



# SETC NEWS

February / March 2004

## SETC 2004 Keynote Speakers Explore Evolving Role of Artists in 21st Century

*At times like these, he cried aloud  
That not to be a poet is  
The worst of all our miseries.*

- Francis Hope

**T**hese words were written 30 years ago, just before the poet was killed in a plane crash in Paris. I have kept them close at hand as I put together the program for this year's convention. Francis Hope's poem speaks of the need of the artist to be engaged in the world. Indeed, he seems to suggest that not being an artist must be a miserable state.

One would have hoped that the world would have grown to be a kinder, more humane place in the space of time between

From the  
President-Elect

Anthony Haigh



then and now. In many ways it has, but in many ways it has not. The need for the artist to illuminate the darkness has not diminished. The world needs artists more now than perhaps it ever has.

(Continued on Page 2)

### Montreal Shoot Forces William Macy Cancellation

Due to a production schedule change, keynote speaker William H. Macy will be unable to attend the SETC Convention. Macy will be working into the wee hours of Saturday morning on a Montreal shoot and cannot get to Chattanooga in time to give his scheduled 11 a.m. address. He does promise to come to a future SETC Convention! Look for the announcement of a new Saturday keynote speaker on the SETC Web site.

## Meet the Authors, Get a Signed Book – and Help a Student

**A**n exciting new program will be offered at the convention this year: the first SETC Book Signing & Exhibitors Reception, sponsored by Apollo Design Technology, Inc.

Come to Exhibit Hall B at 4 p.m. on Thursday March 4 to meet a number of published authors and buy signed copies of their books, with a percentage of your purchase going to benefit SETC's scholarship funds. A cash bar and snacks will be available. While you're in the Exhibit Hall for this event, you also may want to check out what's new at the exhibits this year.

What authors will you find at this event?

Two of our convention keynote speakers will offer signed copies of their books. Eric Booth, editor of the *Teaching Artist Journal* and a member of The College Board's Arts Advisory Committee, will present his book, *The Everyday Work of Art*. Mimi Kennedy, actress of stage and screen, most recently seen on tele-

From the President

Jonathan  
Michaelsen



(Continued on Page 8)

## Setc2004

### News You Can Use

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### Keynote Speakers

2:30 p.m., Thursday

**Eric Booth**  
Author, Actor and Educator

2:30 p.m., Friday

**Mimi Kennedy**  
Actress, Author and Activist

11 a.m., Saturday  
**Speaker to be Announced**  
(Check Web site for Information)

### Keynote Performance

8:30 p.m., Friday

**Daniel Stein**  
Dell'Arte International  
*Windowspeak: A Travelogue of the Soul*

## Info

in  
Chattanooga

### Need information on a program? Want to register for the convention?

Visit the Information Hub, Convention and Auditionee Registration/Pre-Registration, North Entry Lobby, Convention Center 12 noon - 9 p.m., Wednesday; 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday; 8 a.m. - noon Saturday

### Would you like to see the latest theatre products? Or learn what colleges and universities offer?

Visit the Commercial Exhibits and the Education Expo, Exhibit Hall B, Convention Center 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Thursday, Friday; 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday

# ASK SETC

**Q** Where is the bar at SETC 2004?

**A** Believe it or not, that's one of the most common questions we get this time of year at the SETC Central Office. Finding the bar at SETC is not really about locating a place to have a drink, though. It's about finding THE place to network, to meet up again in the evening with people encountered during the course of a fast-moving, event-filled day. Job seekers want to bump into job givers. Workshop attendees have just one

more question about a technique. Old friends want to catch up. Colleagues want to discuss collaborations.

So where's the place to do all of that this year? The convention hotels offer many options:

- *Marriott*. This main convention hotel is closest to the auditions room and has two bars. One (nonsmoking) is in the lobby area and the other is a sports bar (smoking permitted) that is likely to appeal to students.
- *Chattanooga*. This convention hotel has the largest bar, elegant and sophisticated with a Southwestern arts and crafts décor. It has an annex area with a pool table.
- *Chattanooga Choo Choo Holiday Inn*. This theme hotel has great ambience of its own and a nice bar located just off the grand dining area.
- *Read House*. This overflow hotel has a bar with the atmosphere of an early 20th century tavern.

There also will be bars set up for some SETC events:

- *Opening night bar*. During Wednesday night's opening reception, a cash bar will be open in the north entry lobby of the Convention Center.
- *Closing night bar*. During the banquet and dance, a cash bar will be set up in the Marriott Ballroom ABC area.

A final note: If you're not old enough to drink alcohol legally, don't try. Bartenders will be checking identification, and underage drinking will not be permitted.

## From the President-Elect (Continued from Page 1)

One of the important figures in defining the role of the artist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is our keynote speaker Eric Booth. I urge you not to miss his session on Thursday.

I also encourage you to spend time on Friday with Mimi Kennedy, an artist who has placed her political and social activism at the core of her work as an actress.

Also on Friday, be sure to see Daniel Stein's keynote performance of *Windowspeak*, a highly theatrical and wonder-

fully entertaining travelogue of the soul.

Having spent the last year or so building this convention, I cannot tell you how excited I am at the range of events scheduled. Will it be a Box of Delights or a Pandora's Box? Only time will tell. It is my intention that it will be something of both. All of our keynote speakers and featured performers will delight us, but I suspect that they also will let something out of the box – something that cannot easily be put back. So I will see you in Chattanooga, and you can let me know how it all turns out.

## Convention Volunteers Welcomed

**W**ould you like to help at the 2004 SETC Convention? SETC welcomes volunteers! You need to sign up prior to the convention for specific dates and times.

If you contribute eight hours of volunteer time, you can attend the 2004 convention without paying registration as our way of saying thank you. However, if you want a membership that includes the year-round SETC mailings, you will need to purchase it.

Individuals volunteering for eight hours who are auditioning and/or using the Job Contact Service will receive free convention registration, but still will have to pay membership fees and any fees connected to the SETC service they are using.

We also welcome those who wish to volunteer for less than eight hours, but we cannot waive registration fees for them.

Interested? Contact Katie in the Central Office by phone at 336-272-3645 or via e-mail at setc@setc.org.

## Pack Your Bags for Your Busiest and Best Convention Ever in 2004

**I**f you hadn't planned on coming to Chattanooga for SETC's 55<sup>th</sup> annual convention, you might want to reconsider! The jam-packed

From the  
Executive Director

Betsey Baun



program has been infused with a lot of new events – presentations, performances and social activities that make it clear you are part of the nation's

largest and most active regional theatre organization.

Each of the 10 state theatre associations in our region will be visible along the Hall of States, a corridor connecting all events in the Convention Center. Stop by, connect or reconnect and learn about exciting events in your state. Network on Friday at your state meeting, then join us for an All-State Reception sponsored by Walt

Disney Entertainment.

Programming continues to recognize the importance of connecting live theatre to television and film. Keynote speaker Mimi Kennedy has roots in live theatre, but we know her name because of the camera. If you're interested in television work, don't miss the Saturday workshop, Auditioning for Primetime TV, presented by *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* casting associate Jennifer Jones.

Whether you are a teacher, a student seeking new ways to use theatre skills, or a professional considering outreach programs, you will want to fit Eric Johnson's 9 a.m. Friday workshop at the Siskin Institute (across from the Convention Center) into your schedule. This movement workshop for children with special needs was developed jointly with Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga.

Finally, take time to enjoy the social aspects of SETC 2004. Look below and throughout the newsletter for info on receptions, dinners, dances and more.

### Don't miss the SETC State Luncheon, 1-2:20 p.m., Friday, March 5

All Aboard to Greensboro – site of SETC 2005! This luncheon sponsored by the 10 state theatre organizations is a great networking opportunity and will feature a performance by the Chattanooga Choo Choo Kids. Purchase tickets (\$16) through Central Office by February 23.

## PEOPLE on the move

**Julie A. Richardson** will be stepping down as SETC auditions director after the 2004 Convention. After several years as stage manager and numerous years as auditions director, Julie says she hopes to attend SETC 2005 in a different role: as a casting director or a committee member.

Be sure to stop by the Auditions Room this year and thank Julie for her many years of hard work in a demanding job. Melissa Ricketts, currently the assistant director, will become auditions director in fall 2004.

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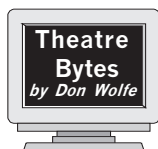
Each year, there are people who work tirelessly behind the scenes, helping to pull together the mammoth SETC Convention – without public acknowledgement of their contributions.

One such person this year is **Megan Breier**, the programming assistant who worked with President-Elect Tony Haigh in building the convention. When presenters submitted their programs – via the Web, fax, e-mail or snail mail – Megan saw them first. She entered the data, spotted potential problems, corresponded with presenters and generally kept the whole thing together.



*Megan Breier*

A graduating senior at Centre College with a major in Communications and Culture, Megan is planning a career in events management and has made a wonderful start with her work for SETC.



Theatre Bytes will return in the next newsletter.

### All Invited to Executive Committee, Board of Directors Meetings in Chattanooga

#### SETC Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 1-4 p.m.

*All Board of Directors and Advisory Council members should attend, and all SETC members are invited to attend.*

#### SETC Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, 4-5:20 p.m.

*All SETC members are invited to attend.*

#### SETC Executive Committee Meeting

Sunday, 9-11 a.m.

*All Board of Directors and Advisory Council members should attend, and all SETC members are invited to attend.*

#### SETC Board of Directors Meeting

Sunday, 11 a.m.- Noon.

*All SETC members are invited to attend.*

### Where's Vicki? Pouring Energy into a New Fight

**T**hose who know former SETC President **Vicki Pennington** may have noticed her absence in the last few months from SETC events. Vicki was diagnosed this past fall with leukemia, and since then she has been devoting the same high energy she puts into theatre and SETC committee business to sending the disease into remission. She has had two rounds of chemotherapy, two surgeries and, in mid-December, entered the hospital for a stem-cell transplant.

The treatments have brought Vicki's leukemia into remission for the short-term, but a stem-cell transplant from a person with a tissue match raises the odds for long-term survival considerably.

"The best options are



*Vicki Pennington*

siblings, but the chances are only 1 in 4 that any sibling will be a match," says Vicki.

"Well, get this. I have only one sibling – and she's a match!"

The stem-cell transplant is a 100-day inpatient/outpatient procedure that will keep Vicki out of circulation until the end of March, so she will miss this year's SETC Convention in Chattanooga. But let's not let her forget about SETC! Drop her a note. You can send cards or letters to: Vicki Pennington, 4 Springlake Circle, Valdosta, GA 31602-1506.

### Don't Miss the Institute of Outdoor Drama 2004 National Summer Outdoor Drama Auditions

**When:** Saturday, March 20, 2004

**Where:** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC

**Deadline for Registration:** March 11, 2004

**Cost:** \$30 nonrefundable registration fee

**More Info:** [www.unc.edu/depts/outdoor](http://www.unc.edu/depts/outdoor)

### Writers Wanted

Are you a writer? Or do you have a story idea? We would love to see you at the 10:30 a.m. Friday convention session, *Southern Theatre: How to Become a Writer or Editorial Board Member for SETC's Popular Magazine.*

## In Memoriam

Former SETC President **Allen Bales** died December 29 at 83. He was a life member of SETC and a recipient of the Suzanne Davis Award for outstanding contributions to Southeastern theatre. In addition to providing dedicated service to SETC, he also was instrumental in creating the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Survivors include his wife, Carolyn Carpenter Bales, and a son and daughter-in-law, Allen Wheeler and Norma Jo Bales.

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**Marvin L. Sims**, president of the Black Theatre Network, president of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and head of performance at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), died unexpectedly on Christmas Day after suffering heart failure. He was 55. Survivors include his partner of 11 years, Scott Foster Bradley of Richmond; his ex-wife, Armethia Louise Sims of Chicago, IL; and three children. The Marvin L. Sims Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established in his memory at VCU.

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**Kay Fliehr**, a founding fellow of the American Association of Community Theatre, died November 10. She and her husband Richard were active in the Minnesota Association of Community Theatres. She is survived by a son, Richard Fliehr (known professionally as the wrestler Rick Flair), his wife, Elizabeth, and four grandchildren in Charlotte, NC.

## design/technology

Submit entries now for design competition, crafts exhibit

**O**ur committee members have proposed an interesting slate of workshops for this year's convention, and I hope you will make an effort to attend the presentations.

If you are a teacher, it's time to remind your students about the annual design competitions and to assist them in selecting projects or designs from realized productions for submission. As in the past, we are soliciting entries for adjudicated competitions for both graduate and undergraduate students in the areas of costuming, lighting, and scenic design. Students may enter designs for only one play in each category, but are welcome to enter designs in more than one category.

Also, don't forget to submit interesting craft projects created this year in any technical area (scenic, props, costume) for display at our annual crafts exhibit. Last year's exhibit displayed a wealth of talent and ingenuity from our student members and was one of the memorable highlights of the convention.

Teachers and professionals working in the areas of design and technology, please plan to join us bright and early at 8 a.m. Thursday during the convention for our annual meeting. This is a great time for you to become involved in our activities as we begin planning for next year's convention.

- Martha Cooper, Chair  
Design/Technology Committee

## acting/directing

Relationships, exercises highlight workshop sessions

**S**ETC 2004 will offer numerous workshops to expand your knowledge in the areas of acting and directing.

Acting workshops cover a wide range of topics, including voice and body energizing; Shakespeare meets Laban; working with acting students who suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder; musical theatre styles; agent relationships; and audition techniques.



Patrick Gagliano

If your interest is directing, you'll find workshops on the director-designer relationship, directing classics and how to simultaneously succeed with your marriage and your show when working with a spouse.

Plan to participate in as many workshops as you can – and don't forget about the festival performances, including the 10-

Minute Play Festival.

All are invited to the Acting/Directing Committee meeting, scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday at the convention, after Eric Booth's keynote address. I'll see you in Chattanooga.

- Patrick Gagliano, Chair  
Acting/Directing Committee

## history

Organizational meeting

**T**he Theatre History/Theory/Criticism/Literature Committee will meet at the SETC Convention on Saturday, March 6 at 8 a.m. This marks the first year that the group will meet as an official standing committee. All persons interested in this area are invited to attend. The committee will consider a set of bylaws for the newly formed group as well as any ideas that will help foster and expand the presence of history/theory/criticism/literature at the convention.

- Scott Phillips, Chair, Theatre History/Theory/Crit/Lit Committee

## Don't miss the SETC Design Awards Ceremony

Friday, March 5, 10 p.m.

All are invited to SETC's second annual Design Awards Ceremony immediately following the *Conversation with the Distinguished Guest Designer* sessions on Friday night.

Winners of the undergraduate and graduate Scenic, Lighting and Costume Design Awards will be announced by the designers and the award sponsors.

Certificate awards also will be given for the Crafts, Props and Special Effects Showcase.

SETC gratefully acknowledges the Design Award Sponsors:

**Scenic Design Awards: Sculptural Arts Coating**  
**Lighting Design Awards: ETC, Electronic Theatre Controls**  
**Costume Design Awards: Wild Ginger Software**

Sponsors and winners also will be announced at Saturday's SETC Awards Banquet

## playwriting

Getchell play announced, workshop offered by Gary Garrison

**W**e have a winner! The 2004 Charles M. Getchell Award for playwriting goes to Lew Holton for his play *Portal*, which asks the intriguing question: what does one do when he stumbles upon the Gateway to Paradise and finds it guarded? The play is an irreverent romp through the philosophical aisles of the Discount House of the Great Hereafter, and is very witty and thought-provoking.

A staged reading of the play will take place at 4 p.m. Friday, with a critique and discussion immediately afterward. Deborah Anderson of Middle Tennessee State University was the New Play chair this year, and she did a great job. We'll be taking submissions for next year's contest soon; contact Deborah or me if you need details.

We had hoped to launch a Secondary School Playwriting Contest this year, but we are postponing it until next year. We will have an interest meeting on this contest at 10:30 a.m. Friday

during the convention, so please come and share ideas – in particular, any thoughts on how to attract more submissions.



Doug Grissom

Please make an effort to attend some of the exciting playwriting sessions that are scheduled. These include a noon Friday workshop, "You Can Write a Play!" presented by Gary Garrison, head of playwriting at New York University. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a dynamic teacher and playwright. A special guest at the convention this year, Garrison is serving as a respondent for the 10-Minute Play Festival.

Finally, if you're interested in playwriting, please come to the committee meeting at 1 p.m. Thursday.

- Doug Grissom, Chair  
Playwriting Committee

**Christians in Theatre Arts Reception, 7-9:30 p.m., Friday, March 5**

Annual meeting of national networking organization for Christians involved in theatre. This meeting, which will include performances, is being held at First Baptist Church, located near the Convention Center.

## movement

*Physical theatre takes spotlight in Windowspeak performance*

**W**e are thrilled to have Daniel Stein, internationally renowned movement artist from the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, perform his solo piece, *Windowspeak: A Travelogue of the Soul* at this year's convention. Stein is featured in a keynote performance Friday at 8:30 p.m. This masterful, funny and poignant performance is the first featured movement theatre piece to be offered at an SETC Convention. Mark it on your schedule now!

One of the goals of the Movement Committee this year was to increase program offerings at the 2004 convention. If you take a look at your convention newspaper, you will see a movement program practically every hour! (Check titles care-

fully because some are cross-listed with other areas such as acting/directing.) At SETC 2004, you can learn Broadway Rhythm Tap or The Rhythm of the Fight, or simply find your own rhythm through chi energy flow exploration!

The Movement Committee would like to invite anyone who is interested in stage movement to attend the combined meeting of the Stage Movement Committee and the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, on Thursday, March 4 from 12-12:50 p.m. Your energy and input is needed to help keep our work thriving.

The Society of American Fight Directors also will hold its regional meeting during the convention to discuss business, current events and share infor-

mation about stage combat training. This meeting will be held Friday, March 5 from 8:30-9:50 p.m.

As always, we invite you to wake up and start your busy day of auditions, meetings and

workshops at an invigorating 8 a.m. physical warm-up led by one of our movement professionals. Be sure to wear comfortable clothes!

- Teresa Lee, Co-chair  
Stage Movement Committee

## voice/speech

*Work on your voice at more than a dozen workshops*

**T**he Voice and Speech Interest Group is pleased to be an "official" part of the Southeastern Theatre Conference. For this year's convention, we have 15 exciting and challenging workshops planned.

Each morning between 8 and 9 a.m., Richard Gang, Allison Hetzel, Mia Self and Alana Ghent will bring us to life with a vocal warm-up.

Workshops related to voice and speech include:

- **Thursday:** Breathing Life into Your Song; Start Your Day with Lessac Body Energies; Integrating Voice and Movement; Exploring the Fitzmaurice and Pilates Connection; What's Wrong with a Southern Accent Anyway?; and Speaking of Women, a workshop that combines physical, vocal and writing exercises to explore relationships from a sensory perspective.

- **Friday:** Fitzmaurice Work for Actors.

- **Saturday:** Breath Acting Technique; Solo Voice, a workshop on how to create and maintain desired vocal quality while doing a one-person show; Shakespeare's Text: A Physical and Vocal Process; Releasing Vocal Energy into Levels of Passion & Intensity That Match Shakespeare's Heightened Text; Using Lessac Energies in Exploring Shakespeare's Text; and Unlocking Greek Tragedy with Your Voice and Your Body.

Anyone interested in planning sessions in voice and speech for next year's convention should come to the interest group meeting on Thursday from 4 p.m. to 5:20 p.m. We will develop workshop session

ideas that will bring us together next year.

It looks like there will be lots of dynamic voice happenings at the SETC Convention this year. We hope that you will join us!

- Janet B. Rodgers, Chair  
Voice/Speech Interest Group



Janet Rodgers

## film/tv

*The camera gets added focus*

**R**ecently SETC has expanded beyond its traditional programs focusing on live theatre to include workshops and events related to television and film.

At this year's SETC Convention, you'll find a number of exciting workshops that address these areas and a keynote speaker, Mimi Kennedy, who has distinguished herself not only on stage but in film as well.

If you have an interest in this area, you are invited to attend the Film and TV Interest Group meeting on Friday, March 5 from noon to 12:30 p.m. In the past two years alone, our group has sponsored 24 film-intensive workshops and forums for the SETC membership. Help us keep the momentum going!

- Joe Filippa, Chair  
Film/TV Interest Group

## SETC 2004 Your interest area

Check your convention program for interest group meeting locations

## cultural diversity

*Programs address wide spectrum, roundtables move to noon*

**I**n 2004, the Cultural Diversity Committee will work even more closely with the SETC leadership and the whole membership to advance SETC's long-range goal #1 (Increase diversity in SETC membership).

Here's a sampling of programs offered at Convention 2004:

Lost Lesbian Lives, a presentation/performance by Marjorie Conn and Karen Willis; Inclusion Not Intrusion, which examines diversity in the classroom; Margins of Error: A Look at Underrepresented Groups; Minority Report: Backstage Bravos II; Creating and Maintaining Diversity, an open discussion; African-American Women Artists: Nurturers or

Firecrackers; Ignoring the Label Black Theatre; and a performance of *Freedom Summer* by Hattiesburg (MS) High School.

The Roundtables are back again this year, but at a new time: noon on Thursday and Friday. Topics this year include: Gay/Lesbian/Bi/Transgender Interest Group; Access Theatre-Including the Physically Challenged; Starting a Black Theatre in Your Community; and Women/Feminist Theatre.

As always, the annual Cultural Diversity Committee meeting is open to all. If you have an interest in this area, please join us at 4 p.m. on Thursday. See you in Chattanooga.

- Alvita Martin-Friar, Chair  
Cultural Diversity Committee

### See you at the Fringe

Check your convention program for the schedule of special performances at SETC's first Fringe Festival!

So you're coming to SETC 2004 with the goal of landing a job – and you have your pen poised, ready to sign on the dotted line. Not so fast!

## Don't Sign that Contract Yet! Tips for Theatre Professionals

...from an Attorney

**W**hether in writing or not, an agreement to perform (as an actor) in exchange for some consideration (usually monetary) constitutes a contract. Although there are several exceptions, a contract generally does not have to be in writing to be enforceable. In all important business arrangements, "the deal" should be memorialized in writing.

Whenever a client asks for my opinion on a contract, I start with three bits of advice:

- If you don't trust the person (or entity) you are about to enter into a contract with, don't do it – unless you absolutely have to.

- The primary purpose of a written contract is to memorialize the terms of an agreement, so you can remember (and be sure of) what you finally agreed upon, and so your agreement is clear to others if the person you dealt with at Theatre X is no longer around when a dispute arises.

- No contract is perfect.

The formality of signing a contract provides a moment in time when both parties can think seriously about the upcoming job and essentially create a checklist of the issues that are important to each of them. Issues that might be covered include: bonuses, penalties for quitting, sick policies, cancellations due to weather, costume requirements, damage to costumes (if provided), free/reduced tickets to performances or venues; and living accommodations.

Once you've determined issues to be included and the contract is prepared, read carefully and make sure that you understand the terms in the contract. If you don't understand, ask.

There is no such thing as "the standard contract." In this day of computers, laser printers, Web sites, downloadable forms and even print-on-demand books, almost every written document looks official. Use the heading, "Standard Actors Employment Contract," and presto, you too can create a standard contract.

Performance contracts in use by local theatres run the gamut from two or three paragraphs to multiple pages. A long contract is actually a plus if it details all the various issues that could arise. An issue that wasn't previously discussed could become problematic if you are on the job and a disagreement develops.

One of the potentially controversial issues that might come up is the "right of publicity," i.e., the right to use your name and/or image for a commercial purpose: to promote the theatre, acting school or program. You might feel fine about use of your picture in publicity for a particular performance, but if the theatre wants to use your image in brochures, T-shirts or DVDs, is that still okay? Do you deserve some extra pay? Or at least some brochures or DVDs?

The more bargaining power you have, the more you can negotiate your contract terms. However, all actors and stage technicians should take the time to understand the terms of the contracts presented to them, because they always have at least one choice – to take the job under the terms presented, or to walk away.

*Dan Ellison is a Durham, NC-based attorney who has concentrated on arts-related law and nonprofit law for 15 years. He is a past president and executive director of the North Carolina Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Have a question for him? Send to: [deanna@setc.org](mailto:deanna@setc.org).*

**Note:** The contents of this column are intended for general information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances.



...from Colleagues

**W**hat should performers, artists, designers and other theatre employees look for in their contracts? What important details are typically left out or misunderstood in contracts?

We recently surveyed employees and employers in the professional division on those questions. The responses point to problems in two major areas.

- Artists often do not read or understand the contracts that they sign.

- Companies often do not write adequate contracts.

When companies do not include enough specific details in the contract and artists do not ask enough – or the right – questions, the working relationship can get off to a potentially unpleasant start.

### Employees: Ask Questions

As you head off to the SETC Convention to seek an acting, design or other contract job, be prepared to ask questions. Companies cannot read your mind and know what you need or what parts of the contract you do not understand. Be sure the contract meets your needs in key areas before you sign it. Salary is the obvious first key question, but don't stop there. Look at how you live and do everyday things and make sure the contract provisions meet your needs. Then ask questions if you're not sure.

"As a producer I don't get angry when people ask questions," says Chris Armbrister, program director at Stagedoor Manor in New York. "I get frustrated when I am told, 'I didn't understand that part of the contract'" after the fact.

### Employers: Include Details

And what should employers do to help avoid problems? Companies should spend adequate time preparing contracts and explaining, in detail, all conditions. The biggest misunderstandings come when contract conditions are not properly described.

In writing contracts, companies should be sure to include information that addresses people's basic needs in an employment setting such as: employment dates; housing; transportation; reimbursements; stipends; per diems; and working conditions.

Employees, take note: If the employer balks at providing such detail, then you may want to pull back and reassess the company and whether its contract is really as good as it sounded initially.

"Know who you are signing with," recommends Matt Davenport, producer-director at Matt Davenport Productions in Tennessee. "A 'not so great' contract with an honest person is better than a 'letter of the law' contract with someone who is really not looking out for any of your interests."

### Equity: Get Specifics

Actors' Equity contracts present some additional areas where employee misunderstanding can occur.

"With Equity contracts, it is important to know the different categories (LORT, SPT, COST)...," says Robert Miller, general manager of Blowing Rock Stage Company in North Carolina. "While the language is the same, many details vary."

By that, Miller means that specific details – such as hours employees are expected to work – may differ with various contract types while the basic structure of the document looks the same.

Before signing an Equity contract, be sure you know the type of contract, read the contract, and ask for specific information that applies to that theatre. For example, Equity does a fine job explain-

(Continued on Page 7)

What's Up  
in Professional  
Theatre

## Chattanooga Theatre Centre Offers Dinner and Tour Before Festival

Thursday, March 4

5:30 p.m. - Cocktails (Cash Bar)

6 p.m. - Dinner (\$16 Pre-paid)

7 p.m. - SETC Community Theatre Festival  
Informal tours before curtain

Enjoy cocktails, dinner and a tour of the 65,000-square-foot Chattanooga Theatre Centre before taking in some of the region's best community theatre at the SETC Community Theatre Festival, which takes place in CTC's 380-seat MainStage theatre.

Order tickets through the Central Office.  
Deadline: Feb. 23

### Keep Track of Your Badge in Chattanooga

No badge? No entry!

Your badge is your ticket to many SETC events. Badges will be checked. Replacement fee: \$5

Lose your program?

Replacement fee: \$5

### Catch the Shuttle!

◆ Free shuttle to performances in Community Theatre and Secondary School Theatre Festivals.

◆ Free downtown shuttle, connecting convention hotels with Convention Center and downtown restaurants.

◆ Airport shuttle must be reserved in advance. Call 1-800-896-9928. Cost: \$11 one-way.

## Donate to Educate...and Win a Prize

How would you like to win two free registrations and your hotel accommodations for next year's SETC Convention in Greensboro, NC?

That's the grand prize that a lucky SETC convention-goer will win this year by participating in the "Donate to Educate" raffle. Other prizes include signed copies of SETC 2004 keynote speakers' books and a VIP pass to Chattanooga attractions (good for a full year).

The raffle is for a great cause! All proceeds from ticket sales will be used to build the endowments for the SETC scholarship awards.

Buy your raffle tickets at the Info Hub, Registration, Job Contact and many other areas at the SETC Convention. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

The winners will be chosen in a drawing at the Celebration and Dance that follows the Awards Banquet on Saturday, March 6.

### What's Up in Professional Theatre (Continued from Page 6)

ing what is required in housing and transportation, but theatres interpret these provisions differently. You may be told that a car is included, but you may not be told that you are sharing the car with five other people and that the car is really... a horse and buggy.

#### A Final Word

Don't assume anything. Just as you put a lot of hours into preparing for SETC auditions and interviews, take time do the necessary homework before signing a contract.

- Jon R. Moses, Production Manager, Riverside Theatre; and Chair, SETC Professional Theatre Division

## States Hold Conventions, Select Festival Entries

### Kentucky State Convention

The Kentucky Theatre Association held its annual conference November 14-16 at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. KTA was pleased to have April J'C Marshall, SETC Central Office, and Dennis Wemm, SETC Executive Committee, attend our event this year.

The Community Theatre Festival featured performances by five community theatres from across the state. The Market House Theatre from Paducah, KY was selected as the winner for its performance of *Proof*.

Plays in the Secondary School Theatre Festival ranged from Shakespeare to Kabuki theatre to *The Laramie Project*. *The Honorable Urashima Taro*, presented by Lexington's School for Creative and Performing Arts, was selected to advance to the regional festival.

SETC screening auditions brought 216 undergraduate students to the conference in hopes of being "passed on" to audition at SETC in March.

New officers are: President, Kathi Ellis; Vice President/President-Elect, Jeremy Kislring; Secretary, Karen Keller; Treasurer, Daven Edmonds.

- Jane Dewey  
State Representative

### Mississippi State Convention

The Mississippi Theatre Association (MTA) held its annual conference in Gulfport/Biloxi, MS January 16-20.

Ocean Springs High School's *The Serpent* was selected to represent Mississippi at the regional festival.

In the Community Theatre Festival, Tupelo Community

Theatre's *Bel Canto* was selected to advance to SETC.

Hattiesburg High School also will perform *Freedom Summer* in a showcase at the SETC Convention

SETC screening auditions were held at New Stage Theatre. Secondary school auditions were held for the first time and will be continued next year.

SETC Executive Director Betsey Baun and SETC Treasurer Robert Prescott attended the festival and adjudicated the secondary school 10-Minute Play Festival.

New officers are: President, Tonya Hays; Vice President, M. J. Etua; Secretary, Sam Sparks; Treasurer, Tom Booth. Stephen Cunetto serves as administrative director.

- Shannon Robert  
State Representative

### South Carolina State Convention

The South Carolina Theatre Association (SCTA) held its annual convention November 14-16 at Lander University in Greenwood SC.

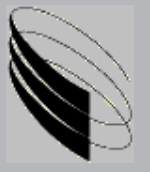
Keynote speaker was Christine Fisher, director of the Arts and Basic Curriculum Committee.

Greenwood High School won the Secondary School Theatre Festival with *Broken Hearts*, and Foothills Playhouse of Easley, SC won the Community Theatre Festival with *The Problem*.

SCTA gave its highest honor, the Founder's Award, to Jack Benjamin, SETC's immediate past president.

New officers are: President, John Bald; Vice-President/Program Chair, Leslie Gravett Dellinger; Secretary, Glen Gourley; Treasurer, Philip G. Hill.

- Glen Gourley  
State Representative



**Southeastern Theatre Conference**  
**P.O. Box 9868**  
**Greensboro, NC 27429-0868**

**SETC NEWS**

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**DINE, CELEBRATE AND DANCE TO THE BIG BAND MUSIC OF SWEET GEORGIA SOUND!**

Don't miss the President's Reception (6:30 p.m.), Dinner/Awards Banquet (7:30 p.m.) and Celebration/Dance (10 p.m.) on Saturday, March 6. Enjoy dinner, watch exciting award presentations and celebrate another year of SETC connections. *Purchase reserved tickets for banquet (\$26) from Central Office or at Registration Desk in Chattanooga by 10 a.m. Thursday, March 4. Dance admission is free with banquet ticket or raffle ticket.*

**From the President**

**(Continued from Page 1)**

vision as co-star of the Golden Globe-nominated hit, *Dharma & Greg*, will sign copies of her first book, *Taken to the Stage: The Education of an Actress*.

In addition, Gary Garrison, a respondent at SETC's 10-Minute Play Festival, will sign his book, *Perfect Ten: Writing and Producing the Ten-Minute Play*. Garrison is artistic director of the Department of Dramatic Writing Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

In addition to our keynote speakers and guests, several SETC members who are published authors will be there to sign their books. They include: Kenn Stilson, *Acting Is Believing*; Elizabeth Hopper (co-author with Ruth Countryman), *Women's Wear of the 1920's, with Complete Patterns*; and

Lou Campbell, *Wind of Destiny*.

A portion of the proceeds from book sales will go to the SETC Endowment to benefit our scholarship award funds.

So join us! Meet the authors, take home a personally signed copy of a book or two, and help support SETC's scholarships.

**Endowment Fund Contributions Listed**

Thanks to the following members for their contributions to the SETC General Endowment Fund:

- David Wohl;**
- Walter Shipley**, in memory of Rick Bell;
- Donald Loeffler**, in memory of Eileen Wehrle; in memory of Thomas Goetz; and in memory of Grace Merriles LaVan.

**Arriving at the SETC Convention on Wednesday? Join us at the**

**Opening Night Reception**

**9-11 p.m.**

**Marriott Lobby and Bar**

**Cash Bar**

**SETC 2004**

**Chattanooga, TN**

**March 3-7**

**Where to Send News**

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