Equity to Hold National Conference

Councillors, Non-Councilor Central Regional Board members and Area Liaisons from around the country will gather in New York City for a National Conference in plenary session on March 13-15, 2011. The first such Conference since 2005, the plenary will provide an opportunity to discuss the major and external issues facing Equity, and enable the leadership and staff to identify and prioritize goals. The agenda for the Conference currently covers broad issues of job development, governance, finance and member outreach. “The Conference is particularly timely in light of Mary McColl’s arrival as Executive Director,” said President Nick Wyman. “We expect the candid exchange of views to be enormously productive for everyone involved.”

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Carol Waaser Retires From AEA After 28 Years

A
citing Executive Director Carol Waaser has retired after a 28-year career at Actors’ Equity Association. Ms. Waaser joined the Equity staff in 1983 as Traveling Business Rep, visiting theatres throughout the U.S. and meeting with actors, producers, arts councils and private foundations. She also was a member of the New York Dinner Theatre, Cabaret and Developing Theatres contracts in 1987 before being named Director of Membership Education and Communications until 1991.

As Senior Business Representative, she was Chief Negotiator for various contracts, including Walt Disney World, and superintended contracts for Developing Theatres. In 1997, she was selected to be Equity’s first Eastern Regional Director, a new position established by Council as part of the Union’s National Representation plan.

In that position she served as Chief Negotiator for the Off-Broadway contract and was co-Negotiator of the 2008 Production Contract negotiations. In November 2009, she was named Acting Executive Director.

Ms. Waaser, who has an MFA from Yale School of Drama, has been an Equity member since 1970. Prior to joining the AEA staff, she worked as a Stage Manager, Company Manager, Casting Director and Operations Manager for theatre, dance and opera companies.

In her final address at the Eastern Regional membership meeting on January 7, 2011, Ms. Waaser said she that she will miss the opportunity to interact with members, taking on producers or general managers in defense of actors, being involved in legislative issues, traveling around the country and visiting theatres, and sorting through Equity’s unique brand of democracy. She will not miss the hustle and bustle of Times Square. Calling herself “an ardent fan and passionate admirer of theatre” since her first show (LI’s Alney) at the age of ten, Ms. Waaser said it has been “a privilege to work for Equity.”

Carol Waaser, (Photo: Stephanie Masucco)

Journal Features: So Many Regs... So Little Time

By Sandra Karas

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tally! On its way out of town, the 11th Congress left us with many last-minute Internal Revenue Code provisions, the regulations of which are still being written. And the IRS is reconfiguring its computers to accommodate these revisions and additions and has announced that the kinds of returns that our members file will not be accepted before February 15, 2011 and maybe later. This includes those taxpayers who itemize deductions, who claim tuition fees deduction, educators’ expenses, first-time homeowner credit and the 2008 repayment thereof, and a few other circumstances that cannot be processed until the IRS re-programs its systems. By the time you read this, we at the New York VITA office will be updated and ready for anything that comes in the future. We have some new volunteers and a new space to provide privacy to our member taxpayers and comfort to our volunteers.

The 2010 Tax Relief Act brings us some welcome extensions to provisions that were due to expire and other changes. Here are some of the highlights:

1. Those who received the first-time homeowner credit in 2008 know that this was an interest-fee loan — unlike the 2009 version. The 2008 know that this was an interest-free loan – unlike the 2009 loan – is now tax-free and can be used to pay tax on the entire amount you received in 2010.

2. The $250 above-the-line deduction for qualifying expenses for primary and secondary teachers has been extended through 2011.

3. The above-the-line deduction for qualified tuition and related fees has also been extended this year.

4. The ceiling on which payments to the Social Security Administration are assessed remains the same as last year - $106,800. For 2010, the rates also remained unchanged, but this year, unless you are self-employed, you will also save on the rate that you pay social security tax. It’s been reduced from 6.2% to 4.2%. There is no limit on the earnings amount for the 1.45% tax to Medicare in any tax year.

5. State and local sales taxes have also been extended as an itemized deduction category for those who live in states with no income tax or whose state/city withholdings are lower than the sales tax for that geographic area.

6. The standard deduction for real property taxes has not been extended for 2010. Those claiming these taxes must itemize to claim the deduction.

7. Mileage rates for 2010 are 50c for business miles, 16.5c for medical and moving miles and 14c for your charitable miles driven. These rates are for those who do not claim actual auto expenses. A reminder that business mileage consists of the driving you do in search of work, driving out of town on a job in your own vehicle and any miles you incur driving for your employer for which you are not reimbursed. It does not include commuting back and forth to work.

8. Estates of decedents who died in 2010 have been granted a special provision for calculating basis on the inherited assets. Beneficiaries may claim either the decedent’s basis or the step-up (fair market value) basis, whichever is more advantageous to the family. Whatever method is chosen, however, must be used consistently on all assets.

9. Tax-free donations from IFA proceeds up to $100,000.

(continued on page 8)
Member Finds Satisfying Second Career Through The Actors Fund Work Program

An Interview with John Pasha, Equity Member And Actors Fund Work Program participant

T he following is an interview with John Pasha, conducted by Kathy Schier, Director of The Actors Fund Work Program (AWP), which supports participants in identifying and finding meaningful work to complement their industry career or finding a new career.

KS: Tell me about your acting experience right after you finished your BFA.

JP: I was lucky to get work at The Shakespeare Theatre in DC, which made me an Equity Membership Candidate. I then got an MFA from the University of Delaware. After graduation, I moved to New York. I was still an EMC, and started to book non-union work. Big mistake.

KS: What do you mean “big mistake”?

JP: I honestly didn’t understand what it meant to work non-union—but I learned that there were no rules—I sometimes worked 14 days straight or worked 12 hour days with no overtime pay, and, forget earning credits toward health insurance. I soon realized that I could not be a professional actor without being union. As a result, when I was offered my next job, I joined Equity. It was one of the best decisions I ever made, and I have been very busy working regional theatre and Off-Broadway.

KS: So if you were busy acting, why did you come to AWP?

JP: No surprise—I had some good years, and some not so good years. I realized that acting is a wonderful career, but I needed to find another career that was equally fulfilling to complement the acting. I had it with survival work. I didn’t want to take work just to pay bills.

KS: How did AWP help you?

JP: The counseling services helped me to define my strengths and interests outside of theatre. I also came to realize that it didn’t have to be an either/or—I could have more than one fulfilling career at the same time.

KS: Where did all this lead you?

JP: In January of 2009 I returned from an eight-month acting gig to a horrible labor market. The teaching work had dried up, and even survival work was hard to find. This was a real wake-up call. I always thought about health care and with AWP’s encouragement, I went to a nurse practitioner open house. I began volunteering in a hospital, realized that I wanted to be a nurse, applied to school, and got accepted. KS: Nursing? Will that allow you to continue acting?

JP: Actually, I spent my summer break performing at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. It was a fabulous summer, but I have to admit I missed school. I do know that after I finish my degree and get licensed I must spend time working in a hospital to build my clinical foundation. There will be no way I can act during this period. However, because the demand for nurses is expected to continue to rise, once I have a strong foundation, I believe I will be able to have a dual career.

For more information about The Actors Fund call (212) 221-7500 or visit www.actorsfund.org.

Correction

Member James Eiler died on July 20, 2010. We regret that his name was spelled incorrectly in the October/ November 2010 issue of Equity News.

In the October/ November 2010 issue (page 77) an incorrect photo accompanied the report on the October 25, 2010 membership meeting meeting in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Here is the photo that should have appeared with the report in the members at attendance at the meeting.

New York

In late summer, Equity Senior Business Representative Kimberly Rimbold and Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg met with New York State Assemblyman Rory Lancman, who chairs the Workplace Safety Subcommittee and the committees on Labor, Governmental Operations and Cities, on the need for stronger emergency evacuation plans for Broadway theatres. Equity, as well as other Broadway unions, theatre owners, the NYC Fire Department, OSHA and the NYC Office of Emergency Management all participated. The legislative team issued a report on their findings at the roundtable forum, held by the Workplace Safety Subcommittee and the committees on Labor.

Legislative Corner

ILLINOIS

• Central Regional Vice President Ken Kennedy and Central Regional Director Kathryn Lamkey attended the inauguration of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. They also attended the opening house reception following the swearing-in ceremony, and had time to speak with the Governor about Actors’ Equity and the arts. They also had the opportunity to speak with a number of other theatre producers and artistic directors as well as a number of theatrical labor leaders. Governor Quinn is a supporter of the arts and a huge fan of Million Dollar Quartet, the cast of which performed at the event.

• With the mayoral campaigns beginning to take shape in Chicago, a task force has been formed to help educate the candidates in the 2011 election about the value of the arts and arts education in the Windy City. Actors’ Equity (represented by Ms. Lamkey) joins Arts Alliance Illinois and the League of Chicago Theatres as well as the African American Arts Alliance, the Arts & Business Council, the Chicago Artists’ Coalition, the Chicago Music Commission, the Chicago Arts Learning Initiative, the Chicago Public Art Group, the Chicago Cultural Alliance, Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Urban Gateways and others in these efforts. For more updates and information, visit www.artspowerchicago.com.

California

• Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield and Assistant to WRD Richard Oslund have participated in focus groups and meetings hosted by The Actors Fund as that organization strives to create affordable housing for artists and writers in the greater Los Angeles area.

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 (honoing 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
COST Agreement Ratified

aced with claims by Council of Stock Theatres (COST) members that they were continuing to experience economic distress, and their determination to impose a financial freeze, Equity was equally concerned with that goal of improving minimum salaries after a previous two-year freeze. Talks began in New York on September 14, 2010, with two member theatres—Oney's Playhouse Center in Oney, Maryland, and Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey. Facing a stalemate, on October 19 the Equity negotiating team received strike authorization from Council. With both sides realizing the severity of the situation and each others' strong-held convictions, on November 22 a tentative agreement was reached that included modest salary increases of 1% in the first year and 2% in the second year. Fortunately, previous negotiations had already achieved acceptable health rates, which carried forward. This Agreement was ratified by Council on December 21, 2010, with strike scheduled to begin five days later.

As part of the negotiation, Equity members had chosen to remove a contract clause reducing the maximum non-Equity performers that may be employed for large musicals in Tans 1-4 as of the last day of this Agreement.

Carol Waaser Retires

continued from page 1

longer a "Mom and Pop" business and neither is Equity. We’ve increased the services we provide our members; we’ve improved the way we administer contracts; we’ve created new means of communicating with our members; and we’ve tried to stay flexible in handling the ups and downs and changes in our industry.

EN: What accomplishments are you most proud of in terms of your work for the Association?

CW: I don’t think of anything as being my accomplishment because everything we do at Equity is a group effort. But I’m very proud of our organizing Walt Disney World and continuing to get good contracts there. I believe I helped bring a lot of small theatres onto Equity contracts. (And many years ago I was part of the group that created the Small Professional Theatre Contracts Committee.) I played an integral part in negotiating what was in some ways a groundbreaking Production Contract in 2008. And there have been several arbitration’s I’ve been involved with that Equity has won—those have been particularly satisfying because they usually involved an individual member whose grievance was ultimately upheld.

EN: What was your most memorable “moment” at AEA?

CW: Oh, well, that moment remains in the category of confidential, so I’m not at liberty to talk about it...but it was huge!

EN: What were some of your most difficult challenges?

CW: I think one of the most challenging aspects of working for Equity is being within our democracy and understanding our motto of “one for all and all for one.” This requires making decisions that will make some members unhappy in the immediate moment, but must be done for the ultimate good of the Association and the larger membership. It’s often difficult to explain to a member who’s negatively impacted by the decision.

EN: We know that you are an avid bicyclist and have literally biked around the world. What are your immediate plans following your retirement?

CW: I’m going to my apartment! Seriously. But then in March I’ll start training on the bike for my next adventure—a four-week cycling trip to Italy. We’ll cross Sicily and then up Italy from the “toe” all the way to Turin to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Garibaldi’s march and the unification of Italy. It will be almost 1,500 miles in four weeks. And when I return I will finally have time to be a “tourist” in New York and see and do all the things that are wonderful there.

2011 Annual Election Calendar

Tuesday, February 22, 2011 Deadline for Reports of all Nominating Committees

Wednesday, March 9, 2011 Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Time)

Tuesday, February 22, 2011 Deadline for Reports of all Nominating Committees

Wednesday, March 9, 2011 Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Time)

Thursday, March 24, 2011 Deadline for registration to vote electronically

Friday, April 8, 2011 Annual National Membership Meeting (All Regions via Teleconference)

Monday, April 11, 2011 Deadline for registration to vote electronically

Friday, May 20, 2011 Annual National Membership Meeting (All Regions via Teleconference)

Saturday, May 21, 2011 Tabulation Day

E-Voting: It’s The Way To Go

[what’s green, fast and cheap? E-Voting in AEA’s upcoming 2011 Council elections. Why? Because it’s the fastest and most convenient way to get your ballot responded to (even working away from home). Plus it’s cost effective! Last year more than 70% of registered e-Voters went paperless and got their ballots much sooner.]

COST Agreement Ratified

Also, building on the groundwork of the 2008 negotiation, strong improvements were introduced into the Agreement for equal employment language and requirements and access for performers with disabilities. Expanded media use was also negotiated into the Agreement to provide the theatres necessary marketing tools in order to survive in the current economy. In addition to Oney Theatre Center and Paper Mill Playhouse, the COST contract is used by independent theatres: Casa Manana, Fort Worth, TX; La Mirada, Fullerton, CA; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Minneapolis, MN; Cape Playhouse, Dennis, MA; Ogunquit Playhouse, Ogunquit, ME and North Shore Music Theatre, Beverly, MA. In this new Agreement, provisions were reintroduced for Tier Two theatres, realizing a longstanding goal for reunification with the theatres that broke off from the bargaining unit in the mid ’90s (Cape Playhouse and Ogunquit Playhouse).

Equity’s negotiating team included Wally Dunn, Chair; Bill Lehrer, Negotiator was Senior Business Manager and Ken Urmston.

Members Honored

Members Honored

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eyt is working within our democracy and understanding our motto of “one for all and all for one.”

From the President

E-Voting in AEA’s
equity members Brian Dennehy, Linda Lavin, and Fred Curt, Harvey Evans, Stu Arges, Robert Knorthsame and Ken Urmston.

The 2010 Legacy Awards presented by Dancers Over 40 have gone to Equity members Fred Curt, Harvey Evans, Stu Arges, Robert Knorthsame and Ken Urmston.
Dallas theater center donates to food bank

Dallas theater center collected $48,986.85 in donations for the north Texas food bank during its annual holiday production of Dickens’ ‘A Christmas Carol.’ In its three-year partnership with NTFB, Dallas theater center has contributed over $130,686.38 to the non-profit hunger relief organization. ‘We are deeply committed to giving back to the community that has given so much to us,’ says DTC artistic director Kevin Moriarty.

After each performance of ‘A Christmas Carol,’ cast members invited audience members to make contributions to NTFB. On average, $1,484.51 was collected per performance. This year’s donations exceeded last year’s by $6,864.65.

In addition to collecting monetary donations, DTC staff, Brierley resident acting company members and A Christmas Carol cast donated their time by volunteering at the NTFB warehouse in October. After two days at the warehouse, DTC prepared 19 pallets of food for distribution—the equivalent of 12,469 meals. The north Texas food bank helps feed more than 53,000 families a month in 13 north Texas counties, with each dollar providing four meals.

Denver

Members meet for hot bagels on a chilly morning

By Shelly Gazy
Chair, Denver Liaison Committee

The Denver Area membership met for its annual meeting at the Garner galleria theatre located within the Denver center for the Performing arts complex. The hot bagels and coffee provided a warm welcome as members gathered on a chilly january morning to discuss local business as well as hear a national update from Western regional director Mary Lou Westerfield.

The following new members were voted on to the Denver liaison committee: Rachel Fowler, kity hilsabeck skilman, sharon kay white and anne oberbroeckling. They join returning members Drew Frady, Paul Dwyer, kity Hilsabeck skilman, Lara maerz, chaz Grundy, and Betsey cassell.

New York

Triple-A’s offer triple opportunities to audition for franchised agents

By Keith Howard
Director of Auditions

Equity members began enjoying a terrific new membership benefit late in 2009: an ongoing series of open auditions attended by NYC-area AEA-franchised agents. Over 30 sessions of Agent Access Auditions (AAAs or ‘Triple-A’s’), all of them free of charge to members, were held in 2009-10. Seventy-four agencies — every active, local franchised firm — attended at least one session.

That’s the good news. The better news? AAAs are already working. Several members have told us that they have signed or are freelancing with agents who saw them at these auditions. And Triple-A’s are continuing, with three sessions in January 2011, three in February, and many more throughout the year.

Not surprisingly, Triple-A’s have become very popular among Equity members, with a total of 1,046 members participating in 2009-10. During that year, the average participating member was seen by four agencies — for agencies where s/h e might not have had the chance to audition, it had not been for this new Equity program.

Member pearl rhein, who has recently worked at La Jolla playhouse and Alabama shakespeare festival, attended two sessions, auditioning for Abrams artists Agency, Emerging Talent, Paradigm, Peggy hadley enterprises Ltd, and the Roster Agency. She sees AAAs as a career tool — one that complements her other efforts. ‘I attend EPAs. I also go to agent seminars and one-on ones, which charge $25-$50 to meet one agent at a time. AAAs are especially good, because you can see by as many as three agencies at once, all at no cost. Triple-A’s are the brainchild of Equity councilor Bob knapp. Mr. Knapp, along with agency committee chair Judy rice, Eastern EPA committee Chair Linda Cameron and Equity staff, worked with members of the national Association of talent representatives (NATR), the organization that represents many agencies, to give Equity members seeking representation this fantastic new chance to enhance their career opportunities. Mr. Knapp states, ‘I’ve been working on this for a decade, because I felt it was vital for all members to have access to the agencies Equity franchises. I’m thrilled that AAAs have been such a success!’

To accommodate agents’ schedules, Triple-A’s are usually held on Monday evenings. Voluneeer Equity monitors run the auditions with the same remarkable efficiency and supportive attitude that they bring to EPAs and ECCs.

While AAAs usually alternate between musical sessions (with members performing songs) and dramatic sessions (monologues), Equity has not hesitated to create special auditions when appropriate. For example, three agencies who work mostly with young people attended a special AAA held for members under 18.

And Equity owes special thanks to Luolile DiCamillo of McDonnell’s Actors' Association for proposing a special Triple-A, just for dancers. In fact, not only did MSA propose the dancers’ call, the agency also provided — free of charge — the services of a professional choreographer and assistant to work with auditioning dancers. MSA has offered to do this again in 2011.

Agencies have been very positive about the new program, several telling us how much they enjoy this chance to see actors they would not have been able to meet otherwise. As of January 2011, over half of NYC-area agencies have already planned their 2011 AAA attendance.

The program would not be possible without the contributions of dedicated staff members, including national director of membership John Forslund and Agency representative Candrea Hackney. Making AAAs work on a day-to-day basis are the Eastern Region Auditions Department staff, including assistant director Robin Welsh and associate Angel Wueffner.

New York, Los Angeles

Actors fund holds seminars — east and west

It’s a new year so don’t forget to check out the special programs offered by The Actors Fund of America.

In New York, there is a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Forum on Wednesday, February 16, 2011 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Equity Council Room, 14th Floor, 165 west 46th Street. Email blievinson@actorsfund.org for information.

Also, there are networking opportunities; money management sessions; job search, interview skills and resume writing workshops; seminars on getting and keeping health insurance; and meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and Debtors Anonymous. For information, visit the website actorsfund.org or call (212) 221-7300.

Similar seminars and group sessions are held in Los Angeles. Check them out at actorsfund.org or call (323) 933-9244.
New York

Annual Gypsy of the Year Competition Raises Over $3.7 Million for BC/EFA

Well, Hello, Dolly… and a high-stepping bow to the 63 Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring companies whose fundraising efforts raised $3,776,720 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS in the six weeks leading up to the 22nd Annual Gypsy of the Year Competition on December 6 and 7, 2010.

Hosted by the “King of Deconstruction,” Seth Rudetsky, two afternoons of standing ovations at the New Amsterdam Theatre kicked off with the entrance of the legendary (1) Carol Channing in “Carol for a Cure,” directed and choreographed by Equity members Melissa Rae Mahon and Sean McKnight. The three-time Tony-winner sang a delightfully miscenous rendition of “Diamoneds are a Girl’s Best Friend,” then (2) backed up by many of the dancers who had appeared with her in the 1956 Broadway revival, brought the Harmonia Gardens back to life with the title song from Hello, Dolly! With guest hosts Cherry Jones, T.R. Knight, Colin Quinn, David Hyde Pierce, Billy Porter, Elizabeth Stanley and Hunter Ryan Herdlicka at the helm, audiences were treated to performances by the casts of 18 shows, including the touring companies of Mary Poppins and Jersey Boys, who came from the road specifically for the event. Highlights of the show included (3) Rock of Ages cast member Julie Nelson and her partner taking the Best Performance award with a heart-stopping, gravity-defying piece entitled, “The Puppet Master” and (4) The Addams Family’s Adam Riegler, delivering an “It Gets Better”-themed monologue written and directed by co-star Nathan Lane on the challenges and dubious joys of being in The Addams Family, winning the Runner-up performance award.

Others in the show were the casts of La Cage Aux Folles, Mama Mia!, Chicago and Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson. There was also a special presentation (6) celebrating the 60th anniversary of Equi-ty’s Gypsy Robe, conceived and choreographed by Equity member SHEA SULLIVAN and Pamela Remler. Dance numbers were presented by Fein, (7) Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown and there was a moving performance by The Lion King in honor of young cast member Shannon Tarbet. Also represented were the casts of Promises, Promises, Wicked, Mary Poppins and Billy Elliot. The show closed with (8) a reunion of past and present cast members of In the Heights, coming together for their final Gypsy of the Year appearance. led by the show’s creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, Javier Munoz and Kyle Beltran.”

Amidst all the frolic and fun, (9) Lombard’s Judith Light led a moment of silence and brought many to tears, reminding all that “no one is alone.” A Little Night Music star Bernadette Peters and Promises, Promises co-stars Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth presented the fundraising awards and the judges’ choices for the performance awards. Broadway Third Runner-Up, The Addams Family, $150,000; Second Runner-Up, Billy Elliot, $152,268; First Runner-Up Wicked, $181,609; and top donation raiser, (10) Promises, Promises, $195,011. Driving Miss Daisy brought in the highest Broadway Play total with $94,044 and Avenue O took the top Off-Broadway spot with $26,851, followed closely by The Divine Sister with $24,444.

The national tour winners were Jersey Boys/$285,398; Wicked-Emerald City Tour/$236,352, and Shrek The Musical/$137,888.

A team of 14 Equity stage managers led by Jason Trubitt kept the show running, with a cast of more than 200 Equity members, scores of volunteers and the entire crew at the New Amsterdam.

Save the Date

Area Liaison Meetings Set

The following dates have been confirmed for membership meetings in Area Liaison cities. Check the Equity website: www.actorsequity.org for further information.

Saturday, February 12, 2011
Austin/San Antonio Regional Membership Meeting
10:30 a.m. 2 Tejas Grill, 1110 West 6th Street Austin, TX
Brunch will be served.
Sunday, February 13
Dallas/Ft Worth Membership Meeting
7:00 snacks and social 7:30 meeting

Detroit

Liaison Committee Hosts Reception for EMCs

Equity members gathered for the annual Detroit Membership Meeting on November 22, 2010 at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. The evening began with the first-ever Detroit Equity Member- ship Candidate (EMC) reception. EMCs mingled with members while enjoying light refreshments provided by the Liaison Committee. There was also a short Q&A period with Equity Central Business Reps Luthers Goins and Cynthia E. Hanks. Contract Associate Michael Cihon also attended. Later at the membership meeting, Mr. Goins reported on the selection of Mary McColl as the new Executive Director, the new Chicago Equity Building and the upcoming Equity Plenar-y. Members discussed topics ranging from educating new members, to changes in Equity agreements, specifically the re-visions to the Small Professional Theatre Agreement. Members were welcomed by the Detroit Liaison Committee Members: Dana Gamarra (Liaison Chair) and Peggy Thorp (Committee member and Central Regional Board member).

New York

Three Receive Awards From AEA Foundation

It was a sweep for The Merchant of Venice when the Equity Foundation handed out its annual Joe A. Callaway and St. Clair Bayfield Awards at the Eastern Regional membership meeting on January 7, 2011. Lily Rabe and Matthew Rauch received the Callaway Award, which was established by Equity member Joe A. Callaway to encourage participation in the classics and non-profit theatre and honors the best performance in a professional production of a classic play (one written prior to 1920) in the New York metropolitan area.

Ms. Rabe was recognized for her performance as Portia in Merchant, the Public Theatre production which originated in Central Park and then moved to Broadway. She said she “loved doing plays and being a part of this community” and it was “a great privilege” to play this role. Mr. Rauch, also in Merchant, actually received the award for his performance earlier in the season as Bosola in the Red Bull Theatre production of John Webster’s 17th century play, The Duchess of Malfi, performed at the Theatre at St. Clement’s. He echoed Ms. Rabe’s remarks, saying he was “delighted and proud to be a member of the theatre community.” He also thanked his Dad for taking him to the theatre when he was a child.

Both awards were presented by Arne Gundersen, President of the Actors’ Equity Foundation. The St. Clair Bayfield Award honoring the best performance in a supporting role in a Shakespearean play in the New York metropolitan area, was presented by Equity President Nick Wyman. It went to Charles Kim- brough for his performance as the Prince of Arragon in the Shakespearean play that was performed at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. Mr. Kimbrough was ill and unable to attend the meeting so Matthew Rauch accepted on his behalf.

A $1,000 check and a crystal statuette will be mailed to each recipient. The judges Panel included Joe DiPietro, Daily News; Adam Feldman, Time Out NY; Susan Haskell, Theater Talk; Harry Haun, Playbill and David Rosenberg, Back Stage.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, February 21, 2011 in observance of President’s Day.

Callaway Award recipients Lily Rabe and Matthew Rauch with Equity President Nick Wyman. (Photo: Stephanie Maucos)
**Washington, DC**

“Oklahoma!” Raises More Than Wheat

AFCU Meeting is February 25

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**New York**

Actors Meet Agents: New York and LA Host Seminars

In November, Equity’s Eastern Region Membership Education Committee and Agency Committee held a seminar with agents. The following month, the Western Regional Member Education Committee in LA also hosted a seminar. Both events helped actors gain confidence in seeking out new talent and were as happy as the client when the agent gets a job. Here is the first installment of a two-part series about the seminars. This is about the New York seminar.

New York Panelists: Liz Rosier, Hartliep Agency; Mark Schlegel, Cornerstone Agency; and Ken Melamed, Bret Adams Agency. The moderator was Councillor Judy Rice, Chair of the Agency Certification Committee. Here are some highlights:

What is the best way to find an agent? “I don’t know the best way. You can do your mailings, and your photos and other actors can refer to you. I don’t know if there’s one set way,” said one agent. Call Sheet (formerly Ross Reports) is one way to go “so you’re not sending yourself to the wrong people.” Also the agents said it was important for actors to do their homework—address the agent by name when writing and to know what kind of clients the agent does or does not represent.

What does an agent look for in a new client? The answers emphasized that an actor should “just be yourself. The best scenario is that somebody is going to see your work and they’re going to feel passionate about you and you’ll connect.” One agent went so far as to say, “You never know when someone’s going to hit you and it’s really going to work.” Another said: “We’re never looking for new clients. But we’re always looking for new clients. It’s a dichotomy. There’s not room for one more but all of a sudden, miraculously, there is, when you find that one. It’s not an exact science, and it’s very much in instinct, which is how we do what we do.”

What about photos? Two agents offered this advice: “It’s got to be a picture that grabs you...as long as it’s something that’s going to interest us to the point of going to the next step” and “it should look like you.”

Head shots and three-quarter shots are more popular in New York, whereas full body shots are more popular in Los Angeles. The agents said they preferred submissions by mail rather than email. Reerrals are good and should be mentioned at the time.

What about out-of-town work? Agents agreed that it is important and one agent said: “Regional theatre is fantastic.”

How should an actor respectfully inform his/her agent of roles for which he/she is hoping to be submitted? An agent responded: “I think you have to know who you are and what roles you can really play. I hope that you know that we are working for you and that we are submitting you.”

The agents also agreed that it is important that actors work—even at low paying jobs, showcases, or short films. “Work is work. Work is good.” “And work begets work and you’re more confident auditioning.”

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What about “paying” to meet casting directors and agents? “I think you have to look at what the class is, whether it’s, and sort of weigh it and decide what you’re going to gain from that.”

Regarding personal management, agents, Equity staff cautioned that the Union has no jurisdiction over personal managers. Rules apply only to Equity Franchised Agents. “Never pay anyone unless you have work,” stressed John Fasullo, Director of Equity’s Membership Department. “Don’t put your name on any piece of paper that involves an agency without checking with Equity if you have any doubts as to whether or not they hold an Equity Franchise. If you do sign with a manager and you’re not happy, Equity has no jurisdiction whatsoever over that particular aspect of the business.”

“What are you most proud of as an agent?”

Liz Rosier: “I’m in love with actors. I’ve never wanted to be an actor. I’ve just always admired actors and think you guys are really brave people and I’m in awe of you. I’m really proud to be an agent, to advocate for people who I believe in and believe in art, and to have good relationships with my clients.”

Mark Schlegel: “I’m proud of being a family business, celebrated my 20th anniversary with four clients. I can’t believe they’ve stayed with me and they still listen to me and they still talk to me. I don’t do anything but sell people’s skills. And, when people out in the world ask, how do you make a living, when do you make money, I say, when they get the job. So, I’m proud that I’ve stuck it out for 28 years in this crazy business.”

Ken Melamed: “More than proud, I would say what excites me is when my instincts are right about you and when you get the job, whether it’s your first Broadway show, or whether it’s an Off-Broadway show, or a big movie or something else that’s fantastic. I’m also proud of my relationship with my clients. I love actors. I can’t believe that you do what you do. I don’t know how you do it.”

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**Somerville, MA**

“Henry IV” Helps

“Shakespeare’s words are urgently relevant to our times.” Those are the words The Actors’ Shakespeare Project lives by. Besides a dedication to the Bard, the company also has a mission to help those in need. During the holidays, members of the company’s production of Henry IV raised $1,952 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Adee Nadine Traub, Manager of Artistic Operations at ASP, said: “The entire cast and crew joined forces to collect donations and had a blast doing it. Our Equity artists are excited to do it every year and the audiences respond in kind and were quite generous.” The company emphasized that Equity really does fight AIDS and cast members rotated the speech nightly, from founding members to new additions, including many of the cast’s younger actors and most recent Equity members taking a turn. “Some in the cast,” said Ms. Traub, “were young enough that they have never known a world without AIDS. We really tried to get across to them and the audience that this is still an issue and many people still need help.”

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**Chanhassen, MN**

43 Couples Say “I Do” at Big Whopping Wedding

As a special promotion for its production of I Do! I Do!, in November, 2010, 43 couples from across Minnesota tied the knot or renewed their marriage vows in a mass ceremony at (a Big Whopping Wedding) at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres.

Chanhassen’s original production of I Do! I Do! ran for 22.5 years (with the same cast—Equity members David Anders and Susan Goepinger) and closed in 1993 having played to 697,004 an audience that this is still an issue and many people still need help.”

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**New York**

AFCU Meeting is February 25

The Annual Meeting of Actors Federal Credit Union will be held on Friday, February 25, 2011 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor at 165 West 46th Street. There will be elections, a State of the Union report from AFcu President Jeff Rodman, refreshments and door prizes.
New York, Chicago

Eastern, Central Regions Celebrate Black History Month

In New York, Equity and the Roundabout Theatre Company have joined forces to present a one-night-only staged reading on Monday, February 28, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in celebration of Black History Month. Trouble in Mind, a play by Alice Childress that explores the stranglehold on race issues in America, will be presented at the American Airlines Theatre, 227 West 42nd Street. It is directed by Charles Randolph-Wright, recipient of Equity’s 2010 Paul Robeson Award. Tickets are free of charge, but seating is limited to RSVPs are required. Email eeo@actorsequity.org or call Business Representative Pearl Brady, (212) 869-8530, ext. 346.

The Agreement.

In Chicago, the 2011 Spirit Celebration and Award Presentation will take place on Monday, March 21, 2011 at both Hyde Park’s Smart Museum and at the Court Theatre. Beginning at 6 p.m., there will be a reception at the Museum, with the Award presentation following at 7:30 p.m. at the Court Theatre. The evening concludes with dessert and coffee from 8:30-9:30 p.m. in the Court Theatre Lobby. For more information, contact Luther Goins, EEO Business Representative, (312) 641-0393.

Both the Eastern and Central Region celebrations of Black History Month have been coordinated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Committees. Co-Chairs of the Eastern Committee are Christine Boy Tony Johnson and Julia Breen at Simpson: in the Central Region, the Committee is Co-Chaired by E. T. Butler and Cheryl Lynn Bruce.

A Look Back@ Equity Milestones

75 Years Ago January/February 1936

• Equity dues are $18 per year, to be paid semi-annually. An assessment of 25 cents a month is charged every delinquent member following the second month of delinquency.

• Equity’s New York office is located at 45 West 47th Street; Chorus Equity is at 117 West 48th Street. Equity’s Chicago office is at 1219-20 Capitol Boulevard; the Detroit office is at 6036 Hollywood Boulevard; and there is an office at 200 Bush Street in San Francisco.

• Halle Flanagan, Director of the Federal Theatre Project of the Works Progress Administration, addresses a meeting attended by 450 Equity members, to discuss the status and accomplishments of the Project.

50 Years Ago January/February 1961

• Fifty-four Industrial Show producers are signatories to Equity’s Industrial Shows Basic Agreement.

• Equity has an office in Toronto at 519 Jarvis Street.

• Equity has 12,004 members.

25 Years Ago January/February 1986

• Nathan Lane receives the St. Clair Bayfield Award for his performance in Measure for Measure presented at the New York Shakespeare Festival.

• Arthur Mitchell, founder and director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, receives Equity’s 12th annual Paul Robeson Award.

10 Years Ago January/February 2001

• Council approves two new contracts: for one night/low guarantee tours and split-week tours. The agreements have been developed in response to the proliferation of non-Equity tours and declining work weeks on the road.

• Equity continues to protest the non-Equity tour of The Sound of Music, calling for a national boycott.

• Developing theatres are the subject of a two-day conference in New York. Fifty producers from Eastern Region developing theatres, Equity staff and Councilors attend.

Boise, ID

A “Tru” Fundraiser in Idaho

Since 1997, the 230-seat Boise Contemporary Theatre has been entertaining audiences with vibrant and dynamic presentations. This past holiday season, veteran Equity actor Tom Ford performed as Truman Capote in the one-person play, Truce, and presented management with the idea of collecting for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. With no one but himself to appeal to the audiences, Tom asked everyone to reach into their hearts and their wallets over four performances and audiences responded with over $1,400. Tom pledged with them that for $20 they could have a poster signed by the cast—which was just me; for $50 they could take me out for a drink, and for $500 I could come over to their house and read them A Christmas Memory as Capote. Nobody took me up on that one. We can feel very isolated from the rest of the theatre community in this part of the country,” added Tom, “and the fundraising was a way for all of us at the theatre to feel more connected to Equity’s membership across the country.”

Phoenix, Tucson

Arizona Members Join Adopt-A-Troop Project

To honor the men and women in the Armed Forces serving abroad, in December, for the second year in a row, the Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Committee assembled holiday care packages as part of an Adopt-a-Troop project. Arizona Equity members expressed their appreciation and gratitude to those in military service by sending much needed items such as toiletries and socks, as well as holiday cheer in the form of candy, jerky, paperback books, playing cards and games, ramen soup and hot chocolate. In 2009, donations filled four boxes for troops in Iraq. The 2010 donations more than doubled that total, with enough items to fill ten boxes destined for different locations in Afghanistan. Sent to addresses selected by a Phoenix-area Girl Scout troop, each box contained items bagged together for distribution to as many as 20-30 individual servicemen and women. “As a veteran myself, I know from firsthand experience how meaningful and welcome boxes like this can be,” said Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Tony Hodges. “Care packages like this are the only way many service members overseas know that their absence and sacrifice are acknowledged by people outside their military families, and I’m proud and pleased that Arizona Equity members want to take part in this and show such generosity.”

Detroit

Liaison Committee Sponsors Adopt-a-Child Event

Every year the Detroit Liaison Committee participates in the Adopt-a-Child at Christmas program that helps disadvantaged children in the Detroit metropolitan area, up to 12 years of age, receive warm clothes and toys for the holiday. This year the number of children and families responded with over $1,400.1 person pledged with them that for $20 they could have a poster signed by the cast—which was just me; for $50 they could take me out for a drink, and for $500 I could come over to their house and read them A Christmas Memory as Capote. Nobody took me up on that one. We can feel very isolated from the rest of the theatre community in this part of the country,” added Tom, “and the fundraising was a way for all of us at the theatre to feel more connected to Equity’s membership across the country.”

Jaylin King, “adopted” by the Detroit Liaison Committee, with Committee Chair Dana Gamarra and Committee and Central Regional Board member Peggy Thorp.

Equity Foundation Awards Grants to 100 Theatres

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he Actors’ Equity Foundation awarded 100 theatre grants in 2010: 55 grants totaling $43,000 in the Eastern Region; 24 grants totaling $10,700 in the Central Region; and 21 grants totaling $13,350 in the Western Region. Started in 1962, the Foundation has grown over the past 49 years 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 Jose De Michele at Equity. (212) 869-8530 x 348. Or, you may send a donation by check to: The Actors’ Equity Foundation, c/o Arne Gunder- sen, President, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036. All contributions are tax-deductible.
Philadelphia

City Council Supports Professional Performers

In an extraordinary showing of brotherly love, the Philadelphia City Council has passed a resolution supporting the hiring of professional union performing artists. Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg was in attendance with Philadelphia Area Liaison Tom Helmer at City Hall in Philadelphia on December 9, 2010 when the resolution was presented.

The resolution recognizes the benefits of generating local employment opportunities that provide living wages, health care benefits, and retirement benefits. The resolution supports the commitment to hiring local performers and professional union performing artists. Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg and Philadelphia AFTRA Executive Director Stephen Leshinski, along with Philadelphia Area Liaison Tom Helmer, AEA Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg and Philadelphia AFTRA Executive Director Stephen Leshinski.

Your Income Tax continued from page 1

Head of Household
$0 - 11,950 10%
$11,951 - 45,550 15%
$45,551 - 117,650 25%
$117,651 - 190,550 28%
$190,551 - 373,650 33%
$373,650 – 3,750,000 35%

Married Filing Jointly
$0 – 16,750 10%
$16,751 – 66,000 15%
$66,001 – 137,300 25%
$137,301 – 209,250 28%
$209,251 – 373,650 33%
$373,650 – 3,750,000 35%

Married Filing Separately
$0 – 8,375 10%
$8,376 – 34,000 15%
$34,001 – 68,000 25%
$68,001 – 137,300 28%
$104,626 – 186,825 33%
$186,826 – 373,650 35%

And whereas Equity, AFTRA and SAG endeavor to create and expand job opportunities for their members.

And whereas it be resolved by the Council of the City of Philadelphia that private and public enterprises who employ screen, stage, television, radio, sound recording and new media employees; and other unions and organizations that represent artists in Philadelphia, for the purpose of creating and maintaining a professional community within Philadelphia for the benefit of its citizens.

Philadelphia benefits from a professional community of dedicated artists who can support and sustain themselves and their families.

And whereas the presence of a professional community attracts and retains theatrical and commercial artistic endeavors;

And whereas Actors’ Equity Association, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and Screen Actors Guild, among other labor organizations, represent the interest of professional screen, stage, television, radio, sound recording and new media employees;

And whereas Equity, AFTRA and SAG endeavor to create and expand job opportunities for their members.

And whereas it be resolved by the Council of the City of Philadelphia that private and public enterprises who employ screen, stage, television, radio, sound recording and new media employees should endeavor whenever possible to meet with and enter into agreements with Actors’ Equity, AFTRA, SAG and other unions and organizations that represent artists in Philadelphia, for the purpose of creating and maintaining a professional community within Philadelphia for the benefit of its citizens.

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Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered and published as space permits. The Editor reserves the right to delete letters to 300 words and to select letters for publication that may not be published in their entirety. 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 abusive, or implied or expressed, against other members. Opinions expressed in letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors’ Equity Association.

AN INVITATION

Dear Colleagues:

As an AEA member, I would like to tell fellow members about the North American Actors’ Association, based in London.

Ours is an organization set up eleven years ago to represent the interests of North American actors based in the United Kingdom. All our members must also belong to a theatrical union, and we have an excellent relationship with British Equity, with whom we meet regularly to discuss common interest.

Until recently we limited membership to those living over here permanently and who have the right to work on an unrestricted basis. We are now opening our doors to actors coming to the UK to work for a limited period of time, with membership dependent on individuals securing the proper work visa.

We welcome American and Canadian actors and advise them on matters relating not only to work, but also to other problems.

You may contact me in writing at 80 Langton Way, London SE3 7JU, United Kingdom or email at jkaplow@btinternet.com or contact our Secretary, Ms. Kelly Jeffreys at Kelly_jeffreys@hotmail.com.

Jeffrey Kaplow

ELEGANT, NEVER TACKY

Dear Editor:

The “legendary Gypsy Rose” to which you refer in the October/November 2010 issue of Equity News was most definitely not my “tacky dressing gown,” but was, instead, a very elegant white satin negligee, trimmed in soft white marabou. When Bill [Bradley] and I decided to send it to Arthur [Parlington] it was slightly stained with “grease paint,” but was otherwise in excellent condition. We would never have sent something “tacky” to Arthur nor would Bill or I wear something “tacky.”

Florence Baum Brooks

REMEMBERING ELLEN STEWART

Dear Editor:

At 4:30 in the morning on Thursday, January 13, 2011, a paradigm shift of tectonic proportions occurred in theatre community across the globe: Ellen Stewart, founder, artistic director, producer and formidable saintly-gentleman-at-arms of La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, died. By the time Ellen’s transfiguration was officially newsworthy, a tsunami of emotion had washed over those of us who were her spirit children. I choose to write about Ellen in my own terms because when in 1973 this womb arrived in New York to take a bite of The Big Apple, it was Ellen Stewart who invited me to make La MaMa my first artistic home.

As an artist, I grew measurably and cannily there: I established lifelong friendships there, and when returning out-of-town, I placed a visit to La MaMa on my short list of destinations, along with Central Park, Harlem, Broadway and the martyred Twin Towers.

Ellen, thank you for your gifts of uncompromising vision. No actor may claim to have worked in New York theatre unless he has worked at LaMaMa.

André De Shields

(An article of remembrance by Mr. De Shields appears on Equity’s website: www.equity-OnLine.org)

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

I wanted to let you know about the death January 2, 2011, of Actor, artist, activist, writer, (wife of the late Val Avery), mother (of actor Mar-got Avery), and link to Equity history.

I met Morgan in Spring 2008. By that time she was celebrating the results of macular degeneration and could no longer read. I joined a crew of volunteers (old and new friends alike) who read to her. At Morgan’s request, the first thing many of us read was her father’s unpublished memoir. Morgan was the daughter of playwright Eugene O’Neill, an Irish actor who came to New York in the late 1800s and worked with, among others, Ed- win Booth. Stevenson joined Equity in 1913, one of our first members.

Morgan got her Broadway debut in 1932 in Firebird. She was in the original Stage Door in 1946 which led me to specu-late the role of Alice Sycamore in You Can’t Take It With You. She was also Morgan Lane in early radio’s The Shadow. Hers was a legacy worth celebrating.

K. Kevyne Baar