

Act

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE

Spotlight

June, 2006



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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

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Office: 734/971.0605
Ticket Line: 734/971.2228
Facsimile: 734/971.2769

Summer Hours:

June 19-August 18: T, W, TH, 9am-2pm
Closed July 31-August 4
Regular hours resume August 21

05-06 season sponsors



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Civic Loses a Dear Friend

For over forty years, Burnette Staebler has been an integral part of the A2CT experience. An accomplished actor, director, Board President, teacher, mentor, and devoted patron, Burnette was not only a vital member of the organization, but a great friend. Burnette died May 5 at the age of 94. Those who were lucky enough to have worked with Burnette remember her sharp wit, tremendous talent, and immeasurable dedication to Civic. At the time of her death, Burnette was a valuable member of

Civic's Advisory Board. She and fellow member Phyllis Wright hosted a meeting at Glacier Hills so, as Phyllis puts it, "we could impart our

continued on page 2

Come visit the Chicken Ranch

by Edmond Reynolds

Oh, the little house lay in a green Texas glade where the trees were as coolin' as fresh lemonade."

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas is in full swing at the A2CT rehearsal space, revving up for what will prove to be a guaranteed great night of theater. Based on a true story that Larry King reported in *Playboy*, this production

continued on page 3



Wendy Wright and Charles Sutherland star in *Whorehouse*

Burnette Staebler (continued)

pearls of wisdom" from years of involvement in Civic and other theater organizations in the area. Phyllis remembers that Burnette would walk from her home to her work (in husband Neil Staebler's office) in order to learn her lines for a play. In recent years, Burnette was primarily a patron, but she never missed a show. Even when decreasing mobility became an issue, Burnette climbed aboard the Glacier Hills bus and navigated the steps, ramps, and obstacles to get to her seat. Burnette's enthusiasm and courage is truly an inspiration.

Longtime Civic member and Burnette fan, Charlie Sutherland, penned the following tribute to Burnette:

Burnette Staebler was an important mentor, and will be missed.

I first saw her in a production at U Players, *Lysistrata*, when she was working on her Ph.D. It was amazing for a university to have a student of her age and ability. All the ladies stripped down to underwear, and she was in red long -johns! She was in *The Girl from Maxim's* with Irene Connors and Pris Lindsay. I met her in my second A2CT show, *Misalliance* when she played my mother. Susan Morris, Irene Connors, Bev Pooley, and Charles Stallman were in it, too. It was directed by John Reid Klein. I remember feeling how egalitarian theatre was, when I was calling Burnette by her first name as if we were "equals," and she was my Mom's age! She and I were in Reid's *Once Upon a Mattress*. I played Sir Harry, with Connie Barron, and Burnette was the (gender switched) Wizard! I heard stories of how she opened Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre in a play in French, and she played Catherine in *Vagabond King*. It's always been hard to imagine her as a soprano, when she always seemed like a baritone to me. I will always remember her as the drunken Vera in *Mame*, with Irene Connors, when she was carried off stage by the chorus boys!

Jim Posante and I attended parties in Burnette and Neil Staebler's home. I was struck by how perfect Neil seemed as a politician. He genuinely liked people, and really connected in conversations. I knew he was semi-famous, but he was warm and generous. They moved to Washington, DC, when he worked in the Carter Administration. I grew up in theater in this town assuming that everyone was surrounded by similar brainy, interesting, accomplished, stimulating and attractive people!

Through the years, Burnette directed shows I was in, like *Kiss Me Kate*, performed with me in *Tartuffe*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The 101st*, and was in shows, like *Follies*, which I directed with Jim Posante. She



Burnette Staebler in Misalliance with Bev Pooley and Susan Morris.

wowed em' as Hattie, singing "Broadway Baby." She came to see me in shows at Performance Network. She went to see Jim's shows at Greenhills, and Nancy Heusel's shows there, too. I will always remember her!

Charles Sutherland ■

Volunteer Coordinator Report



ello Everyone! As many of you are aware, I recently took on the job of Volunteer Coordinator here at A2CT. One of the most important parts of this position is keeping our volunteer database updated and active so that we know who to ask for what. We've made the decision to rebuild our database from scratch so that it will be more accurate and easier to use. In order for us to take on this task, we need some information from our members. Many of you have already given this information to us before, but sometimes phone numbers, addresses and even interests can be out of date. For now, what we would like to do is to just get a basic idea of who would like to help with what. The best way to do this is to send me an email at volunteer@a2ct.org with your name, email address, telephone number, the best way to reach you, and your top three areas of interest. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can always send a quick postcard to me in the office. This is a rather large undertaking, but we're all excited to have a brand new database. I look forward to hearing from you!

Thanks! Torey Berneis, Volunteer Coordinator ■

Best Little Whorehouse (continued)

shares the exploits at a brothel known as the Chicken Ranch. The ranch flourished just outside La Grange, Texas, from 1844 until 1973, when it was shut down by the governor following a week-long expose by a ratings-hungry Houston TV reporter. The musical is a grand satire, and makes fun of Texas, say-nothing politicians, hypocrites, and the media in general.

A2CT's production of *Whorehouse* features Civic favorites



The ladies of the Chicken Ranch welcome you, especially if you're a football player!

Wendy Wright as Mona and Charlie Sutherland as Sheriff Ed Earl Dodd. Also featured are Alexandra Berneis as Doatsy, Jeff Steinhauer as Mayor Rufus Poindexter, Eric Wright-Olsen as CJ Scruggs/Senator Wingwoah, and Mark Bernstein as Edsel Mackey. New to Civic are Lawrence Bryk as the Governor, Alan Burk as Melvin P. Thorpe, Linzi Bokor as Jewel, and Katherine Hoag as Angel. In addition, a whorehouse full of Texas beauties and testosterone-laden Aggie football players is sure to keep the crowd entertained. The cast is extremely tight and full of experienced performers who are absolute team players—they set an example for all casts—and remind all of us that all parts, no matter how small, are crucial to the show.

Y'all check us out June 8-11 at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. Keep in mind that this show contains adult language and themes, and is for mature audiences.

See y'all there! ■

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas runs from June 8-11, 2006 at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. Performances are at 8pm Thursday through Saturday, and 2pm on Sunday. Tickets are \$15 on Thursday, and \$24 (\$21 for students and seniors) Friday through Sunday. Tickets are available online at a2ct.org, by phone or in person at the A2CT office, or at the door of the Mendelssohn 45 minutes before each performance. For additional show information, visit www.a2ct.org or call the box office at (734) 971-A2CT (2228).

The Studio Series

We are very excited to introduce our new Studio Series for the 2006-07 season. Harkening back to the Second Stage and Footlight series of yore, we will be presenting three alternative productions in our bright and airy rehearsal studio. Each production will run Friday and Saturday evenings at 8pm for two weekends.

First up October 20-28, 2006, is *Wake up and Smell the Coffee*, written by Eric Bogosian and directed by Andy Jentzen. This edgy, frenetic riff on pop culture and the information age is Bogosian at his fuming and foul-mouthed best.

Next, from February 9-17, 2007 is the hilarious, moving, and refreshing comedy *The Vagina Monologues*. Written by Eve Ensler, this series of monologues celebrates the complexities of the female body and spirit.

The third production in the Studio Series is *Playing Around: Readings of New Works* July 6-14, 2007. Produced by Catherine Zudak, this playwriting contest will tap the infinite talent of local playwrights to award each of two original, full-length plays a monetary prize and a premiere staged-reading.

Civic Spirit

So many people do so many things for A2CT, it's hard to mention them all. However, here are just a few folks we'd like to thank for extra help these past few months:

- Linda Lee Austin, for cheerfully helping out in the office
- Tom Steppe, for stepping in to provide emergency technical support
- Dave Keren, Anne Bauman, David Andrews, Bob Skon, Kathleen Beardmore, Tiff Crutchfield, Cassie Mann, Tanya Dabney, Suzi Peterson, Torey Berneis, Tawna Dabney, and Susie Berneis for attending the Greenway task force sessions to show support for a shared community arts space
- Kate Patterson for providing free and delicious goodies for the community focus group meeting and to sell at Towsley shows
- Susie and Alix Berneis and members of UM's North Campus Service Day for costume shop organization March 18
- Jeff Booth for plumbing assistance

We know there are other people who do extra little (and big) things for Civic, so if you know of anyone we should mention in the next *Spotlight*, let us know.

President's Corner



After getting involved with Civic Theatre in late 1998, I gravitated quickly to the

Board and have since served five of the last seven years as a Board member, including several years as an officer. In that time, I've become very interested in the dynamics that affect governance of a large, volunteer-based organization like A2CT. With hundreds of participants, several

large-scale projects each year (such as our shows) and many situations that can generate heated emotions, it requires a delicate balance of power to keep everything running smoothly. Elements of this balance include the Board (and to a limited extent, its officers), various committees that advise the Board, Cassie and Suzi, volunteers in key positions and the membership at large. Officially, we are a member-driven organization, meaning all power ultimately flows from the consent of our membership. That's why the annual Membership Meeting is so important. This year's meeting is set for Wednesday, June 14 at 7:00 pm at Arbor Brewing Company's Tap Room.

There are many ways that individual members can become involved with Civic Theatre's governance. The most obvious is to stand for election to the Board, and we will elect four new Board members at this year's Membership Meeting. If you're interested in running, please plan to make a short speech describing why you believe you would

be a good choice. Another option is to volunteer for a committee. As A2CT grows and strengthens, much of the real governance work now occurs in committees, which study issues in-depth and make recommendations to the Board. By serving on a committee, any member may become involved in an area of special interest, often with minimal time commitment, and have a real impact on the decisions that move the organization forward. We currently have eight active committees, and the Membership Meeting will include overviews of all of them, along with opportunities to sign up.

Another important governance role is available only to the membership at large: the approval of changes to A2CT's bylaws. The bylaws are the "constitution" of an organization, and spell out details of how the Board is set up and how it operates. From time to time the Board may decide that parts of the bylaws are out-of-date or no longer serve the organization. In that case it can request the membership to approve specific changes at the annual Membership Meeting. This year the Board seeks approval of changes relating to the length of Board terms, in an effort to improve year-to-year continuity, and to the construction of committees, in an effort to improve flexibility. The details of the proposed changes are described on the back page of this issue of the *Spotlight*.

Finally, in addition to its important governance functions, the Membership Meeting is a great chance to get together and celebrate the completion of another season, to catch up with old friends and to have a good time. Recent meetings have enjoyed large turnouts and we expect that trend will continue this year. There will be free light refreshments and, as an added bonus, each member who attends will receive a coupon for a free beverage. See you there! ■

From the Program and Managing Directors

Happy spring! As the flowers bloom and the grass grows, we are happy to report that the A2CT membership is growing, too. Each year for the past five, our membership has grown. We now have over 400 members and counting. Our programming is also growing--with acting camps and workshops, more volunteer opportunities, and our new Studio Series. Because our next season is so terrific and bountiful, we're sure our audiences will be growing, as well. To benefit the large numbers

of people we are sure will want to see our shows, we've revamped our group discount program to make it even nicer for groups to enjoy an enriching and exciting evening of entertainment. In addition to great discounts, we will work with groups to find restaurants for a pre-show bite or a post-show aperitif. Look for group discount specifics in the 2006-07 Season Brochure. Theater is a great way for work groups, book clubs, social organizations and more to get together for something a little different, so think of A2CT the next time you and your group, club, family, or friends want a great evening for a great price.

Sincerely,

Cassie & Suzi ■

Comedy and Romance Mix at *The Nerd*

The last non-musical of the 05-06 season, *The Nerd*, was a delightful experience for all and a life-changing experience for some. *The Nerd* played to enthusiastic and appreciative audiences, and a good time was had by all. Though the far-flung food required a half-hour of cleanup each night, it was worth it to see the expression on Ticky's (Ed Reynolds) face as cottage cheese oozed from the top of his head down to his toes.



Dann Smallwood proposed to Joy Martin from the stage of 'The Nerd'! She accepted.

The Saturday evening performance of *The Nerd* introduced romance and mystery into the production, as Dann Smallwood proposed to Joy Martin onstage at the curtain call. Though most of the cast knew about it--and about 40 of Joy's relatives who packed the house--Joy was very surprised. (She said "yes," by the way.) We wish Dann and Joy all the best as they embark on this new "production," and as they join the growing number of couples who met right here at A2CT.

Seasons of Love

In addition to a great place to do theater, A2CT is a great place to meet your mate. Over the past 77 seasons, many couples have met at Civic, (and there are a growing number of second-generation thespians as a result). Two such people, our managing director Suzi Peterson and actor/drummer/singer Matt Steward, met during the *Singer/Songwriters' Showcase* and are getting married this summer. Instead of blenders, woks, and place-settings, Matt and Suzi are asking

their wedding guests to donate to their newly-created A2CT Seasons of Love Fund. Although Matt and Suzi are still trying to figure out how to earmark the funds, they are encouraging anyone who met his or her true love at Civic to consider a donation. For that matter, friends and family of Civic couples might consider a donation in their honor. Simply write a check payable to A2CT, and include in the memo or on a note, "Seasons of Love Fund." Your name will appear in a separate section of each program.

To inaugurate the fund, we want to include an article for the fall *Spotlight* about all the couples who've met at Civic Theatre. If you are such a couple, let us know. If you have a good story about it, let us know that, too. If you know of people who met here but have moved away, let us know about them, as well. Just drop a note in the mail or send an e-mail to: manager@a2ct.org by August 21. (Photos of the happy couples are welcome, too.) ■

Auditions

The Full Monty

Auditions for the first show of the 2006-07 season are just around the corner. *The Full Monty*, directed by Wendy Sielaff, is a new musical based on the wildly popular British movie of the same name. Set in contemporary New Jersey, *The Full Monty* follows a group of six unemployed steel workers as they scrape up the courage to bare it all in a stage show designed to bring in badly-needed money.

Auditions take place Saturday, June 24 and Sunday, June 25 from noon-3pm. Actors need attend only one of the regular audition dates, but should be available for callbacks.

Callbacks are Monday, June 26 at 7pm. All auditions take place at the A2CT Rehearsal Studio, 322 W. Ann St. There are featured roles for six men (one of whom must be African-American) ages 25-60, four women ages 25-60, one boy who looks 12 (this is a non-singing role), plus supporting roles for 3 men and 3 women. There is no chorus for this show.

Actors should prepare 16 bars of music (not from the show) and bring sheet music. There are roles for dancers and non-dancers, but all auditioners should come prepared to move. Production dates are September 14-17, 2006, at The Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. Additional information and character descriptions are available on our website at www.a2ct.org. ■

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE

Membership Form 2006-07

The Ann Arbor Civic Theatre (A2CT) is a non-profit community theatre that provides the citizens of Ann Arbor and the surrounding region with opportunities to participate in all aspects of theatre: performance, production and appreciation.

As has always been true, revenue from ticket sales alone cannot cover the entire costs of operating our community theatre. We hope that you will join us as a supporter of this vibrant and venerable institution. In addition to providing support needed to keep A2CT fiscally sound, membership offers you:

- a discount on Season Tickets
- our "Spotlight" newsletter
- a listing on lobby signage for gifts of \$500+
- a listing in all of our show programs

Sign up (I want to make a tax-deductible gift!)

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ ST. _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Determine level of contribution:

Member \$25 or more/year My Amount _____

Sponsor \$50 or more/year My Amount _____

Star \$100 or more/year My Amount _____

Director \$250 or more/year My Amount _____

Benefactor \$500 or more/year My Amount _____

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Pay Ann Arbor Civic Theatre by credit card, check, or money order:

Credit Card VISA Mastercard AMEX

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Mail to:

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre
322 W. Ann Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**Make a difference in your community . Thank you
in advance for your support.**

ann arbor civic theatre presents

2006 Summer Acting Workshops

A Practical Approach to Acting

Saturdays, July 8-August 19, 2006, 1 pm to 3:30 pm

taught by Glenn Bugala

Learn:

- THE ACTOR'S BODY AND VOICE - discover techniques to address tension and become more expressive
- ANALYSIS - learn how to pursue objectives that are believable and sensible.
- LIVING IN THE MOMENT - realistic goals for live performance
- SCENE WORK - develop scenes and discover your abilities



Glenn Bugala is an A2CT veteran who has an MFA in Acting from Purdue University, has performed professionally in Chicago and has been a director or performer in over 100 productions. He has experience as a drama instructor at both the high school and college levels.

Specs: \$135 per participant, Ages 16 and up

Jr. Theatre Introduction to Theatre

August 21-25, 2006 from 10am-noon each day

taught by Valerie Wilkinson

Learn:

- Basic stage directions and terms
- Improvisations
- Theater games
- Theater costumes

Specs: \$120 per participant (scholarships available)
for kids grades K-3



Valerie Wilkinson has acted, directed, stage managed, costume designed, gathered props, run crew, sold tickets, and volunteer coordinated for various performances with A2CT since 2003. She directs shows for Junior Theatre.

Jr. Theatre Actor's Intensive Workshop

August 21-25, 2006 from 1pm-4pm each day

taught by Valerie Wilkinson

Learn:

- Scene analysis
- Character development
- Monologues
- Duo and group scene work

Specs: \$120 per participant (scholarships available)
for kids grades K-3, must have been in 1 class or play

Register on www.a2ct.org
or call (734) 971-0605

It's Time to Meet and Party!

Another season has flown by, and it's time again for A2CT's annual meeting. All Civic members are encouraged to attend, to vote, eat, drink, be merry, and possibly win door prizes. If you're not a dues-paying member, you can join any time right up to time of the meeting. We'll even have membership forms at the door! If you're not sure you are a current member, call the office or e-mail us at manager@a2ct.org to find out. All members who RSVP to the office via phone or e-mail by 2 pm Wednesday, June 14 will receive a ticket at the door of the meeting good for one free drink. Free light refreshments will be served. Here are the details:

Annual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 14

Time: 7pm

Location: Arbor Brewing Company - Tap Room

See you there!

By-laws Change

At the past two Board meetings, the following changes to the by-laws were voted on and approved. Final approval will be up for a vote at the annual meeting in June. It was proposed that Board members' terms be changed to 3-year terms. These changes are reflected in the by-laws changes below.

Section 1. Number and Term of Directors: (4/20/82, 5/21/86, 5/24/95, 5/22/96, 4/18/99, 6/24/01, 7/12/02)
The Board of Directors shall consist of up to fifteen members, six of whom shall be elected to three year terms by the membership at the Annual Meetings, with the remainder to be appointed by the current Board of Directors for three year terms. Said term of office shall run concurrent with the dates of the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). (A portion of section 4 was added to section 1 and section 4 was eliminated.)

Article III Section 1: Standing Committees will be deleted from the By Laws.



Non-Profit Organization
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 Ann Arbor, MI
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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre
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 Ann Arbor, MI 48104
 Phone: 734/971.0605
 Ticket Line: 734/971-2228
 Facsimile: 734/971-2769

ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE



BRINGING DRAMA TO ANN ARBOR FOR 75 YEARS, AND IT SHOWS.

05-06 'love with a twist' season

- 09/05 West Side Story
- 11/05 All My Sons
- 11/05 (Jr.) Dorothy Meets Alice
- 01/06 Guys and Dolls
- 03/06 A Thousand Clowns
- 04/06 The Nerd
- 05/06 (Jr.) The Reluctant Dragon
- 06/06 The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas

...AND THE 06-07 SEASON!

- The Full Monty 09/06
- Tom Jones 11/06
- (Jr.) The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood 11/06
- Sweet Charity 01/07
- The Tempest 03/07
- Cactus Flower 04/07
- (Jr.) Stone Soup 05/07
- Hair 06/07