



# The Institute of Outdoor Theatre Newsletter

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## Welcome to New Members:

### Elm Shakespeare Company

Daniel Fitzmaurice  
 New Haven, CT  
 203-874-0801  
[info@elmshakespeare.org](mailto:info@elmshakespeare.org)  
[www.elmshakespeare.org](http://www.elmshakespeare.org)

### Miller Outdoor Theatre

Shawn Hauptmann  
 Houston, TX  
 832-487-7103  
[shawnhauptmann@aol.com](mailto:shawnhauptmann@aol.com)  
<http://milleroutdoortheatre.com>

## Next Newsletter:

Do you have something you want to share with the IOD membership in the next newsletter? Just send it to: [outdoor@ecu.edu](mailto:outdoor@ecu.edu) and we will try to include it in the next newsletter.

## Letter from the Director

As our 2013 attendance survey results indicated, we are seeing some early signs of growth for outdoor theatre for the first time in several years. Several theatres that were struggling or even closed are beginning to make comebacks, and others are working hard to expand and diversify their offerings. Here at the Institute we are increasingly convinced of the need to be proactive, experiment with new directions, and work hard to get away from the comfort zone of business-as-usual.

With that in mind, this pre-season issue of our newsletter describes several new Institute programs and services that we are offering to support the field and bring fresh insights. For the past six months, our teams of architects and theatre professionals have been hard at work on an important new book about outdoor theatre, and it should be ready for member distribution in about six weeks (see story below). You'll also read about a new strategic planning seminar and retreat in October, while our annual conference will move to January with a reduced cost to coincide with our auditions over the Martin Luther King weekend. We invite you to let us know how these changes work for you and send us your suggestions for making the IOT more useful to you. Telephone conversations with several members have already produced some great new ideas that we'll be rolling out in coming months.

For most of us this has been an unusually long and difficult season of winter weather: let's hope that our audiences will have had a collective case of cabin fever that will bring them out in droves this year and keep this growth trend going. Have a wonderful season!

Michael Hardy

## Annual Conference: Moving from October to January

January 2015		
<b>16 Friday</b>	<b>17 Saturday</b>	<b>18 Sunday</b>
<i>Auditions</i> Evening: Orientation & reception	<i>Auditions &amp; Conference Kick Off</i> Daytime: Auditions & Callbacks Evening: Conference Reception	<i>Conference</i> 9 AM- 4 PM Sessions and Awards Luncheon

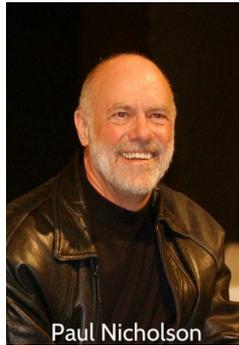
The next annual networking and awards conference of the IOT will be scheduled immediately following the national auditions on January 17-18, 2015 at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. The meeting will open Saturday evening with a cocktail reception at the home of IOT Director Michael Hardy and continue all day Sunday on the East Carolina campus, adjourning late that afternoon. (The next day is the national holiday for Martin Luther King.)

The Mark Sumner and Scott J. Parker awards will be presented at the Awards Luncheon on

Sunday and sessions that day will include round table reports, IOT business meeting, and professional development sessions. With this shorter format, registration costs are being reduced from last year's \$275 to \$75 and our negotiated hotel rate (with breakfast) starts at \$79. Members are also encouraged to attend the auditions which take place all day on Saturday with a Friday evening reception opening the weekend. Company registration for auditions this year is also reduced from \$175 to \$25, so registration for the conference and auditions combined will only be \$100 - a savings of \$350 from previous years in addition to consolidating two trips into one.

Members arriving by air can fly into the Greenville airport (PGV) or Raleigh-Durham (RDU), a 1 ½ hour drive to East Carolina University. Further details will be posted online and emailed this summer.

## New in October: Master Seminar



Paul Nicholson

Every year we discuss the increasing challenges to our theatres and how we can best respond to them. For many of our members, it has become clear that doing the same thing each season and hoping it will turn out better is simply not working. We need different strategies, better information and new tools to help us start growing again. With this in mind, the IOT has committed significant funding to support member organizations who wish to attend our first executive education training program: [Strategic Planning with Paul Nicholson](#) scheduled for October 12-15, 2014. With the IOT subsidy covering over 60% of the expense, the registration fee will be only \$600 per participant for the three day program plus one full year of ongoing support.

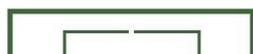
Led by Paul Nicholson, Executive Director Emeritus of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and winner of last year's Mark Sumner Award, the seminar will train participants in a proven model for strategic planning, including the ability to test and project the financial impacts of alternate goals and strategies. Oregon is the largest Shakespeare Festival in the United States with two outdoor performance spaces: the 1,190 seat Allen Elizabethan Theatre and the plaza Green Show. Nicholson led the Oregon success story for a total of 32 years.

To ensure an intensive, hands-on experience, the IOT seminar will be limited to 10 organizations. Up to two individuals per theatre may attend: either two staff or a staff-board member combination. Nicholson will lead participants through a structured 3-day program at the beautiful and secluded [Inn at Serenbe](#), 25 miles southwest from the Atlanta international airport. Plenary sessions will alternate with one-on-one consultations, and free time will be provided to prepare for the different stages of the process. The group dinner each evening will be followed by study time with the option of ending the day together over a nightcap. On the day of arrival, the group will attend a site-specific performance by IOT member Serenbe Playhouse performing "The Sleepy Hollow Experience."

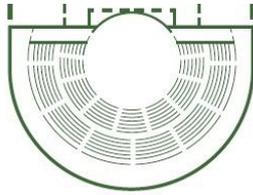
Seminar participants will apply the principles and techniques of strategic planning to the development of specific plans for their organizations. At the conclusion of the seminar, the process will only have begun. For the next year, members will work to complete their strategic plans with continuing coaching and advice from Nicholson.

Registration for the seminar will open on May 1 and additional information will be emailed to all IOT members.

## New Publication



The Institute's new book [OUTDOOR THEATRE FACILITIES: A Guide to Planning and Building Outdoor Theatres](#) will be

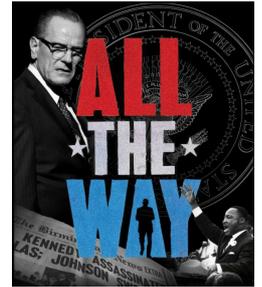


published in June. Each IOT organization will receive a free member copy, and the book will be available for sale on our website. Research and written by a team of architects, theatre consultants, director-designers and managers, the book will provide a comprehensive analysis of the issues facing outdoor theatre planners and a wide-ranging survey of existing theatre

types around the world.

## Member News

The **Oregon Shakespeare Festival's** "All the Way" has opened to critical acclaim at the Neil Simon Theatre on Broadway. Directed by **Bill Rauch**, Oregon's artistic director, the play by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Robert Schenkkan stars "Breaking Bad" actor **Bryan Cranston** in the role of Lyndon Baines Johnson during the President's first year in office



**Brenda DeVita** has been named the new Artistic Director for the **American Players Theatre** in Spring Green, Wisconsin. DeVita has been performing the majority of the tasks required of an artistic director for a number of years, as she was identified as the heir to retiring Producing Artistic Director David Frank.

The award winning site-specific theatre company **Serenbe Playhouse** and **Brian Clowdus** are blazing new trails with the creation of the Serenbe Playhouse Academy. Educational programming geared towards students from all stages and walks of life will be offered year round and will cover a variety of topics.

In a recent storm, a tree fell on one of the new dormitories for performers at **Unto These Hills**. Fortunately no one was harmed, but there was extensive damage done to one of the resident apartments. In better news, **John Tissue** reports that their Trip Advisor rating has increased from 3.4 stars to 4.4, and audience feedback has been positive. Plans are also in the works to create an indoor version of their production that can be performed in poor weather.



John also reports that **Marion Waggoner** will direct the show with Philenia Walkingstick again this year.

Attendance at California's official outdoor play **Ramona** has been improving in recent years according to [local news reports](#). **Dennis Anderson** reports that attendance has increased over the past 5 years, more volunteer work is occurring, and the amphitheater is being used for more and more events.

The Roanoke Island Historical Association and **Bill Coleman**, producers of **The Lost Colony**, have bestowed the coveted Morrison Award on former IOT director **Scott Parker**. Congratulations to Scott on this award.



**Colorado Shakespeare Festival** is bringing Shakespeare to schools in a new and productive way. They have joined with the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence to help [teach kids about bullying](#) in their performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

**Drums Along the Mohawk** is taking a ride! On August 9<sup>th</sup> they will offer a [guided bus tour](#) that stop at historical areas important to the show on the way to the theatre. They hope that this will add another layer of experience to attending the show.

Producing Artistic Director **Matt Wallace** reports that **Kentucky Shakespeare** is creating a new series called [Shakespeare in the Parks](#). In addition to their home base in Louisville's Central Park, they will begin touring *Hamlet* to nine other area parks in April and May.



April 23, 2014 marks the 450<sup>th</sup> birthday of William Shakespeare, and several members are celebrating. **Nebraska Shakespeare** is again holding its annual "Talk Like Shakespeare Day" with prizes, a sonnet contest, events, and deals around town, and are encouraging participants to share their day over social media. The **San Francisco Shakespeare Festival** is holding a celebratory dinner, complete with fine vintage wines, gourmet foods, and a silent auctions. **Shakespeare by the Sea** in San Pedro, CA is also celebrating with a very British twist: afternoon tea. The fundraiser on April 26 will feature tea, sandwiches, scones, and of a performance by Shakespeare by the Sea.

For the 14th Season of **Tom Dooley: A Wilkes County Legend** the show is getting a new brand. "The show needed something that embodies the nature of the story," said Robin Hamby, President of the organization. "Although the famous lover's triangle ends with a hanging, most people hum a verse of the song when you mention Tom Dooley to them. The fiddle really drives that home."



**By Popular Demand:** Branson, Missouri's perennial outdoor drama **Shepherd of the Hills** will be returning for a limited production in 2014 after earlier announcements that it would close following the death of its owner **Gary Snadon** last fall. Long-time IOT member **Theatre West Virginia** will also re-open for an abbreviated 2014 season, after announcing their closing earlier in the year. In both cases, strong local support was instrumental in the ability of the shows to continue operating.

After some ups and downs during the past season, the Town of Boone, NC renewed the production license for the 63rd Season of **Horn in the West**. The show was also awarded a grant of \$20,000 to address structural issues at the theatre site. In addition, **Teresa Lee** has been appointed the new director for the 2014 season.

## Fundraising Tips

*(If you've tried something new in your fundraising and had good luck with it, please share!)*

Last year, **The Stephen Foster Story** participated in an inaugural campaign sponsored by The Kentucky Non-Profit Network and raised \$1,637. This is a statewide program with over 400 organizations benefitting from a 24 hour blitz of fundraising. This year **Johnny Warren** reports that the results greatly exceeded their expectations, bringing in a total of \$6,246.00. Members wanting to learn more can visit [Kentucky Gives Day](#) on the web.

**Oregon Shakespeare Festival's** technical director **William Tiesi** had heard Stanley Black & Decker was known for helping out nonprofits focused on rebuilding, so he reached out to see if the company could fill some of the Festival's growing need for tools and other equipment. The result? **\$12,627.24** worth of new tools!

Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Since its inception in 1963, the Institute's scope has grown to provide services to a wide variety of theatrical organizations around the world who perform in outdoor settings including historical dramas, Shakespeare festivals and religious and contemporary theatrical presentations. These organizations are united by their common adventures in producing theatre in outdoor settings and their unique roles in providing exceptional values in tourism , education and entertainment. For more information please visit our website at [www.outdoor-theatre.org](http://www.outdoor-theatre.org).

Phone: (252) 328-5363 | Fax: (252) 328-0968

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Institute of Outdoor Theatre  
ECU College of Fine Arts and Communication  
201 Erwin Building, Mail Stop 528  
Greenville, North Carolina 27858-4353  
US