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Illinois Theatre Association

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ITA UPDATES

ITA EVENTS:
3/29/19-3/31/19

ITA's Statewide
Community Theatre
Festival
It'll Play in Peoria
www.illinoistheatre.org

eFOLLOWSPOT

February , 2019

ITA UPDATE:

Illinois Theatre Association 3rd Bi-Annual Statewide Community Theatre Festival Illinois AACTFest



March 29-31, 2019

PEORIA PLAYERS THEATRE

www.illinoistheatre.org **aact**

[Click Here](#) for Details!

SAVE THE DATE:
6/2/19

Travel with the President to

6/2/19

Travel With the President
to ten Chimneys
Stay Tuned for Info

EVENTS OF INTEREST FROM ITA MEMBERS:

The AACT 2019 National Design Competition will showcase the best of community theatre in this country. AACT member theatres and their designers may enter. Designs must be of projects occurring between July 2017 through June 2019. Click here for entry guidelines.

Submit an Event

JOB POSTINGS

Paramount School of the Arts will be home to over 40 summer camps and is seeking to employ teaching artists in all areas of the arts.

Dunes Summer Theatre is hiring a Stage Manager for its summer season. This is an ideal position for a junior or senior in college.

Parkland College, in Champaign, Illinois, is now hiring a full-time tenure track theatre director position for the Fall of 2019.

Click Here for ALL Job Details, or to Submit a Job Posting.

AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Theatre-on-the-Hill, in Bolingbrook, will hold auditions for *Mr. Burns*, a post-electric play on February 23 and February 25.

TEN CHIMNEYS Stay Tuned for More Information

UNPRECEDENTED NUMBERS, UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY AT ITA'S STATEWIDE NON-EQUITY PROFESSIONAL AUDITIONS

by Joan McGrath
ITA Professional Theatre Representative

The 40th Annual ITA'S Statewide Non-Equity Professional Auditions showcased a record 291 actors, singers and dancers before the largest audience ever -- casting directors and commercial agents from 30 theatrical entities.

If you were at the University of Illinois Chicago on February 2 and 3, here's a recap of the powerful event you experienced. If you've never participated in a high-stakes, seamlessly-run, professional "cattle call," here's the super charged encounter you missed.



The auditionees hailed from Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. They all came to The ITA's (as the auditions are affectionately called) prepared to present two contrasting performance pieces, totaling 90-seconds in length, timed from the first word of monologue or note of song. Musical theatre actors, who auditioned Saturday from 9 to 4, are required to perform a musical selection (16 bars minimum) plus a monologue to demonstrate their range. Most also participate in a display of dance talent. Non-musical theatre actors, auditioning Sunday from 10 to 4, presented two contrasting monologues.

Ninety-seconds doesn't sound like a lot of time - but it's plenty for seasoned pros to evaluate stage presence and talent. The basement practice rooms hummed with vocal warm-ups and the dance studio sweated with efforts to master a challenging jazz combination choreographed by Jon Martinez and taught with assistant Holly Humbita. The vibe was intense focus. At the same time, it was also wonderfully convivial with fellow auditionees generously helping one another prepare and manage nerves.

Performers were called up in groups of five. The atmosphere sizzled as the auditionees -- veteran actors, new-to-Chicago talent, recent college theatre graduates and a sprinkle of child performers - were escorted into the auditorium of the U of I School of Theatre and Music at 1044 West Harrison. Singers had a brief opportunity to hand their music to virtuoso accompanist Andrew Blendermann and confer on key and tempo.



Then it was the moment! Shoulders back. Deep breath. State your name, audition number, present 90-seconds - strictly timed -- of your best material, make a lasting

Playhouse 38 (Geneva Park District) announce auditions for Proof on March 3 and 4.

Dunes Arts Foundation (DAF) and Dunes Summer Theatre hosts general non-equity auditions for its 2019 Summer Season.

Aurora University offers generous theatre scholarships to incoming students.

Millikin University announces its Theatre & Dance Campus Audition Dates & Pre-screen Submission Deadlines for 2019 Admission.

Western Illinois University's Department of Theatre and Dance announces Musical Theatre BFA Auditions for the incoming class of 2019.

[Click here for ALL Audition Details, or to Submit an Audition.](#)

FEATURED PERFORMANCES

Chicago: High School Edition

Oak Park & River Forest High School
2/23/19 - 3/2/19

Black is Beautiful: A History of African Americans

Illinois Valley Community College & Streater Friends of the Library
2/27/19 and 2/28/19

Little Women - The Musical

Triad High School
2/28/18 - 3/2/19

Present Laughter

Independent Players
3/1/19-3/16/19

Visit the **ITA Performance Calendar** for all performance details, and to submit **YOUR** performance.

impression. Exhale and exit stage right.

The process is awesome, even arresting, but the rewards are tantalizing: evaluation by the prestigious companies and agents for whom these performers aspire to work, the chance to be cast in an upcoming production, the affirmation of their talent by industry pros. Four companies even hosted on-site call backs at the end of the day, capitalizing on the availability of potential cast members for their immediate season.

The performers recognize The ITAs as an invaluable source of career exposure and momentum. Where else could they have the remarkable opportunity, in one single audition, to impact professional, storefront and summer stock casting directors and commercial agents from around Illinois and surrounding states?

Their enthusiasm for the experience is captured in their exit comments: "Thank you for this smooth and friendly process;" "It was an incredibly well-run event. Everyone was kind and supportive;" "Have attended a lot Cattle Calls and this was by far the best;" "Everyone was very friendly and the space was very welcoming and comfortable. Also the acoustics were great! Lucky us!"

The casting professionals consider the statewide combined auditions as their very own "season's generals" - a valuable way to screen new talent where all the logistics, from scheduling to venue to reproduction of headshot/resumes, are handled by experienced ITA staff members and volunteers. Audition Coordinator Molly Hernandez assembled dozens of workers primed to anticipate every need agents and reps might have. ITA President Kevin Long hosted the ever-calming ITA Member hospitality room, while College/University Board Member Rick Arnold engineered the Casting Reps hospitality suite where the company agents dined and chilled. ITA Executive Director Aimee-Lynn Newlan supervised the "Quo Vadis"-sized event with a steady vision.

The casting contingent lauded the 2019 auditions as both a streamlined showcase for viewing new talent and as a way to demonstrate their commitment to bringing new professionals into the industry. Among their compliments: "We hire a majority of our season based off these auditions. Great diversity throughout. The level of talent seen was quite good." "Thank you for gathering all the talent and producers AND working crew in one place." "I appreciate the pace of the day and the fine concessions - but mostly the fact that our company has some solid prospects as a result."

Since 1979, over 10,000 performers, from fresh out of college newbies to credentialed pros on Illinois' robust theatre scene, have brought their dreams center stage to present their talents at The ITA's. Next year you can be on the boards! Join us to launch your career!

Here is the roster of distinguished companies and talent agencies participating this year:

(re)discover theatre
Big Mouth Talent
BIZKIDZ, Inc.
Black Ensemble Theater
Chicago Actors Studio

ITA Links:[ITA Home Page](#)[About the ITA](#)[Advocacy](#)[Board of Directors](#)[Job Postings](#)[Audition Announcements](#)[ITA Divisions](#)[eFollowspot](#)[Join the ITA](#)[Membership Directory](#)[Performance Calendar](#)[Submit an Announcement](#)**Join the ITA on Facebook:**[ITA Fan Page](#)[IHSTF Fan Page](#)[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](#)**FOLLOW OUR TWEETS:**[Illinois Theatre Association](#)[IHSTF](#)

**Illinois
Theatre
Association**

Coalescence Theatre Project
Compass Creative Dramatics
Dominican University Performing Arts Center
Dunes Summer Theatre
Erasing the Distance
ETA Creative Arts Foundation
Explore Theatre
Goodman Theatre
GreatWorks Touring Theatre
Historical Perspectives for Children
Imagination Theater
Kane Repertory Theatre
Lori Lins LTD
Metropolis Performing Arts Center
Midsommer Flight
Our Perspective
Pieus Productions
Pride Films and Plays
Strawdog Theatre Company
The Artistic Home
Theatrically Inclined
The Mystery Shop
Timber Lake Playhouse
Victory Gardens Theater
Waterfront Summer Stages

Hats off to these additional individuals who volunteered their time to make The ITAs a clockwork production (forgive us if we forget anyone!): Audrey Palumbo, Assistant to the Auditions Coordinator; Brad Newlan, Timer and Assistant to the Executive Director; Colin Douglas, Auditions Monitor; Noah Watkins; Hannah Yonan; David Hernandez (UIC Student Rep); Jerluane Jenkins (UIC Student Rep); Carmel DeStefano (ITA 2nd VP); Jolaine Orlin (ITA 1st VP); Susan Rothchild (ITA Membership Coordinator); Cassandra Quinn (Creative Drama Rep) and Donald Shandrow (Community Theatre Rep).

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**Intro by Peggy Breaux Hupp
ITA Theatre for Young Audience Rep**

I found this quote from Lin-Manuel Miranda at Playbill.com. It's the best theatre-related advice anyone could be told (besides having a back-up).

Q. - Do you have any advice for people pursuing theatre in college?

Lin-Manuel Miranda: *The answer is this: Study all the things you don't want to go into in theatre. Study lighting. Do all the things. For my theatre major, I did makeup, I ran lights, I did sound design, I sewed costumes, and that*

stuff comes in handy when you work with other people. Theatre is all about collaboration, so you have to actually understand a bit of the job your collaborators are doing, so that you can speak to them fluently. And then the other thing is take, like, whatever you're interested in - i promise it will come in handy.



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)
www.illinoistheatre.org

Please Visit ITA's Corporate Sponsors:

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Protolight
Stagedoor Manor
USITT Midwest
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Paramount Theatre



Tommy Kail was an American History major, it came in pretty handy when we had this idea. So that's my advice. Do what you're passionate about.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITA AND COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

By Richard Arnold, Jr.
ITA College & University Rep

This has been a very busy year so far. January brought the Illinois High School Theatre Festival, where along with ice, snow and frigid temperatures, thousands of high school students invaded the campus of the University of Illinois. I had the opportunity to talk with well over 100 of these very excited students at the Elmhurst College booth. This event is one of the highlights of our theatre recruiting program. After all, where else are you able to find that many students in one location who are so passionate about theatre?

Then February brought colder weather, and the Illinois Theatre Association's non-equity auditions, where hundreds of actors had the opportunity to audition for dozens of theatre company representatives. In fact, I ran into some of my students at the auditions. These two events are important for higher education. The first allows us to meet with those who perhaps will be part of our future classes, while the latter offers a way for our seniors and recent alumni to take the first steps into their entertainment careers.



While these are valuable resources the ITA offers, I have begun to wonder what else the ITA can do to help us and our students. I took a little time at the High School Festival, between the waves of highly energized high schoolers, to visit with folks from other Illinois schools. I asked them about their thoughts on the ITA and what else it can do for us. I must admit I put

them on the spot, but some interesting ideas came from our conversations. We talked about the idea of offering audition and portfolio workshops around the state. These would help educate and prepare high school students who plan to audition or interview at the Festival. Another thought was to create a database of college and university productions each year, to improve the chance of getting out and seeing the work each of us do. This could lead to other cooperative opportunities, like co-productions, director/designer swaps, and other events where our students might have the chance to see the different ways we all create theatre.

I am sure there are many more ideas out there, and I invite you to contact me with any and all of the ones you have. Send me an e-mail (arnoldr@elmhurst.edu) with your thoughts. The ITA is working to improve theatre in Illinois, but it needs your help to get it done.

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**WANT TO WORK IN THEATRE BUT NOT SURE HOW?
Talk To Producer Roberta Maia Pereira**



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

**By Risa Sarachan,
Forbes, February 2019
Forward by Britnee Ruscitti Kenyon**

In the the mass chaos of college auditions, the question I'm constantly asked by my students is, "But what do I do after college?" I really appreciate the candid, but professional nature of this interview. It is especially inspiring because of Pereira's background--an immigrant finding theatrical success in the US. I think it's important for students to read success stories before they go off to study theatre to reassure themselves that their passions can turn into a career. For the article, [click here](#).



Roberta Mala Pereira

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PEORIA PLAYERS CELEBRATES 100th SEASON

**Forward by Don Shandrow
ITA Community Theatre Rep**

We are looking forward to the Illinois Theatre Association's 3rd Bi-Annual Statewide Community Theatre Festival, *It'll Play in Peoria*, Illinois AACTFest, which will be hosted by Peoria Players Theatre and the Peoria Park District in Peoria on March 29-31, 2019. Peoria Players received the ITA Community Theatre Award of Excellence this past year and will be celebrating their 100th anniversary this year as well. Following is an article written by Peoria Players that shares a little about their history and why Peoria Players makes a perfect choice for this years AACTFest. We look forward to having you attend this event that brings together community theatres from across the state. Registration is available at www.illinoistheatre.org.



The first show presented on October 6, 1919 was appropriately titled *The Maker of Dreams* by Oliphant Down. This "little theatre" has been in continuous operation since that date. Peoria Players will celebrate its 100th season this Fall. Theatre

Manager Nicki Haschke, who has been involved with Peoria Players for 40 of those years, says, "When selecting our 100th season lineup of shows, we wanted to not only celebrate the past, but also look ahead to the future. Therefore, we are offering some of our most well-known productions, along with a regional premiere." As a special incentive to attract input from patrons, Peoria Players ran an "Audience Choice" survey last year, asking audience members what show or shows they would like to see in this centennial season. "Our top vote-getter

was actually *The King & I*," Haschke says, "but unfortunately due to the tour, we could not get the rights. So we decided to give audiences their second and third choices, which were *A Chorus Line* and *The Wizard of Oz*, respectively. However, we will continue trying for *The King & I* and hope to present it in a future season."

The mainstage season officially opened in September with *The Wizard of Oz* directed by Jimmy Ulrich. Still a popular staple among the musical theater standards, Jimmy's recent auditions welcomed over 95 hopefuls. The season continues with *Steel Magnolias* directed by Susan Hazzard, *Elf the Musical* (a regional premiere) directed by Jeremy Kelly, *West Side Story* directed by Connie Sinn, *Dreamgirls* directed by Lisa Voyle, and *A Chorus Line* directed by Chip Joyce.

Along with the season lineup, this year Peoria Players will offer several special performances, including the annual showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, now in its 27th year at Peoria Players, Christmas One-Acts, featuring one-act plays written by local authors, the return of A Ring-A-Ding-Ding New Year, a New Year's Eve celebration showcasing the music of Frank Sinatra and including a complimentary hors d'oeuvres buffet, and Centennial Celebration Revue, a musical revue of Peoria Players' history.

The 100th Season Planning Committee, chaired by Pat and Bruce White, started meeting in April of 2015 to begin brainstorming about significant ways to celebrate this landmark occasion. Furnished with several sub-committees to carry out each task of the planning process, the full committee has many exciting things in store. Currently, along with the sale of Peoria Players 100th season merchandise, the Century Selfie Celebration is happening around town at various arts venues. Attendees are encouraged to take a "selfie" next to the Century Selfie sign and post it on social media to be entered to win a pair of Peoria Players season tickets.

This fall, WTVP produced a video documentary about Peoria Players which will be sold to patrons along with a 100th season commemorative booklet. A historical exhibit will enjoy a three-month display at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. This exhibit will include a scaled-down version of our well-known marquee with a stage and theatre seats. There will also be a decade-by-decade feature where visitors will get an up-close look at backstage photos and details, along with famous costumes, props and set pieces that have been seen onstage in various Peoria Players productions. On January 19, 2019, the committee hosted a gala celebration complete with a live band and dance floor, plated meal and goodie bags with Peoria Players merchandise. The festivities wind down with a birthday party next October, made possible by the current "Buy a Candle" campaign. Patrons are being offered the opportunity to have their name displayed on a candle to be lit atop the 100th birthday cake, which will be displayed in the front lobby. Candle order forms are available at peoriaplayers.org. Perhaps the most exciting event to take place is the installation of brand new theatre seats after Grease closes this August. Thanks to a generous donor, during the week of August 13, 302 new theatre seats will be installed, giving the patrons a more comfortable experience.

As prestigious recognition from fellow theater chums, the Illinois Theatre Association has awarded Peoria Players with its

Community Theatre Award of Excellence. Peoria Players has been a mainstay in our local area and has kept its continuous operation status through the rough times - the Depression, the construction of I-74 taking out their stage and workshop at the Jackson Street Firehouse, and consequently, moving from venue to venue. The group even took the "show on the road" in 1957 while their current facility in Lakeview Park was being built. The first show produced at this facility was Teahouse of the August Moon. What Peoria Players has accomplished in their 100 years of operation is nothing short of phenomenal, and it proudly lives up to its debut production, The Maker of Dreams.

For more information, patrons may contact our box office at 309-688-4473 or visit us online:

peoriaplayers.org
facebook.com/peoriaplayerstheatre
twitter.com/Peoria_Players

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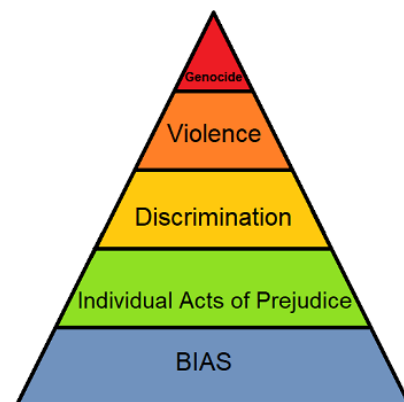
EXPLORING THEATRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Elisabeth Westphal
ITA Creative Dramatics Rep

I have been involved in devising theatre with students for many years, but in the last five or six years, I have turned to subjects that revolve around social justice. This year we focused on the idea of how unintentional acts of bias can lead to acts of prejudice.

The process was very interesting for me because I decided to use an action research methodology with my students. We started by each student talking about a time when someone made an assumption about them that was not true. Then, I created panels of staff members from my school. One panel was black men, one was a panel of biracial teachers, and one panel was made up of staff who had immigrated to the U.S. as children or young adults. The actors made a list of questions to ask the panels about their experiences of prejudice based on race or immigrant status. We ended up making the decision to ask the same question to each panel to give the performance some coherence. Once we had done these interviews we made fictionalized scenes out of their stories.

Then to give this part of the performance some more structure, we used the "Pyramid of Hate" created by the Anti-Defamation League which shows how prejudice spreads and intensifies if no one speaks out.



After we had generated all this material then we needed a frame for our material. We could have just presented the scenes, but the group wanted a narrative so we created a dystopian world based on a suggestion of one of the student where the worst possible outcomes of racial prejudice were evident including a dictator, a caste system, immigrants being removed and sent back to their country of origin and reservations. The play became two parts.

The first part showed the dystopian world through an illegal organization that had hacked the news media. The second half of the play was a documentary entitled "How we got here," which outlined how this dystopian society went from prejudicial attitudes to a complete unraveling of social justice. The piece was timely and truly shared the middle school student's fears and hopes. A big lesson I am always reminded of when I create work with middle school students is to trust them to come up with the frame and not to have too much of a preconception. I can tell you that this performance was very different from what I had imagined.

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USING DATA TO INFORM MY PRACTICE

By Stacy Deemar
ITA Member

In my current practice, students have drama daily for forty-minutes over the course of nine weeks. At the beginning of a rotation, students participate in a performance based drama pre-assessment during one class period. The purpose of the assessment is to analyze where students are in their drama development. Since drama is not a full year course, the amount of time that elapses between drama courses can vary from six to twelve months which effects student performance.



Students are assigned to a small group to plan and rehearse an improvisational scene based on a prompt with guided questions. Students are scored individually on the following criteria: planning/rehearsal, character, concentration

and commitment, improvisation, plot, audience, and critique/evaluate. Each item is scored on a scale of 0 to 4.

The results of the pre-assessment inform me of students' strengths and weaknesses in their drama skills. Many students score low in critiquing a scene because they have forgotten this practice. The criteria for evaluating a scene must include the student using a theatre/drama vocabulary word and citing evidence from the scene to support their argument. Many students in the assessment use a theatre/drama vocabulary in their critique but fail to cite evidence from the scene or they use examples from the scene but do not use a theatre/drama vocabulary word in their evaluation.

To improve on critiquing skills, students are required to make at least one oral evaluation per scene. If a student's comment does not include the required criteria, I ask multiple questions that guide the student to properly evaluate the scene. For special need students, I may need to make different accommodations. For example, I might cite evidence from the scene and have the student contribute a theatre/drama vocabulary word to the evaluation. Furthermore, English language learners may need to state their comment in their native language or write their idea on paper.

About two weeks into the rotation, my specific learning objective is on character. Students are evaluated on

appropriate body language and facial expressions, voice, dialogue, and maintaining a believable character. Students are given a rubric and each item is scored 0 or 1. The scores are mostly average and below average since students have had only a few opportunities to hone their craft in the improvised scenes. The results indicate: students continue to engage in scene work, the teacher models the scenes, students critique themselves and what improvements they can make, and the teacher uses formative assessment so students can make adjustments immediately.

By the last week of the drama rotation, students have completed eight scenes, written a monologue, and designed a costume. The specific learning objective is on character again for the ninth scene. Students are evaluated on appropriate body language and facial expressions, voice, dialogue, and maintaining a believable character. Students are given a rubric and each item is scored 0 or 1. Most students make significant improvements in all four domains of the rubric from the initial evaluation. Student progress is indicative of the aforementioned practices I implemented in addition to students being afforded the opportunity to practice over a specific period of time.

On the last day of the drama rotation, students participate in a performance based post assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to analyze student growth in their drama development compared to the pre-assessment. Once again, students plan and rehearse an improvisational scene based on a prompt with guided questions. Students are assigned to a small group and are scored individually on the following criteria: planning/rehearsal, character, concentration and commitment, improvisation, plot, audience, and critique/evaluate. Each item is scored on a scale of 0 to 4. By the end of the nine week course, the test results indicate that students have made progress in all seven categories.

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NSAL's Metropolitan Chicago Chapter Drama Competition

Date: March 17th, 2019
Time: 11am-3pm
PianoForte Studios
1335 South Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL

Awards for the local competition will be \$500, \$300 and \$200. The 1st Place winner will advance to the national competition to be held in Washington, D.C. May 30 to June 1, 2019. All expenses for the winner to attend will be paid by the Metropolitan Chicago Chapter. Local judges will be chosen from schools with well-known theater departments.

The 1st Place national award will be \$12,000. There will be three other awards as well. The national judges will be D.C. Shakespeare Theater Company's Artistic Director, Michael Kahn; Arena Stage Theater's Artistic Director, Molly Smith; Hollywood actor, director, producer, acting coach and teacher Michael Bofshever; and New York casting director and producer Geoffrey Soffer.

Applications must be submitted, (via email) by March 9, 2019. For applications and information regarding the NSAL Drama competition, [click here](#) to go to the NSAL website.

For specific information regarding the Metropolitan Chicago Chapter Drama competition, email Judy Park at tlac31@comcast.net or Ilya Frieberg at ilberg@gmail.com. To speak to someone regarding the competition, call Judy at 847-710-7127 or Ilya at 812-361-4027.

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