

## Two-Year Agreement Reached With Westchester Broadway Theatre

### Possible Strike Averted; 80 Jobs Preserved for 2012

Equity has successfully negotiated a new, two-year contract with the Westchester Broadway Theatre, a 450-seat dinner theatre in Elmsford, NY. The new contract will preserve 80 jobs (Principal, Chorus and Stage Management) in the theatre's upcoming 2012 season.

Westchester Broadway Theatre has been in operation for 38 years and is one of the remaining professional dinner theatres in the US. WBT's eight-

show musical season includes: *'S Wonderful*, *Legally Blonde*, *Hairspray*, *George M*, *Cinderella*, *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Can-Can*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Each production will have a minimum of five Principal, four Chorus and two Stage Management contracts.

"WBT is an important source of jobs in the metro-New York City area" said Senior Business Representative Russell Lehrer, who negotiated the agreement. "AEA was able to overcome significant resistance from the producer to come to the bargaining table, but once there

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## AEA Will Launch Two New Websites to Address Members' Needs

The rapidly changing technology landscape has impacted everyone, whether it's an individual, business or union. Actors' Equity Association is no exception, and this year the Union will launch two new websites designed to make it easier to manage information for both members and employers.

The Member Portal and the Employer Portal are two key components in the larger scope of an internal technology infrastructure overhaul. The new system will provide more flexibility, improved integration with other technologies and the ability to facilitate business process workflow. While that may sound a little "techie speak," the end result will be a faster, safer and more intuitive way to have the most up-to-date information readily available, and it will address the members' needs in an effective and efficient manner.

As internal improvements are made so staff can better serve the membership, a new and improved Member Portal will be launched this winter. The new portal will have its own address: [members.actorssequity.org](http://members.actorssequity.org). A member can view his or her profile and update it in real time as emails, phone numbers or addresses change. They will be able to vote in Union elections



Equity's New System Team: (l to r) Joe DeMichele, John Fasulo, Joan Glazer, Doug Beebe, Karen Nothmann, Dave Thorn, Tom Kaub. (Not shown: Russell Lehrer)

online, subscribe to email lists by topic, and much more. Other advantages will include a paperless billing option, and the same online payment options (credit cards and ACH) as the current member site. Security has been a mainstay in Equity's system and this new portal will continue to offer enhanced security.

According to National IT Director Doug Beebe, "Our goal is to provide our members with the best services possible. As we designed this new Member Portal, we kept the needs of the members as the core driver in our plans. Our work at Equity is first and foremost about the members."

In addition to the Member site, the Union will introduce a new Employer Portal, *employers.actorssequity.org*. This portal will allow employers to interact with

Equity staff, and submit production information electronically, reducing the need for duplicate data entry. Future features will include electronic contracts, and submission of working dues payments to the Union. For the member, this means a more efficient interaction with Producers.

The changes in Equity's IT system will not stop with the launch of these two new portals. Beebe and his IT team, along with other key staff members, continue to work on new and improved systems to better serve the members. The ideas are many and with advancements occurring quickly, Equity is keeping pace in the new technology playing field.

(Editor's note: Check Equity's website and future editions of Equity News for information about the launch dates.)

### Your Income Tax

## Our Congress, Ourselves

By Sandra Karas  
Director, VITA Program

### Yes, Virginia, We Are the Congress

It bears reminding ourselves from time to time that the "they" we deride - those with whom we have become so exasperated, the government and the people in it who are seemingly not paying any attention to us - are US. They are we! It's not as though the Constitution didn't already provide us this status, it's just that we feel quite powerless at times and not very, well,

represented. So, with another round of encouragement, I suggest that you contact your Congressional representatives - both in the House and Senate - and let them know what's on your mind. Do you want to change the tax structure? How? Do you want lower taxes on the income you've worked for (your wages)? Continue the lower rates on your investment income (stocks, bonds)? Both? And what do you expect in return? Is there something you think our government should support? Education? The Arts? Overseas spending? Healthcare? We already know we must pay tax, it's just a question of how much and for what. If you have an opinion about any of this, let your public servants know what it is. Email your House Representatives at:

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov); Email your Senators at: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov); Email the President and other Government officials at: [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov). For your state and local representatives, email: [www.\(your state or city abbreviation\).gov](http://www.(your state or city abbreviation).gov). They do read what you have to say and they should know what you think.

### Catch 22— A Tax Bill and No Money

As he carefully considered the bottom line and allowed his large tax bill to fully register, one of our members looked up at me and said, "My whole life has come down to taxes." While this comment was hardly a fair reflection of his whole life, it seemed at that moment to be an accurate, if somewhat

## Online Voting: The Way To Go

What's green, fast and cheap? Online Voting in AEA's upcoming 2012 Officer and Council elections. Why? Because it's the fastest and most convenient way to get your ballot (especially for members working away from home). Plus it's cost effective! Here's how it works: Once you've registered for Online Voting, you will no longer receive a paper ballot.

hyperbolic assessment of his state of discomfort. And I really couldn't disagree with the poor guy. Everything we do, from filling out a W-4 form to choosing where and with whom to live, seems to be reduced to our tax bracket in one way or another. And for this member, it all really did come down to taxes as he sat vainly trying to think of ways to get out from under the balance due and continue to navigate the unpredictable waters of his chosen profession - the

entertainment industry. He was a competent, well trained, talented professional whose chosen career was to give to others the sheer joy of experiencing his work as a performing artist. And the irony of it all did not escape him, either. The art and entertainment he provided to others seemed to be lost on him at that moment. We laughed about it as we worked to structure a plan for repayment, reduce penalties and get him

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## LORT Pact Extended

Council has acted on a request from the three regional LORT Committees to extend the current Agreement, due to expire on February 19, 2012 for one year—until February 17, 2013. All terms of the Agreement are unchanged. This action was taken due to concerns about the effect on LORT theatres of the current economic climate and loss of National and State funding. The request was supported by Chairs of the Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs as well as the Media and Stage Managers' Committees.

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## Area Liaison Hotline system

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has a National toll-free hotline system for members who live in Area Liaison and office cities. The number is 877-AEA-1913 (honoring the year of Equity's founding). Each Area Liaison city has its own extension, where members can access news and information in their region.

### (1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

### (2) Dial your city extension:

- 811 Atlanta
- 812 Austin/San Antonio
- 813 Boston
- 814 Buffalo/Rochester
- 815 Chicago**
- 816 Cincinnati/Louisville
- 817 Cleveland
- 818 Dallas/Fort Worth
- 819 Denver
- 820 Detroit
- 821 Florida – Central
- 822 Florida – South
- 823 Houston
- 824 Kansas City
- 825 Las Vegas
- 826 Los Angeles**
- 827 Milwaukee/Madison
- 828 Minneapolis/St Paul
- 829 Nashville
- 830 New Orleans
- 831 New York**
- 832 Philadelphia
- 833 Phoenix/Tucson
- 834 Pittsburgh
- 835 San Diego
- 836 San Francisco
- 837 Seattle
- 838 St. Louis
- 839 Washington DC/Baltimore

## Westchester Theatre

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we were able to respond to WBT's new business model and growing economic concerns, ultimately achieving a fair and equitable agreement for our members." In addition to the jobs, Equity achieved a 3% salary increase in the second year of the agreement as well as an increase in required contracts; a higher chorus increment; protections for juveniles; and new EEO language.

Negotiations began with the producer, William Stutler, in mid-December. "Over the past decade, WBT has experienced

economic difficulties and since 2005, has only had increases to their minimum salaries twice," noted Mr. Lehrer. "After years of producing two-month runs of each musical, WBT announced that they were going to increase the number of shows in their 2012 season with shorter, four-week runs, which boosted production costs. Stutler initially proposed a one-year agreement with a severe reduction in the number of required Equity contracts along with a wage-freeze, threatening that this was the only way he would remain an Equity theatre and imposing a deadline for Equity to accept his proposal – but we had legitimate questions and concerns which

could only be addressed through negotiating."

Mr. Lehrer and the Eastern Dinner Theatre Committee (Councillors Margot Moreland, chair, and Bill Bateman, vice-chair) steadfastly resisted the threat, determined to preserve Equity jobs while offering WBT terms for a second season. "Both sides deserved to know what to expect moving forward," Lehrer said.

After WBT's refusal to negotiate any further, Lehrer filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) with the National Labor Relations Board and testified at the Board, all the while continuing to reach out to the producer to get him to sit down at the bargaining table

with Equity. Upon the recommendation of the Eastern Regional Board, the Council was apprised of all developments and unanimously passed a strike authorization to be used if necessary. These actions brought WBT to the table, ultimately leading to the successful conclusion.

"Going to the NLRB and getting a strike authorization isn't a daily occurrence for us at Equity," Mr. Lehrer said, "but fighting for fair working conditions is. A ULP charge or a strike are just extreme tools at our disposal to ensure Actors' voices are heard as part of a meaningful negotiation."

## I AM PWD Summit: Disability IS Diversity Reflects the True American Scene

by Amy M. Threet, AEA, SAG, AFTRA, MSW

This historic, I AM PWD (Inclusion in the Arts & Media of People With Disabilities) summit took place on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 with *simultaneous* meetings at both The Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles and Baruch College in New York. Both were video-conferenced so that each coast could experience the full event. This was an opportunity for industry professionals—from producers, directors, casting talent and union representatives from AEA, SAG and AFTRA to meet and share ideas following a campaign that began on October 6, 2008 with *simultaneous* conferences in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington DC.

It is important to note that the Tri-Union I AM PWD disability rights campaign has become an international civil and human rights movement, endorsed by the AFL-CIO, Both ACTRA, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists, and FIA, the International Federation of Artists, also recognized the campaign, further emphasizing its global impact.

Having been involved with this campaign from the beginning as the NY SAG PWD (Performers with Disabilities) vice chair, and a member of the PR and Communications Action group, I can

honestly say that making this summit happen was a monumental feat! Incredibly well thought out and executed over a period of three years which involved in-person meetings, phone calls, video-conferencing bi-coastally, and the tireless efforts of many.

Robert David Hall,

that they are part of the American Scene."

Keynote addresses were delivered by Kathleen Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor at the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, and actor RJ Mitte (*Breaking Bad*). Also in attendance were the performer union leaders: Eq-

ber, 2011 I AM PWD Co-Chair, a disability advocate and performer with a disability, from the Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts gave a heartfelt introduction in NYC. She stated, "while progress has been made in other employment sectors, people with disabilities remain virtually invisible in the entertainment and news media. The I AM PWD campaign was created to say: *enough*. It is time to change the status quo. It is time to end the discrimination loudly."

Anita Hollander, Chair of the I AM PWD Steering committee and National chair of AFTRA and SAG Performers with Disabilities as well as an AEA member, said that "despite the progress we've made, our presence still does not reflect our nearly 60 million Americans with disabilities."

Lawrence Carter Long, a tireless advocate and activist, who currently works as the Public Affairs Specialist for the National Council on Disability, facilitated the table meetings/discussions in NYC, while Olivia Raynor, Director of the National Arts and Disabilities Center at UCLA, facilitated in Los Angeles. Danny Woodburn, best known as Mickey Abbott on *Seinfeld*, acted as host.

After a robust round of table discussions, it would seem that we had broken a communication boundary, but still had lots of work ahead of us to achieve our goal of true inclusion.



(From I): AEA Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg, DOL Regional Representative Robert Asaro-Angelo, SAG NY Executive Director Jae Je Simmons, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy and Keynote speaker Kathleen Martinez, I AM PWD Co-Chair Christine Bruno, I AM PWD Watchdog Action Group Chair Anita Hollander, National Council on Disability/NY Facilitator Lawrence Carter Long, AEA President Nick Wyman, SAG Interim National Director of Affirmative Action & Diversity Adam Moore. (Photo: Stephanie Masucci)

AEA/SAG/AFTRA member, activist and advocate, has been a National Board member and Chair of the PWD Committee and a driving force in the campaign since its inception. He can be seen as one of the only "real" disabled (double-leg amputee) series regulars on CBS TV's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and in media generally. He eloquently stated that "kids with a disability need to grow up to feel

uity President Nick Wyman, AFTRA National President Roberta Reardon and SAG National President Ken Howard. "The mission and the mandate of I AM PWD is that everyone should be able to see themselves mirrored in media," said Mr. Wyman. "Kids will grow up seeing and hearing themselves in the media and know that they are not alone."

There were many speakers, but Christine Bruno, Equity mem-

## Stage Managers' Association Honors Three With Lifetime Achievement Awards

Late Broadway stage manager Beverly Randolph, along with Steven Zweigbaum and Joe Drummond, received the Stage Managers' Association's Del Hughes Lifetime Achievement Award at the SMA's annual holiday celebration in New York on December 12, 2011.

The Del Hughes Lifetime

Achievement Award, which has been described as the "crowning achievement of a stage manager's career," recognizes "the finest qualities of Stage Management: patience, diplomacy organization and a sense of humor."

Ms. Randolph, a 30-year Broadway veteran, died in March 2011. She stage managed eight

Broadway productions for producer-director Hal Prince, as well as, among others, *Curtains*, *Passion*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Follies in Concert* at Avery Fisher Hall.

Mr. Zweigbaum stage managed the original Broadway productions of *Shenandoah*, *42nd Street*, *Me and My Girl*, and *City of Angels* and was associate di-

rector for *Crazy for You*, *The Producers* and *Young Frankenstein*.

Mr. Drummond has served as the stage manager at Chicago's Tony Award-winning Goodman Theatre since 1974 and also teaches stage management at Roosevelt University.

Now in its 30th year, the Stage Managers' Association is a professional association created by and for stage managers. More than 500 members are represented.



ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITY NEWS

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# Equity Centennial Book on the Way

By Jack Goldstein  
Director of Governance  
Policy and Support

**A**EA's Centennial celebrations are on schedule with the manuscript and design of its illustrated history nearing completion.

Entitled, *Performance of the Century, 100 Years of Actors' Equity Association and the Rise of Professional American Theater*, the coffee table book is being written by well-known theatre journalist Robert Simonson and will be published for national release in the fall of 2012 by Applause Books. Richard Rothschild of Print Matters Inc., and the President of the National Association of Book Packagers, has been engaged to oversee the project under the direction of the Centennial Committee's book subcommittee. While the book will be available through major book stores, Playbill Inc., one of the primary media partners for the Centennial, has agreed to handle on-line sales with discounts for Equity members.

The book is targeting a broad popular and educational audience. It will be fact-filled enough to attract students and devoted theatregoers and be entertaining enough to open a

window on professional theatre for thousands of potential theatregoers. The book compares the intensely demanding craft of the theatre in the words of Actors and Stage Managers with the glamour and lore that so fascinates the public and examines Equity's professional and moral choices that have had a lasting impact. It will also tell the story of Equity's role in making American theatre a worldwide phenomenon. Special care is being taken to balance text with visual excitement to ensure wide audience appeal.

The book will launch coincidentally during a national election cycle in which union-bashing may become even more familiar political rhetoric. If so, *Performance of the Century* will serve an ambassadorial role as well, not to hostile politicians, but to average American citizens who may be curious and admiring of a labor union made up of the improbable creatures who inhabit the stage. If theatre is the mirror of human experience, then perhaps readers will recognize themselves in the pages of *Performance of the Century* as well.

## Equity Equinymys

**A**re you sometimes (or even often) confused by Equity shorthand—terms used regularly, but rarely defined, or abbreviations and acronyms, which look like alphabet soup? Equity News is beginning a feature of definitions or "Equinymys," which we hope will be useful and help solve the problem. First up, are Chorus Equinymys.

### ACCA

The ACCA, Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs, was formed as part of the merger of Actors' Equity Association and Chorus Equity in 1955. It is responsible for advising the Council on all Chorus matters.

The ACCA is charged with protecting, preserving and advancing all aspects of the Chorus contract and chorus provisions for all of Equity's National and Regional contracts.

### CHORUS

A member of the Chorus is any person who appears in a musical as part of a group or ensemble or who appears in a dramatic play as part of a singing or dancing group or ensemble; in either instance, the Chorus member's primary function is that of a member of such group or ensemble. A member of the Chorus may be

known by a character name, may speak and/or sing lines, and/or perform a "specialty" and/or a dance segment alone.

### DANCE CAPTAIN

The Dance Captain is a member of the company who maintains the artistic standards of all choreography and/or musical staging in the style, intent, technique and energy level of the original production. The Dance Captain always works in tandem with the Stage Manager in conveying and maintaining the creative intentions of the Artistic Staff.

### SWING

A Swing is a non-performing member of the Chorus who is required to learn all Chorus "tracks", parts, and specialties assigned to them. A "track" is defined as Chorus actor's show from start to finish. It includes all vocal parts, choreography, backstage traffic patterns, and costume changes. A Swing can go into the performance at any time during the show to cover any injured or absent Chorus members.

Questions? Contact: David Westphal, National Chorus Business Representative (212) 869-8530 x412.

**Next issue: Understudies, Standbys, and Increments**

By Nick Wyman

**A** well-known theatre website just posted that (as announced by the Broadway producers last May) my most recent Broadway show *Catch Me If You Can* will go out on a national tour this fall. Immediately, Facebook and my e-mail inbox burst into flame. How come? The tour is not going out on a full Production Contract or a Tier. It isn't going out on SETA (Short Engagement Touring Agreement). It is going out non-Equity.

Most of the Facebook comments were quick to place the blame: it's that blasted Union, letting decent-paying jobs slip through their careless fingers. It galls me that this wonderful piece of Broadway entertainment, this show that I have been so proud to be part of during its four-year development and all-too-short six-month Broadway run, is going out non-Equity. It galls me just as much that my fellow Union members think AEA is to blame.

The Road has changed, and AEA is working hard to save Equity jobs. As I laid out in my "Touring 101" and "Touring 102" (available on the AEA website), touring is now a very difficult environment in which to make money—whether you are a Producer, a presenter, or an Actor. Government funding has been slashed or eliminated, donors have pulled back and subscription lists have shrunk—so the local presenters are refusing to pay the guarantees necessary to mount and run an Equity show, even on the lowest SETA category. If a Producer needs \$280K to \$300K per week to run his show and only three or four cities will guarantee more than \$230K, the Producer (who may have already lost most of the investors' money during the Broadway run) will take the sure money—exceedingly modest but sure—of licensing the show rather than taking the risk of losing yet more of the investors' money.

As I explained, the Union's approach has morphed from last century's "If you want professional actors, you have to pay full production salaries" (which I wholeheartedly supported then) to our current stance of "If you can prove you're getting low guarantees,

## From the PRESIDENT

# CashCowasaurus vs. CatchMeasaurus

we'll share the risk/reward with you by taking lower salaries in exchange for a back-end participation" (which I just as wholeheartedly support now). This change in strategy has enabled AEA to maintain and even increase our share of the touring market. As you may recall, our share of the one-week touring market had slipped to about 60% as recently as 2003. Currently, almost every show playing engagements of one week or longer is on an Equity contract.

AEA has a staff of hard-nosed, experienced, creative negotiators who work with (and sometimes against) producers to cajole them into making the most favorable deal possible for the members. Sometimes, however, the two sides just can't make the numbers work.

If a show is a smash hit like *Wicked* or *Jersey Boys*, the money is there and it all works. (Check out my "Touring 102" column for a discussion of the numbers.) The producers of the Tony-winning Broadway hit *Billy Elliot* thought, not unreasonably, that they had a similarly rainmaking cash cow and sent out not one but two national tours on a full Production contract with an Equity company of 52 and many trucks worth of scenery and costumes. To break even, they needed to make a ton of money. They didn't. The two tours were consolidated, and the four major sit-down cities were divided up. One tour closed in Canada; and the other tour, faced with upcoming shorter engagements (and consequently many more expensive moves), planned to close and license the tour to a non-Equity producer. Our staff was able to convince the producer to reconsider the decision to go non-Equity, in part through a mutual careful review of the financial and human elements of the new production, and thus keep it on an Equity contract, albeit a SETA as opposed to full Production.

For saving the resulting 48 Equity jobs—more jobs than the average touring show and jobs paying far more than the average Equity job—the Union received considerable grief—not so much from the cast as from other members—for having "allowed" the *B.E.* producers to reduce the actors' salaries. The truth is that AEA doesn't allow producers to

reduce member salaries, AEA allows producers not to eliminate member jobs. Would you rather have 80 jobs at \$2,000 a week or 400 jobs at \$1,000 a week?

We all—Actors, directors, designers, producers, presenters—want touring shows to be duplicates of the Broadway show: a thrilling and moving entertainment with a spectacular set, extravagant costumes, a huge orchestra and a top-notch cast. On the Road, however, costs soar because the set has to be disassembled, transported and reassembled (sometimes once a week) and the cast and those orchestra and crew members traveling with the show have to be paid per diem for their housing and meals. Those are the two big cost-factors on the road: the size of the touring complement and the number of trucks.

Many of our Production Contract bargaining partners, used to the more expensive and forgiving environment of Broadway, have difficulty saying "No.": "OK, you can have an ensemble of 16;" "OK, you can have an orchestra of 24;" "OK, you can have three turntables." Their non-Equity-producing brethren, who are used to operating with thinner profit margins, have no problem saying "No.": "No, you can only have eight in the ensemble;" "No, you can only have 16 in the orchestra;" "No, the set has to fit into four trucks."

My best friend (who is ten inches shorter and 80 pounds lighter than I) has a running gag about how he the proto-mammal is going to steal the eggs of me the lumbering dinosaur and I am going to go extinct. That may be the situation on the Road. Whether or not the CashCowasaurus goes extinct, it no longer rules the earth.

The Road is different than it was. We need to talk and work with not only our traditional bargaining partners, but also traditionally non-Equity producers and our sister unions to help configure a road that works for all of us. We need to be alert, fast-moving, and adaptable in order to not only survive but thrive. Thanks to a flexible, determined and creative leadership and staff, Actors' Equity Association is doing just that.



## Lamkey Feted on Retirement

(From l) Regional Directors Mary Lou Westerfield, Rick Berg and CRD designate Christine Provost, with retiring Central Regional Director Kathryn Lamkey (second from l) at her December 12, 2011 retirement party held at Province Restaurant in Chicago. The event was also attended by President Nick Wyman, Councillors, Board members, Executive Director Mary McColl, Assistant Executive Director Steven DiPaola, industry labor leaders, producers and AEA staff past and present. As Kathryn used to say, quoting her hometown newspaper, "A good time was had by all."

## Need Help With Housing? Contact The Actors Fund

Is the lack of affordable housing keeping you from pursuing your career? Do you need quality skilled nursing or assisted living for yourself or a loved one? Housing sponsored by The Actors Fund may be the answer. The Schermerhorn offers occupancy in the heart of downtown Brooklyn. The Dorothy Ross Friedman Residence has shared units in

New York's Theatre District. The Palm View provides homes to low income people with HIV/AIDS in West Hollywood, and the Lillian Booth Actors Home in Englewood, New Jersey provides quality assisted living and skilled nursing to those who've dedicated their lives to performing arts. Visit [www.actorsfund.org](http://www.actorsfund.org) for more information, or to download an application.

## Stephen Douglass Dies Former AEA Treasurer, Councillor

Stephen Douglass, a Councillor from 1956-1971 and AEA Treasurer from 1966-1969 and 1971-1972, died on December 20, 2011 after a long battle with leukemia. He was 90.

Mr. Douglass, who joined Equity in 1942, began his career at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey playing in the chorus and then in leading roles. He understudied the role of Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* in New York, played the role on the

which he was nominated for a Tony Award. Other Broadway shows included *Destry Rides Again*, *110 in the Shade* and *I Do, I Do*.

Mr. Douglass retired to England in 1972, but continued to work, playing *Teveye* in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Alhambra Dinner Theatre in Jacksonville, Florida at the age of 71. His last stage appearance was in 2003 in an English production of *Oklahoma!*



Stephen Douglass as Teveye.

National Tour, at Lincoln Center in 1948, in London in 1950 and more than 1,000 times in summer stock. He appeared on Broadway in *Make A Wish*, *The Golden Apple*, *Pajama Game*, and was Joe Hardy in *Damn Yankees* with Gwen Verdon, for

## Correction

In the story on Jeanna Belkin, Councillor Emerita and Special Advisor to the Equity P&H Trustees, that appeared on page 4 of the December 2011 issue of Equity News, it was stated that when Ms. Belkin was appearing on Broadway in *One Touch of Venus*, she was concerned that there was no cot backstage for performers who needed to lie down. It is true that Ms. Belkin *did* appear in *One Touch of Venus*, but it was when she was on tour in *Call Me Mister* that she decided to take action. The result is that today there is a cot backstage in every Equity theatre.

## Equity Foundation Awards Grants to 101 Theatres

The Actors' Equity Foundation awarded 101 Theatre Grants in 2011: 58 grants totaling \$42,000 in the Eastern Region; 27 grants totaling \$11,000 in the Central Region; and 16 grants totaling \$14,000 in the Western Region.

Started in 1962, the Foundation continues to grow as a result of estate bequests and individual donations. Would you like to be part of the work of this lasting and tangible way to help fellow performers and live theatre? If so, and for further information on making a bequest or donation, contact Comptroller Joseph DeMichele at Equity, 212-869-8530, ext. 348. Or, you may send a donation by check to: The Actors' Equity Foundation, c/o Arne Gundersen, President, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036. All contributions are tax-deductible.

## Your Income Tax

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back into the land of the fully functioning, taxpaying members of society. If you find yourself with a tax bill and unsure what your options are, don't be discouraged. Contact a tax expert who can give you some choices and peace of mind.

### Withholding not Sufficient?

Over the last few years, as happens whenever the economy takes a downturn, artists may be the first to lose jobs or find new ones even harder to obtain. This can be a blow in a profession where maintaining gainful employment is uncertain at best and a struggle at worst. Add taxable unemployment compensation to the equation and you add insult to injury. Our members who qualify for and receive unemployment benefits have no control over the federal and state taxes to be withheld from each payment. They must first elect to have withholding and then accept the minimal amount taken out. Federal withholding is only 10% - but the taxpayer's final bracket may be higher when added to other income. In New York, the state withholding percentage is so low (2%) that it does not make an appreciable dent in the tax that will be due when filing the return and, because many states do not offer to withhold taxes at all, there is usually a state tax bill waiting next April, regardless of where your claim originates.

Unemployment is not the only source of under-withheld income we see; you may have little or no federal withholding and none at all in your state if you work on a cruise ship and perform on the high seas. And if you work out of your home state, you will probably not have enough state tax withheld to cover the obligation to that state

Medicare is covered) and you will be in a pickle next year when you owe tax. And the income source from which there is no withholding at all is your 1099 fee income. This is the independent contractor income you receive when you model, choreograph, direct, create recorded books or other voice-over projects from home, write,

lot as independent contractors what they do and they'll likely tell you how they pay as they go. Estimated taxes and how to fill out your W-4 form will be discussed in next month's issue.

### And Finally— Everything Old is... (well, you know the rest)

Not that you've been waiting with bated breath, but there are some extended benefits for 2011 that came from the tax relief act that President Obama signed in December, 2010. Among other things, he extended the Bush tax cuts that were to expire, continued the election to claim state and local taxes as an itemized deduction, along with mortgage insurance premiums, refundable adoption credits, child tax credits, capital gain rates and a simplified earned income credit. Other highlights for 2011 include:

**Reduced FICA for Employees:** If you noticed the slightly higher take-home pay last year, it's because employees have been paying lower social security rates than employers (4.2%, instead of 6.2%) during 2011 and that has also translated into lower self-employment tax for independent contractors. The President proposed extending the Social Security tax reduction for another 12 months. As we went to print, Congress had voted to grant a two-month extension only. This provision also included a brief extension of unemployment and some Medicare benefits, among

other items. In exchange for this two-month benefit period, President Obama promised to consider constructing the Keystone (Canada to Mexico) oil pipeline. Check your news sources for updates on these negotiations - and whether or not your taxes are going back up.

**Alternative Minimum Tax:** The dreaded and much-feared AMT has increased exemption amounts: if you're single, it's \$48,450 and married, it's \$74,450. The 0% and 15% capital gain rates for AMT are also extended through 2011. Every little bit helps those who get caught in this deduction snare.

**Education credits:** the American Opportunity Credit remains in effect through 2012; Qualified Tuition Deduction goes through 2011; Student Loan Interest continues through 2012, as well as the exclusion for employer provided educational assistance.

For more information on these and other tax issues, consult your own tax adviser or stop in at your VITA office.

The New York VITA office is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (no Tuesdays) from 10:30 to 4 on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of the New York Equity building. Telephone 212-921-2548. Check the website for other VITA Programs for our members.

Sandra Karas is the Director of VITA, Secretary-Treasurer of Equity and a member of SAG and AFTRA.

## Sandra Karas Presents Seminars on Income Tax Issues in Four Cities

San Diego Equity members welcomed Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Karas to their Area Liaison Membership Meeting on November 14, 2011 where Ms. Karas presented a seminar on Income Tax Deductions and Audit Preparation for Performing Artists. Members of SAG and AFTRA were also invited to attend. Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield and Area Liaison Chair Abner Genece were also in attendance. With the generous support of the AEA,

AFTRA and SAG Foundations, Ms. Karas was able to visit four cities to present seminars to members of the three unions. In addition to San Diego, she visited Los Angeles, Seattle and Orlando. Ms. Karas was asked to assist with organizing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs in Los Angeles and Orlando and, with the addition of those two cities, VITA is now offered to AEA members in four cities: New York, Seattle, Orlando and Los Angeles.

and your home state as well. The result is that you end up paying one or both of them when you file your returns. If you qualify for and receive third-party disability benefits, you will find that the weekly wages do not withhold federal or state taxes (though FICA and

compose, or design. You know when you receive it that it's not subject to withholding, but do you plan for the tax that's going to be due when you file your returns? Probably not - at least not if you haven't had much experience with these kinds of earnings. Ask those who work a



## All Regions Programs Planned for Black History Month

### Eastern Region

The Equal Employment Opportunity Committee presents *Celebrating African-American Actors on Broadway* on Monday evening, February 27 from 5-7 PM at B. Smith's, 320 W. 46th street. To acknowledge and commemorate the wealth of talent and the contributions that African-American Actors and Stage Managers are bestowing on Broadway this season, the Eastern Region EEO Committee is sponsoring a festive cocktail party centered around a 20-minute live "Talk Show" with a slate of guests from among those being celebrated. Host is Norm Lewis, star of *The Gershwins' Porgy*

and *Bess*. This event is free, but space is limited. RSVP by February 20 to [eeo@actorequity.org](mailto:eeo@actorequity.org) or by calling Pearl Brady at 212-869-8530, ext. 346.

### Central Region

*Spirit, A Celebration of Diversity*, the annual event and award presentation honoring Central Region Members of color and minority-based theatre companies will be held at the Black Ensemble Theater on March 19, 2012. For more information, visit the Equity website, [www.actorequity.org](http://www.actorequity.org) or call Luther Goins, National Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator, at 312-641-0393.

### Western Region

The Western Region EEO Committee, in partnership with Center Theatre Group, is hosting a panel discussion recognizing the *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park*

connection. The two productions are running simultaneously in Los Angeles with *Raisin* at the Kirk from January 19 through February 19 and *Clybourne* at the Taper from January 11 through February 26. The panel will consist of Actors from both productions as well as original cast members of the 1959 production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. The event will be held at the Kirk Douglas Theatre on February 19, 2012 at 3:30 PM following the 1 PM matinee performance of *Raisin*. The discussion will focus on Acting and Equal Employment Opportunity over the past 50 years. The panel will be moderated by Pier Carlo Talenti, Literary Manager for the Center Theatre Group. For more information contact Business Rep Michael Van Duzer at [mvanduzer@actorequity.org](mailto:mvanduzer@actorequity.org) or 323-978-8080.

## New Jersey

### McCarter Theatre Makes a Difference

#### By Cheryl Mintz

McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey supported local social service organizations by collecting donations for Allies, Inc. and Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

Principal Councillor James Ludwig (Nephew Fred) and Cheryl Mintz (Supervising Stage Manager), followed its daily standing ovation to jump into a heartfelt curtain speech. Graeme Malcolm, quoting Dickens, said: "At this festive

non-profit agency dedicated to providing housing, healthcare, meaningful employment and recreational opportunities to people with special needs. ([www.alliesnj.org](http://www.alliesnj.org))

In 2009 and 2010, McCarter Theatre, the company of *A Christmas Carol* and theatre patrons also helped The Children's Home Society ([www.chsofnj.org](http://www.chsofnj.org)) and HomeFront ([www.homefrontnj.org](http://www.homefrontnj.org)) with donations totaling over \$60,000. Special mention goes to Christopher Parks and McCarter Theatre's Education Program for



The 2011 company of McCarter Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*, with (seated center) Jennifer Paulson Lee (Choreography Supervisor), Michael Unger (Director), Cheryl Mintz (Supervising Stage Manager), David Thompson (Adaptor) and Mara Isaacs (Producing Director). (Photo: T. Charles Erickson)

(TASK) during the holiday run of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The production ran from December 4-24, 2011 and donations totaled \$37,642.

The company, led by Equity members Graeme Malcolm (Ebenezer Scrooge), Ronica Reddick (Ghost of Christmas Present), AEA Eastern

season of the year, we who have been blessed with good fortune in our lives have the obligation to give a little back to those in need."

TASK's mission is to provide food for the hungry in Trenton, as well as programs to improve their patrons' quality of life. ([www.trentonsoupkitchen.org](http://www.trentonsoupkitchen.org))

Allies, Inc. is an accredited

cultivating these outreach programs.

As longtime cast member Danny Hallowell (Peter Cratchit), 13, who started out as Tiny Tim in 2003, said in the curtain speech, "Anything you care to give is meaningful. Thank you for your generosity. And from the bottom of our hearts, Happy Holidays!"

## Denver

### Tri-Union Meet-n-Greet Draws AEA, SAG, AFTRA members

On Monday, December 12, 2011, the Equity Liaison Committee helped sponsor the first Tri-Union event in Denver. Equity members were invited to join other local members from SAG and AFTRA for a festive meet-n-greet at The Denver Sports Column. Attendance was free for members of the three unions and their guests.

Members and EMCs dropped by to chat with other members, as well as meet with their Denver AEA Liaison Chair, Colorado SAG President and Denver AFTRA President. The event was intended to promote solidarity, reciprocity and enthusiasm among the three unions. Plus, it was a whole lot of fun, according to members who participated.

The Tri-Union Committee consisted of Shelly Gaza, Julie Crane and Chaz Grundy. They worked together to organize this first Tri-Union event for



EMC Devin Mugavero (l) with Equity member Chaz Grundy at the meet-n-greet.

colleagues and members to mingle, rejoice and celebrate the performing arts in Colorado. "By connecting with each other, we become more relevant," said Chaz Grundy, of AEA's Liaison Committee. "We're working to become not only more visible, but more accessible to employers/ producers and performers. We do better together than apart."

## Phoenix/Tucson

### Liaison Committee Supports "Adopt a Troop" Project; Helps Local Organizations

To honor the men and women in our Armed Forces serving abroad, the Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Committee gathered

16 boxes destined for different locations in Afghanistan, each box containing items bagged together for distribution to as



Area Liaison Tony Hodges loads packages for the "Adopt a Troop" project.

many as 20-30 individual servicemen and women.

In addition to the boxes being sent overseas, sufficient donations were received to fill several boxes with food, toiletries and stationery that were delivered

donations for holiday care packages in December. This is the third year in a row that the Committee has participated in the "Adopt a Troop" project. Arizona Equity Members expressed their appreciation and gratitude to those in military service by donating much needed items such as toiletries and socks, as well as candy, hot chocolate, paperback books, playing cards and games.

This year, the Committee joined forces with Girl Scout Brownie Troop 2817 from the Meadowlark Neighborhood of Phoenix where Committee member Maren Maclean's daughter is a member. The Brownies worked on the project with Equity members as part of their Community Service and not only assisted in the collection of donations but in packing all of the boxes for shipping. The combined collection efforts filled

to local organizations selected by the Brownies, including UMOM (providing services to Arizona's homeless families), Maggie's Place (a home for single mothers) and Operation Santa Claus (a community-wide effort benefiting children's charities).

"Once again I'm proud and pleased at the generosity of Arizona Equity members," said Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Tony Hodges. "Working with the Brownie Troop was a huge plus that enabled us to not only double what we sent overseas last year to acknowledge in a small way the absence and sacrifice of service members, but allowed us to also share some of that generosity to meet needs within the local community." Committee member Charles St. Clair added, "This is a great thing, done by great people. Thank you."

**New York****Red Socks Award Honors Asian-American**

Participating in the Red Socks Award ceremony are (l to r): John FitzGibbon, founder of the Award; Jorge Ortoll, Executive Director of Ma-Yi; honoree Ching Valdes-Aran; and Tisa Chang, Producing Director of Pan Asian Rep.

The sixth Lilah Kan "Red Socks Award" was presented on November 16, 2011 at the

opening of *Shanghai Lil's* at Pan Asian Repertory Company. The award is given annually to a

New York-based Asian-American theatre artist. Ralph Pena and Jorge Ortoll, the Artistic and Executive Directors for the Ma-Yi Theatre Company nominated this year's recipient: Actress Ching Valdes-Aran. She received a plaque and a check for \$1,000.

The award was created to honor the memory of Lilah Kan, whose "unique spirit lifted many people." She was the "hostess with the mostess" to hundreds of artists whom she fed, housed and inspired over her five decade acting career. Ms. Kan was known for giving a pair of red socks as an opening night gift to many actors she admired.

**New York****Bayfield, Callaway Awards Presented****Three Members Honored by AEA Foundation**

The annual St. Clair Bayfield and Joseph A. Callaway Awards sponsored by the Actors' Equity Foundation were presented at the Eastern Regional Membership Meeting on January 6, 2012.

The Bayfield Award, honoring the best performance in a supporting role by an Actor in a Shakespearean play in the New York metropolitan area, went to Nick Westrate for his performance as Berowne in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, part of the 2011-2012 Public Lab season at the Public Theater. The award was presented by Francois Battiste, a friend and classmate at The Juilliard School.

Mr. Battiste called Mr. Westrate "the real deal," who had high expectations for himself as well as for others, and who works "diligently at his craft." He praised Mr. Westrate's "commitment, passion and infectious sense of humor."

Mr. Westrate said he was grateful to be recognized for what he always wanted to do—act in Shakespeare and classical theatre.

Nick Westrate appeared on Broadway in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, and Off-Broadway in, among other plays, *Unnatural*

*Acts* (Classic Stage Company), *The Little Foxes* (New York Theatre Workshop) and *The Boys in the Band* (Transport Group), for which he had received a Drama Desk nomination.

The Callaway Award, honoring the best performance in a professional production of a classic play (one written prior to 1920) in the New York metropolitan area, went to Danai Gurira and Derek Smith.



Third Vice-President Ira Mont with Callaway Award recipient Danai Gurira. Photo: Joe Marzullo

Ms. Gurira was recognized for her performance as Isabella in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* presented by the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park. Barry Edelstein, "head of all things Shakespeare" at the Public, made the presentation, citing Ms. Gurira's strong "emotional connection to the story and the character," and her "command" of the space. Mr. Edelstein also noted that Ms. Gurira is an emerging playwright and he was looking forward "to the classical works she will play and her canon of work which may become classics."

Ms. Gurira was "overwhelmed," saying it was "a gift to get to do what you love to do" and to be recognized was

more than she expected. She was thankful for the role and expressed her joy in exploring the part. She also noted that she had recently returned from Zimbabwe, which, she said, needed an organization like Equity to support its Actors. In closing, she thanked Equity for "all it does for Actors in this country."

Ms. Gurira had appeared on Broadway in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and Off-Broadway was in, and was co-creator of, *In the Continuum*. Other awards she has received include an Obie, Helen Hayes, John Gassner Outer Critics, and she is both a Hodder Fellow and an NEA Grant Fellow.

Mr. Smith, who received the award for his performance as Dog in the Red Bull Theater Production of *The Witch of Edmonton*, was unable to attend the meeting since he was working out-of-town. Margot Harley, Producing Artistic Director of The Acting Company, accepted on his behalf, reading a statement Mr. Smith sent expressing his thanks and deep gratitude to the company for casting him and to the judges for recognizing him.

Mr. Smith's Broadway credits include: *The Green Bird* (Tony nomination), *The Government Inspector*, *Timon of Athens*, *Jackie: An American Life*, *Ring 'Round the Moon*, and several years as Scar in *The Lion King*. He received Drama League and LA Ovation Awards for *Sylvia*, the 2000 Clarence Derwent Award for his appearance in *King John*, and an Obie for *The Green Bird*.

All honorees received a \$1,000 check and an engraved crystal plaque.

The Judges' Panel included Joe Dziemianowicz, Daily News; Adam Feldman, Time Out NY; Harry Haun, Playbill; and David Rosenberg, Back Stage.

**Chicago****Members Attend Teaching Artist Workshop**

The Central Regional Member Education and Outreach Committee hosted a Teaching Artist Workshop conducted by AEA Member Bruce Taylor. Mr. Taylor, who has previously worked as a consultant, director and lecturer for national and international arts organizations, is a champion of arts education in public education and, over his years as an arts administrator, has created programs and practices that have successfully woven artistic practices into programs designed to be used in the classroom. Mr. Taylor shared these practices with AEA, SAG and AFTRA members on December 5, 2011 and challenged the participants to become viable Teaching Artists. Follow-up seminars were held on December 9 and 19 where participants reconvened

to present their proposed lesson plans incorporating the ideas and principles Mr. Taylor shared in the first workshop. "Bruce has been a pleasure to work with, bringing his attention to detail to all parts of the project. His communication and people skills are excellent, and he has some very innovative ideas," said one AEA Member. Mr. Taylor also donated a copy of his book, *The Arts Equation: Forging a Vital Link Between Performing Artists and Educators* (Back Stage Books, 1999) to the Ray Loneragan Memorial Library at the Chicago office. Chicago Equity staff thanks the Member Education and Outreach Committee for hosting the event and Bruce Taylor for his passion, enthusiasm, and for selflessly volunteering his time to his fellow Equity Members.

**Dallas/Fort Worth****DFW Actors Raise \$15,000 for Local Children's Charity**

DFW Actors Give Back board members and friends present a check and framed poster to Jonathan's Place. Shown here (l to r) are: Stephanie Riggs (FMPAT Executive Director, AEA member), Scott Kirham (FMPAT Executive Producer, AEA member), Doug Hood (Development & Communications Director, Jonathan's Place), Bob Hess, Lisa Schreiner Goss (Board and AEA member), Doug Miller (Secretary, Holidayzle producer, AEA member).

DFW Actors Give Back raised \$15,000 from sales of *HOLIDAZZLE Act II*, a CD compilation of holiday songs, with each tract featuring a different solo or group performance. The money went to Jonathan's Place, which has been providing residential care and specialized services to the abused and neglected children of North Texas for almost 20 years. "To raise \$15,000 this

year was a tremendous accomplishment," said Actors Give Back President and Equity Member Bob Hess. "We are lucky to be part of such a generous arts community and we thank the individuals and organizations who made it possible." The most outstanding sales came from Flower Mound Performing Arts Theatre, Theatre Three and WaterTower Theatre, he added.

**New York****AFCU Meeting is March 2**

The Annual Meeting of Actors Federal Credit Union will be held on Friday, March 2, 2012 from 3:30-5:30 PM in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor at 165 West 46th Street. Included on the agenda are Board and Credit Committee elections and the State of the Union report by AFCU President Jeff Rodman. As always, there will be refreshments and more than \$500 in door prizes.

**New York****Women to Celebrate Women in the Arts on March 5**

The Eastern Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee is sponsoring a special event to celebrate Women's History Month, March 2012. Women of AEA, The Rehearsal Club and The Ziegfeld Club are uniting to present *Union Women@Work - Inspiration in Motion* at 7 PM on March 5, 2012 at the Theatre at St. Peter's Church, 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue.

Admission is free, but seating is very limited. This event will celebrate contributions by and for women of 1913, a significant year in Equity's history, as well as the *Ziegfeld Folies*, which opened at The New Amsterdam in 1913, among other surprises. For more information contact Eastern EEO Business Representative Pearl Brady at [eeo@actorsequity.org](mailto:eeo@actorsequity.org) or 212-869-8530

**New York**

# Annual Gypsy of the Year Sets Another Fundraising Record

*Grease* was the word and a record-setting fundraising total of \$4,895,253 was the highpoint of the 23rd Annual *Gypsy of the Year* competition, thanks to the tireless work of 53 participating Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring companies during six weeks of intensive fundraising.

Hosted by Seth Rudetsky of Sirius/XM Satellite Radio, with special guest hosts (1) Patrick Page of *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*; and *Follies*' Jan Maxwell, two afternoons of songs, original skits and dances were performed by more than 300 Equity members.

The audiences on December 5 and 6, 2011 cheered as the original 1972 Broadway cast of *Grease* opened the show with a spirited reunion celebrating their show's 40th anniversary. (2) Barry Bostwick, Carole Demas, Adrienne Barbeau, Alan Paul, Walter Bobbie and other members of the original cast joined 16 current Broadway gypsies in an opening number directed and choreographed by Equity member Rommy Sandhu with musical direction by Ben Cohn, and revisited songs from one of the most popular musicals in Broadway history.

The show ended with a send-off to Broadway's *Billy Elliot*, which closed in January, as more



Photos: Peter James Zelinski

than 50 current and past company members appeared on stage. (3) including nine "Billys" who played the role on Broadway.

Capping the afternoon and as part of the final total announcement, Hugh Jackman was honored with a special award for raising \$857,740 in the first three weeks of his fundraising efforts during the limited run of *Hugh Jackman, Back on Broadway*.

(4) Hugh Jackman, Daniel Radcliffe (*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*)

and Bernadette Peters (*Follies*) presented the afternoon's fundraising and performance awards. Broadway's top fundraiser was *How to Succeed...* with \$325,935; first runner-up was *The Book of Mormon*, \$315,968; second runner-up was *Wicked*, \$240,809; third runner-up was *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, \$197,285; and fourth runner-up was *Follies*, \$186,405. *Other Desert Cities* brought in the highest Broadway Play total with \$77,712 and *Rent* took the top Off-Broadway spot with \$43,300.

The big winners from national

touring were *Wicked*—Munchkinland, \$326,902; *Wicked*—Emerald City, \$316,299; *Mary Poppins*, \$169,709, and *Jersey Boys*, \$157,831.

The judges recognized the company of *Billy Elliot* as the best onstage presentation while (5) the kids from *Mary Poppins'* presentation were runner-ups.

But the afternoon shows were not just about entertainment. (6) Judith Light (*Other Desert Cities*) led a poignant moment of silence saying to the stilled audience: "Today, 23 years since the first *Gypsy of the Year*, let us take a

moment to reflect on those who cannot be here and those whose voices still cannot be heard. Let us take a moment to recommit to reaching beyond ourselves to ensure that all facing a multitude of challenges are embraced in times of trouble, isolation or crisis."

The 23rd Annual *Gypsy of the Year* was directed by Valerie Lau-Kee Lai with Jason Trubitt as PSM, leading a team of 10 stage managers.

For a complete story and more pictures, visit [www.broadwaycares.org](http://www.broadwaycares.org).

**Los Angeles**

## Dancers Discuss Careers

Career Transition For Dancers is sponsoring a Career Conversation on Job Search Strategies for Artists in Transition on Wednesday, February 15, 2012, a session on Careers in Eastern Medicine on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 and a session on

Careers in Western Medicine on Tuesday, March 27, 2012.

All events are from 7-9 PM at The Actors Fund office, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard. For information, call 323-549-6660 or visit the website: [www.careertransition.org](http://www.careertransition.org).

**Chicago**

## Drury Lane Company Helps Season of Concern

During the month of December, the lobby of the Drury Lane Oakbrook Theatre was alive with the sound of...GRATITUDE. Smiling faces tell the story: those from grateful audiences who just saw the critically acclaimed "sold out" *The Sound of Music* and who opened their hearts and

pocketbooks and filled the buckets and cans of the grateful company members who volunteered to collect for 2011's Season of Concern. Stephen Radar (head of SOC) said, "It is truly the largest collection total from the run of one show that I know of or can remember."



(From l) Detroit Liaison chair Dana Gamarra, Central Regional Director designate Christine Provost, Liaison Committee member Leah Smith, Kathryn V. Lamkey, Central Regional Board and Liaison Committee member Peggy Thorp, Liaison Committee member Milford Luster, and Central Regional VP Dev Kennedy.

**Detroit**

## Heartfelt Farewell to Kathryn Lamkey

The Detroit Liaison Committee hosted a small reception to say a formal farewell to retiring Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey. Equity Members and local Equity producers were in attendance as Committee Chair Dana Gamarra and Central Regional Vice-

President Dev Kennedy gave heartfelt farewell speeches. Mr. Gamarra presented Ms. Lamkey with a plaque on behalf of the Liaison Committee to commemorate her 25 years of service to the Union, and Ms. Lamkey's favorite cake (with lots of icing) was shared by all.

**Chicago**

## EEOC Event Focuses on Building Minority Audiences

The Central Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee and Silk Road Rising are presenting *Multi-Colored Butts in Seats*, a program on "attracting audiences that look like Chicago (a city of colors)" on Monday, February 27, 2012 from 6:30-9

PM at the Chicago Temple Building, 77 West Washington Street. This event is free to all Equity Members and Membership Candidates. No reservations needed. For more information, call Luther Goins or Michael Cichon, 312-641-0393, ext. 237, 238.

**New York**

## Dancers Get LinkedIn For Job Search

LinkedIn is the primary social media tool for ongoing career management and for landing a job. Find out the best practices and strategies for your search from social media expert Haig Chahinian at a Career Transition For Dancers' event on Monday, February 27, 2012.

On Monday, March 12, Career Transition For Dancers hosts a similar event on using social media tools to catch up on the innovations that will help promote your new business and ideas. Social media expert Maryam Day conducts this session.

Both events take place from 5:30-7:30 PM in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street. For information or reservations, call 212-764-0172 or email [careerconversations@careertransition.org](mailto:careerconversations@careertransition.org).

### Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, February 20, 2012 in observance of Presidents' Day.

## A Look Back@Equity Milestones

### 75 Years Ago

January/February 1937

• In a discussion of increasing Equity's minimum wage, the Equity Magazine reports that "of the 2,000-odd contracts signed by Equity members last year [1936], a total of 9% were signed for less than forty dollars."

• A revised contract for Stock (in effect on and after February 15) includes a rule stating that "preceding the opening date, the Actor, if required, shall give one week of free rehearsals."

• The February issue of the Equity Magazine includes an item from President Frank Gillmore accepting responsibility for the presence of guards at a membership meeting. This was done, he said, because "meetings have become more and more hectic." At one meeting, he noted, there was "a near riot" precipitated by "an opposition group," and at another, "there was an affair of fistcuffs."

### 50 Years Ago

January/February 1962

• Equity Magazine reports that U.S. Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg has issued "the strongest recommendation for government assistance to the arts yet put forth by an officer of Cabinet rank." Among other things, Secretary Goldberg calls for the establishment of a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts, an action long supported by Equity.

• Executive Secretary Angus Duncan reports that merger talks with the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) are ongoing and jurisdictional disputes with the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA) continue.

### 25 Years Ago

January/February 1987

• Equity and British Equity leaders meet in London for discussions on actor exchange and reciprocity. Main focus of the meetings is to review the

balance of exchange and explore ways to expand the program.

• Discussion of regional representation and developing top a two-day agenda at a National Conference which brings together executives, staff, representatives from the Western and Midwest Regions and 14 Area Liaisons.

### 10 Years Ago

January/February 2002

• The three regional Racial Equality Committees agree to a reorganization and a change of name to the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (EEOC).

• Equity protests continue over a non-Equity "national tour" of *The Music Man*. Protests have followed the show from Des Moines, where it began, to Cleveland, Hartford, Baltimore, Orlando, Chicago and Indianapolis.

• In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Broadway performers, including Equity Councilors, go on the road in *New York Loves America: The Broadway Tour*, promoting New York City and the Broadway theatre.

## 2012 Annual Election Calendar

Tuesday, February 14, 2012	Deadline for reports of Joint Officers Nominating Committees
Tuesday, February 21, 2012	Deadline for reports of all Regional Nominating Committees
Friday, March 2, 2012	Deadline for nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in Regional Offices by 2 pm Eastern Time, 1 pm Central, 11 am Pacific)
Wednesday, March 7, 2012	Deadline for Candidates Statements for Equity News, Equity Website and Ballot Brochure (due in Regional Offices by 2 pm Eastern Time, 1 pm Central, 11 am Pacific) Lottery for ballot placement (National Office)
Thursday, March 22, 2012	Deadline for registration to vote electronically
Friday, April 13, 2012	Annual National Membership Meeting (all Regions via teleconference) Candidate speeches
Monday, April 16, 2012	Distribution of ballots (from balloting company)
Wednesday, May 23, 2012	Deadline for receipt of ballots
Thursday, May 24, 2012	Tabulation Day

## BRIEF NOTES

• Equity member **José Ferrer** will be immortalized on a First-Class Forever Stamp in 2012, the hundredth anniversary of his birth. He is the 14th luminary celebrated in the U.S. Postal Service's Distinguished Americans Series. Mr. Ferrer died in 1992 at the age of 80.

• **Florida Studio Theatre** in Sarasota ended its 2011 season with 11,000 Mainstage subscrip-

tions, becoming the largest subscribed regional theatre in the southeast.

• **The Surflight Theatre** in Beach Haven, NJ has emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and is planning a 2012 season of musical theatre.

• Welcome to **Farmers Alley Theatre**, a new Equity Small Professional Theatre in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Farmers Alley is now the only year-round full time professional theatre in West Michigan.



### By Luther Goins Central Region Business Representative, National EEO Coordinator

They are calling it "the house that Jackie built." Jackie Taylor that is—founder, producer, playwright and Artistic Director.

The new Black Ensemble Cultural Center, an impressive, multi-faceted, \$19 million facility opened on November 18, 2011 with a not-to-be missed reception and with a new production of the award-winning musical, *The Jackie Wilson Story* (written by none other than Ms. Jackie Taylor).

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, pop icon Dionne Warwick and scores of corporate, foundation and political representatives attended the VIP reception and show. The amazing facility, designed by architect John Morris, includes interior designs by Dionne Warwick, a 299-seat Main Stage theatre, a 150-seat Studio Theatre (coming soon), and much needed space for Black Ensemble's numerous arts and educational outreach programming.

Jackie Taylor, who began her welcome and thank you speech by stating, "If I'm dreaming, please don't wake me until the bills come," reinforced Black Ensemble's mission and promised to continue to bring generations of talented African-Americans to life on the professional stage.

### Central Region

## Black Ensemble Theater Celebrates New Home, New Theatre, Long Awaited Cultural Center



(From l) Dionne Warwick, Jackie Taylor and Illinois Governor Pat Quinn at the opening of the new Black Ensemble Cultural Center.

Ms. Taylor is also pleased that she has been able to employ Equity members over the years. "Black Ensemble Theater is proud of the number of Equity artists that we have been able to employ through the past 35 years," she says. "Now with the completion of our Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center we will be able to serve our artists by offering a higher Equity pay scale. It is so satisfying as an Equity actress myself since 1972 as well as an Equity producer since 1976, to be able to continue benefiting our union artists."

Carrie Louise Abernathy is one of the Equity artists who has benefited by being part of the Black Ensemble family. "To me first and foremost Black Ensemble wraps its arms around its members and you become a part of family and everyone is learning. People are willing to assist you. It is a teaching theatre and there is a constant learning environment. My first experience with

Black Ensemble was as an understudy in their 150-seat basement theatre several years ago. Since that time Black Ensemble Theater has become the 300-seat jewel on North Clark Street in Chicago that serves a diverse audience, in race and in age. It is a Black Ensemble tradition at the end of each show for the cast to go to the lobby and greet audience members. As an Equity member, it warms my heart to see the smiling faces and hear the comments from the audience."

Founded in 1976 by Ms. Taylor, a recipient of Equity's Rosetta LeNoire Award, Black Ensemble Theater has grown from a small community arts organization to a nationally and internationally renowned arts institution. Black Ensemble achieves its mission through productions and programs that perpetuate the history of the African American people while reaching out to a cross-cultural audience and serving disenfranchised communities.

### On the Web:

[www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org)

- Your income tax - Sandra Karas
- I AM PWD National summit
- BC/EFA Week across the country
- David Wheeler - Father of the Boston theatre scene

## Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered and published as soon as possible. The Editor reserves the right to limit letters to 175 words and to select one or two representative letters when many similar letters are received. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request for those letters which may affect members' employment. Signatures will not be withheld on letters antagonistic or accusatory, either implied or expressed, against other members. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.

### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Dear Editor:

Having read that "The Broadway Flea Market was born in the autumn of 1987 when the company of *A Chorus Line* sold items left in the dressing rooms on two tables set up outside their stage door in Shubert Alley to benefit Equity Fights AIDS," I'd like to set the record straight.

In July 1987, shortly after Michael Bennett's death from AIDS, Trish Ramish and I sat in our dressing room at the Shubert Theater lamenting our many colleagues lost to AIDS. We wanted to raise money to fight the disease, and we struck on the idea of a garage sale or flea market to sell show memorabilia and personal items. Michael Daneke (Principal Deputy of ACL) helped secure permission from The Shubert Organization to use Shubert Alley free of charge. Michael then phoned Equity to tell Tom Viola what we were planning.

Trish and I spent the next weeks visiting theatres and casts asking for participation, even soliciting outside vendors. Never underestimate the power of actors on a mission.

—Kathy Flynn Muenz  
(aka Flynn McMichaels)

### LOOKING FOR LEGACIES

Dear Editor:

Do you know Equity members who have children who are also

Equity members? How about parents or grandparents who are Equity members? I'm doing a profile of families who have Equity lineage. Please contact me, c/o Equity News Editor Helaine Feldman ([helle122@aol.com](mailto:helle122@aol.com)), if you would like to be included in this roundup of Equity legacies.

—Nicole Flender  
Principal Councillor

### KUDO FOR THE CHORUS

Dear Editor:

What a lovely article in the December issue about the chorus of *The Scottsboro Boys* winning the ACCA Award for Outstanding Broadway Chorus. I was fortunate enough to be in the audience of the last performance of this important work and, indeed, the chorus, under the expert direction and staging of Susan Stroman, excelled at a level of distinction worthy of recognition. I created this Award in 2007, the only one of its kind, to shine the long overdue spotlight on the hard working men and women of the chorus, and it is my great pride to know that this recognition will live on in perpetuity. The chorus has always been the heartbeat of the Broadway musical and without them we would have ended up with shows such as *Guy & Doll* and *Cat*.

—Jean-Paul Richard  
Officer Emeritus, AEA