age and older is eligible to join the organization. Membership dues are \$75 for the first year and \$60 for every renewal year. Right now, in honor of their 35th Anniversary, they are offering a \$35 membership for those 35 years of age and under. The Saints would love to attract younger folk to join in their mission of assisting the most vibrant performing arts scene in the country.

For more information about the Saints, visit their website: www.saintschicago.org.

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John Muszynski: A Mentor to All

By Amelia Kmiec, ITA Secretary

Theatre is a selective mirror of life. Each experience - from early collaborations and rehearsals to performance - mimics the growth and change that occurs in the journey of life, but in a fraction of the time. Each production cycles through the important stuff- birth, childhood, adulthood, old age and death- and, with each new production, it happens again; and again; and again. The arduous and yet oh-so-completely-satisfying process of making more and more theatre (because as you all know, we don't just ever stop participating in the theatre process), makes essentially a little bubble- its own little world that so few outsiders understand. And while, for some of us, being a part of "Theatre Island" often brings us back to the therapists' office each week, the few that often stand out among the rest of us along in this strange little world, are almost like sprites, elves, or, if you will, fairies. Childlike, energetic, ethereal, excited, fascinating- it is impossible not to be captivated by their spirit and want to catch and keep a little bit of their energy for yourself.

The recipient of the ITA's [Anne Thurman Mentorship Award](#) this year once told me that he was not quite sure what he'd be when he grows up. Perhaps his sense of adventure stemmed from his first broad and accolated journey as an actor, director and producer of regional theater in Chicago for almost a decade. Tackling theatre in the classroom was the next chapter of his career, and while perhaps he was always young at heart, all the commendations that surrounded him indicated that he was wise and experienced. He has been honored both by [AATE](#) and ITA for his extensive contributions in teaching theater. He not only participated on several [IHSTE](#) committees and directed an All-State, but, he was also a very active President of the ITA. Additionally, he, along with

others in NITE (North Shore Theater Educators), a networking group that he helped to create, worked tirelessly to try and implement an AP Test in Theatre. All while, of course, teaching a day full of classes and directing three productions a year. I was in awe. When did he sleep? From where did this boundless energy flow? How had this rare and scary world of theatre education not clouded his passion for this art form? The answer to these questions lies in his intuitive ability to rely on the strength of those around him. Not unlike applause to keep an ill-fated Tinkerbell alive, the Anne Thurman recipient this year truly feeds off whatever engagement he receives from his fellow collaborators. While this is a relatively new award, those who knew Anne Thurman truly understand how large of



Harper College

Gypsy

November 13-22

Fri and Sat at 8:00pm

Sun at 2pm

Region 2: Palatine

East Aurora High School

The Laramie Project

November 13-21

Fri and Sat at 6:00pm

Region 2: Aurora

Need more information

on the above shows?

Want your performance

to be featured here? Visit

the [ITA Performance](#)

[Calendar](#) for details.

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[Creative Drama Group Discussion](#)

a shadow she cast on those she mentored throughout her life. In her service to connecting others, Anne was relentless, fearless and, often, incredibly skilled in getting what she believed could only best add to the Theatre community as a whole. The recipient of her namesake award this year, truly makes what is often misperceived as a stuffy or outdated art form accessible to anyone. Mentors often carry an air of elitism and can make you feel a bit intimidated and scared. When a person that you believe to be so talented and successful tells you, a fearful student teacher, and a group of high school students, confidently, that even he doesn't know what the future holds, but guess what, we're going to do it together, -- how can you help but feel safe?

This person is always mentoring everyone around him, and, even better, those who would be offended by the notion of being mentored by a colleague can't be because he does it so well. A former colleague told me that for this award recipient, a quiet evening at the theatre does not exist, as at least 15-20 people from the audience will approach him. He once told a shy, new colleague he needed to meet three new theatre teachers at high school theatre festival each year, and he offered to find them for her in an effort to get her to network. It is impossible to meet a person who is not acquainted with his crew of former students, who once might have been "lost." but have now found themselves as theater professionals and supporters all over the world.

While he still may not have grown up, he is embarking on a new, theatre related journey directing and acting in professional theatre, as well as continuing to mentor Theatre Education Student teachers at [ISU](#). So, whether you are excited/relieved to have come to the last installment of the Peter Pan metaphor, or, like me, you are just grateful to this person for giving you the opportunity to think happy thoughts and feel like you can fly while doing what you love, please- clap your hands - if you believe - for this year's Anne Thurman Mentorship Award recipient: John Muszynski.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO ITA's 2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Each year the Illinois Theatre Association recognizes both individuals and organizations for their significant contributions of promoting quality theatre throughout the state of Illinois.

Recipients are nominated by the Illinois theatre community, approved by ITA's divisional representatives, and accepted by ITA's Board of Directors.

Professional Theatre
Group Discussion

Secondary School Theatre
Group Discussion

Theatre for Young
Audiences Group
Discussion

FOLLOW OUR TWEETS:

Illinois Theatre Association

IHSTF

Illinois Theatre Association

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

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Grand Stage

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Intelligent Lighting

Light Chicago

USITT Midwest

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Music Makers Theatre



Award of Excellence in College/University Theatre
CHRIS GRAY
Illinois Central College

Award of Excellence in Community Theatre
THE DRAMA GROUP

Award of Excellence in Creative Drama
STACY DEEMAR

Award of Excellence in Professional Theatre
FIRST FOLIO THEATRE

Award of Excellence in Secondary School Theatre
PATRICIA HAYNES

Award of Excellence in Theatre for Young Audiences
CHICAGO KIDS COMPANY

Anne Thurman Mentorship Award
JOHN MUSZYNSKI

Award of Honor to a Non-ITA Member
SYLVIA HERNANDEZ-DISTASI
The Actors Gymnasium

Award of Honor to an ITA Member
JOHN NESBITT
A&B Photo & Print

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Presidential Proclamation -- National Arts and Humanities Month, 2015

Submitted by Don Shandrow, ITA Community Theatre Division
Representative

This article can be found by [clicking here](#).



President Barack Obama released this proclamation on September 28, 2015. His respect for artistic creativity is evident when he states that his Administration is "dedicated to empowering [young people] through the arts and humanities..."

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

ITA ANNOUNCEMENTS

Each week the ITA sends out "Friday Announcements" to its Listserve (currently comprised of more than 2,300 theatre artists and educators from throughout the state). If you'd like to submit an item for inclusion in the weekly announcements, please click [here](#). [Suggestions for inclusion include: audition announcements, job postings, interesting theatre stories/experiences, lesson plans, community/life events, etc., theatre opportunities, etc.).

Also, please remember to submit your upcoming performances and/or events to the ITA's on-line performance calendar!!! [Click here](#).

Children's Theater Productions: Fall 2015 Through Spring 2016

Submitted by Jeremy Schaefer, ITA Theatre for Young Audiences Division Representative

This article can be found by [clicking here](#).

For members of the TYA community who live in Chicago or the surrounding suburbs, take a look at this valuable resource.



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Mindfulness and Self-Awareness: Engaging the Vessel of the Artist

By Brenna Cronin, ITA Theatre for Young Audiences Division Representative

At this year's [ITA Annual Convention](#), I had the opportunity to ask artists, educators, administrators, and theatre appreciators, "What is one way that you're currently engaging your personal artistic vessel, currently, every day, without hesitation?" And here are the things I heard:

- "I love to write in the mornings."
- "Group Interpretation!"
- "Hang out with other artists."
- "Hang out with other artists and steal their ideas!"
- "Participate in a creative book club."
- "Crafting and home projects"
- "Journaling... it's my creative bank account."



His creative bank account. Unbelievable. And when asked, "What is one way that you would like to engage your personal artistic vessel?" Here are the things I heard:

- "See more plays."
- "Write in the afternoon or evening."
- "Guided meditation."
- "Taking time to sleep."
- "Big scale, dining room table takeover type projects."
- "Learn to say no."
- "Expand my view of creativity."
- "Cash the checks."

Cash the checks! Absolutely! How much preparation do we get stuck doing before we actually get our hands deep into creative work? How many of us get stuck spending an hour cleaning off the dining room table to run out of time and not start the project? In my own life, it's the simple ten minute things that don't seem to get done for weeks. Piling and piling up until it turns into a three-hour long, project-filled afternoon, which feels more like work and less like a creative outlet. If there's one thing I learned from our Creative Drama and

Theatre for Young Audiences conversation at our annual convention, it's that if we artists don't have personal outlets for our creativity, we get stuck. And strangely tired. And miserable to be around.



I'd like to challenge you with beginning a meditation practice. Allowing my fiery body and brain to sit still for ten minutes a day has had a profound impact on the clarity of my thoughts, the concise nature of my words, and the lowering of my stress response. During my session at the conference, we explored four ways to bring meditation into your daily practice. Try setting a timer and see if one of these will work for you.

1. Walking: With a different quality of movement than pacing, find a space that you can either walk gently in continuous back and forth lines, or in a circle. Whether this is the ten minutes on your lunch break to get some oxygen or your walk to your next meeting, make it intentional. Every breath is intentional. Every step of your foot is intentional. Finding a simple mantra like "I am walking" or "I am feeling..." can be incredibly transformative. Don't pick up your phone. Don't say hello to anyone walking towards you. It's not being rude - it's taking care of yourself in the few moments you have today.

2. Seated Movement: Perhaps after a walking meditation or on its own, find a comfortable seat in a chair or on a cushion. If you are used to being in motion and sitting quietly is challenging for you, stay in the challenge. After a few stretches above your head, side to side, or forward, allow three or four minutes to go by in a completely still seated state. It will be uncomfortable. Stay with it. Notice the things your body is experiencing and gently let them go. Don't be frustrated by an itch on your left leg. Over time, your body will soften and lighten towards the practice of "finding your seat."

3. Body Scan: Fully reclined on your back, allow your legs to fall and palms to open at your side. Take up as much space as feels comfortable to you. Beginning with your feet and working up to your head, squeeze every bit of tension and frustration into that body part. While squeezing, take a big deep breath in and release your breath and body. Allow your mind to "scan" through the different sections of your body - knees, quads, hips, belly, ribs, heart, throat, neck and shoulders, and head. After squeezing your facial muscles and releasing with an exhale and open jaw, allow the entire body to squeeze into itself and release. Feel free to stay in this reclined "corpse pose" or savasana as long as you'd like.

4. Written meditation: With pen and paper nearby, reflect on these questions:

- The part of my day where I feel the most alive is...
- One person who mentors and inspires me is...
- The place in my home or workplace where I can relax and reflect is...
- Feeling my breath moving in and out of my body is...

- One way I can reinvent my creativity today is...



We are all brilliantly flowing vessels with unlimited potential. Unlimited potential to create, lead, explore, dance, write, think, move, and be present. Be present with your kind self today. Have no reservations, no desire to achieve, and leave competition at the door. Breathe. Engage your one and only vessel.

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The Ultra Low Budget Film

By Stacy Deemar, ITA Member

I had the distinguished pleasure of working on an Ultra Low Budget SAG-AFTRA film this summer. Like any actress, I was delighted to get cast and even more excited that I was going to receive monetary compensation. The jubilation about working on a film overshadowed the fact that I had no knowledge about the benefits the Ultra Low Budget SAG-AFTRA agreement affords the performer.

SAG-AFTRA issues a hard copy of the Theatrical Contracts Digest to all of its members in addition to having it available on their website. The document is reader friendly and extremely informative. Regardless of the type of motion picture you embark on, it is important to know your rights and responsibilities as well as your employer's.



The performer, under an ultra low budget film, is an employee rather than an independent contractor. Thus, the performer is subject to income tax withholding, social security, disability deductions and is entitled to unemployment insurance coverage. Furthermore, the employment contract, W-4 Form, and I-9 Form must be given to the performer no later than the first day on the set.

The minimum daily rate for a performer is \$125. The workday is eight consecutive hours excluding meal periods. Performers must be given a meal break six hours from the time of reporting to work. The meal period must be a minimum of thirty minutes and may not exceed an hour. During meal periods, performers cannot be required to work.

Additional compensation is granted to performers who work beyond eight consecutive hours. Under the agreement, performers are paid "each 1/10 of an hour unit or fraction thereof, an amount equal to time and one-half of the professional performer's pro rata payment for the day."

Payment is distributed to a performer by Thursday of the following payroll week. A payroll week starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday. The days a performer works in a payroll week are due by the following Thursday.



Performers may not be scheduled more than twelve consecutive hours within a twenty-four hour period. The performer should receive at least a twelve-hour rest period between workdays. If the performer receives less than ten hours between workdays, he may refuse to report to work.

If the performer has to travel away from his/her residency, the producers are responsible for paying transportation expenses, per diem, and time spent traveling.

A director can require actors to attend rehearsals. Rehearsals are defined as "the reading of lines, acting, singing or dancing in preparation for the performer's performance, in the presence and under the supervision of a representative Producer...Rehearsals shall be counted as work time...". Performers are to be compensated a day's pay for rehearsals.

In many agreements, the producer is responsible for furnishing the actor's wardrobe for the portrayal of the characters. If the actor provides his own wardrobe, the actor can receive a cleaning allowance and/or reimbursement for damaged clothes.

Once the principal photography is completed, the producers are required to make clips of each professional performer's work available at cost in either 16mm, 35 mm or digital video.

Prior to working on a set, familiarize yourself with the type of agreement you will receive. Answers to many questions about SAG-AFTRA contracts can be found on their website at www.sag-aftra.org or by contacting the Chicago SAG-AFTRA office at 312-573-0318.

Break a leg!

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Shakespeare Whispers Into Your Ear: The Use of First Folio Technique

By Kevin Long, ITA University/College Division Representative



I would personally like to thank all the participants and guests who attended the recent [ITA Annual Convention](#) this past September in East Peoria. Your presence helped to make the convention a great success and your enthusiasm and positive spirit helped make our time together both productive and fun. I hope that your experience at the convention was stimulating and rewarding and that you left energized and empowered to do great things for your students and your institutions. It is my honor to serve as the college/university representative on the board and I look forward to my work with ITA this year.

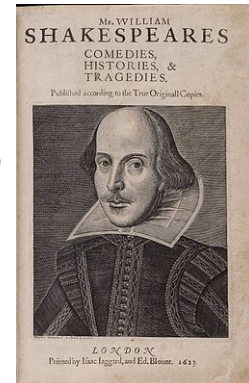
At our Convention, I presented my workshop entitled, "Shakespeare Whispers Into Your Ear: The Use of First Folio

Technique." I had many requests for the power point that I created for my session and I am happy to share it with you. [Click here](#). Note: You must be an ITA Member to access this document.

What is First Folio Technique? With the rigorous performance schedule of the repertory system during Shakespeare's day, there was no time to rehearse.

Therefore, Shakespeare created a system that quickly and efficiently provided the actor with the entirety of the character. He achieved this by placing essential clues for the actors directly into the text! Unfortunately, since that time, many editors have removed this vital, intended text and deleted important acting clues in the name of regularity.

The First Folio of 1623 is the most authentic manual available to Shakespearean actors today!



Through the use of this technique, participants saw Shakespeare in an entirely new light and unlocked the secrets to performing Shakespeare's work. Using Shakespeare's own methods, participants learned how to interpret text and build a foundation for inspiring performances. When used, this exhilarating process will result in a production that is extremely tactile, visceral and accessible. The First Folio method is the foundation of Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, where I also teach.

Everyone who loves Shakespeare gains a deeper understanding of the texts and how they work in performance. Action and subtext become clear and performances become exhilarating for both actor and audience. Teachers in attendance learned new ways to bring Shakespeare alive in the classroom and how to decode the language, spelling, punctuation and lineage preserved in the First Folio of 1623.

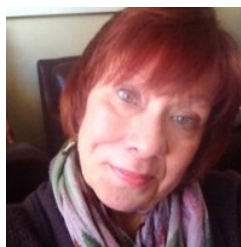
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ITA Member Spotlight: Marge Uhlarik-Boller, ITA Member
Submitted by Judy Klingner, ITA Second Vice-President

What is your name?

Marge Uhlarik-Boller

Please describe your background in theatre.



That's a weighted question: I have done theatre virtually all my life; I fell in love with reading plays when I was only 10 years old. But even before that I had a vast imagination which always took the form of storytelling. In high school and later in college, my passion for theatre was cemented. By the time I graduated with a degree in education and a minor

in theatre, I had acted in and directed a variety of plays. A cancer scare I experienced in my late 20s forced me to look at my life in terms of my art and then I took off as a director. I have directed over 100 productions from store fronts in Chicago, to theatre company work, to high schools, college, community and regional theatre.

You taught middle school for 12 years. What advice do you have for aspiring junior high school teachers?

If you want to know how to direct middle school aged actors, I'd say know your strengths and direct to them. I have a very strong eye for blocking, for example, and the ability to discuss character development and this is where I begin with young actors. Honestly, that's not much different from working with a seasoned professional though. No actor can see himself at work, and you need to gauge your direction on how they listen and absorb.

Besides Steel Beam Theatre, with which other theatre companies have you been associated?

I have directed for Wheaton Drama, Village Theatre Guild in Glen Ellyn, DesPlaines Theatre Guild, Village Theatre of Palatine, Oak Park Village Players and Grove Players among others. Steel Beam Theatre, however, is a professional non-Equity house; it's an important distinction. Everyone associated with our theatre is paid for their time and effort. I am paid as a full time Executive and Artistic Director.

What is your history with Steel Beam Theatre?

I acted in a production at SBT in 2006, but didn't direct for the theatre until 2013 when I directed Steven Dietz's BECKY'S NEW CAR. The following year I directed Ken Ludwig's POSTMORTEM and then followed that up with THE SPITFIRE GRILL by Valcq and Alley; it's a small musical based on the film of the same name. I was then asked to take on the position of resident director. So last season-this would be the 2014-2015 season, I directed ALMOST MAINE, VERONICA'S ROOM and GOD OF CARNAGE, as well as our children's Christmas show, SINGALONG WITH SANTA. In July, the board offered me the position of Executive/Artistic Director. This season I have just directed David Lindsay-Abaire's GOOD PEOPLE, am gearing up for another fun SINGALONG show and will end the year with Sarah Ruhl's THE CLEAN HOUSE and THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE by William Finn. .

What will your new job entail?

How many pages do you have? LOL. I am the chief cook and bottle washer for the theatre; I do artistic direction which I love, but also the nitty gritty stuff like paying bills, hiring professionals, overseeing auditions, writing press releases and audition notices, box office, grant writing, fundraising, and probably a whole lot more that I haven't even imagined yet.



How do you imagine the ITA can be a valuable resource for you as you transition into this new position?

I want to be able to use our theatre as a venue for workshops for teachers who might be directing for the first time or for actors aspiring to learn about auditioning. I'd like to collaborate with other houses in our area and in Chicago. I'd like to have the opportunity to communicate with others who are working in the field and facing the same challenges we are.

What is the biggest challenge that Steel Beam Theatre has to overcome?

Like all theatres, big and small, we are trying to engage our audience and challenge them as well. To that end, we are seeking the most interesting work to produce. Because of our

small space, we keep our cast sizes small, but we seek out strong connective work that will attract talent and audiences as well. Additionally, we have the challenge of keeping our space always busy, with educational offerings, musical events and cabarets as well as our six play main stage and four play youth stage seasons. And of course, like all theatres, we do this on a small budget; we are always looking for ways to increase our funds or find kind benefactors to our artistic cause.

Where can we find current information about Steel Beam Theatre?

www.steelbeamtheatre.com

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