



The Institute of Outdoor Theatre

Newsletter

In This Issue

- Letter from the Director
- Conference
- Conference Awards
- 2014 Attendance
- 2015 Auditions
- Member News
- Theatre Seating

Welcome to New Members:

Ragged Edge Community Theatre

Tagan Cox

Harrodsburg, KY

859-734-2389

raggededgetheatre@gmail.com

www.raggededgetheatre.org

The Public Theater of Minnesota

Mark Hauck

St. Louis Park, MN

612-849-0618

mark@theptmn.org

<http://theptmn.org>

New Graduate Assistant:

Scott Rose has joined the IOT as our graduate assistant. Scott received his undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee. He is enrolled in the Maritime Studies graduate program here at ECU. Scott has technical theatre experience and we are glad to add him to our team.

Letter from the Director

New Direction for the IOT



The Institute is embarking on a more inclusive approach to our mission to support and promote outdoor theatre. Whereas our policy in the past has been to concentrate exclusively on those theatres who chose to pay membership dues, our increasing awareness of the larger international field of outdoor theatre has led us to believe that this approach limits our ability to serve the field as completely as we should. And, although membership dues are an important source of revenue for the

Institute, they represent a barrier for many excellent theatres whose work deserves to be promoted.

So, for the first time this fall, we will begin to recognize and list every outdoor theatre that we can identify *throughout the world*. Visitors to our website after October 10 will see a revised design with a “Find a Theatre” menu item that will open up to a map of the world with theatre listings in every country where we have identified organizations. Basic information about each theatre will be available together with a link to its website. With nearly 600 theatres to start, we expect the list to grow significantly over time.

With this new direction, our website will become the only comprehensive portal to information about outdoor theatre. Our plans include leveraging this unique position to encourage and facilitate the public’s attendance to outdoor theatre, and this portal will enhance our ability to effectively pursue that aspect of our mission.

For those theatres who have been faithful members throughout our long history, we want to assure you that membership is still a relationship that we need and value, and it will continue to provide the traditional exclusive benefits of consulting, member discounts, mentor support and publications (such as our recent book *Outdoor Theatre Facilities*) at no additional cost. Members will still be listed in the membership directory, and their listing on the IOT website will be highlighted to show their member status. Members will also receive an annual certificate of membership and decals to display as needed. Member dues provide important financial support for our operating expenses and special projects.

That support also comes from individuals and theatres who wish to make an annual donation to the **Friends of Outdoor Theatre**. Over the years, these gifts have helped sustain our work in providing information and services to the field. Donors to the Friends will be acknowledged on our website unless they wish to remain anonymous. None of the funds we raise through contributions are used to pay our staff salaries: they go to offset the operating expenses and project costs of the Institute.

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 and we will try to include it in the next newsletter.

We invite your comments and questions about this new direction for the IOT and look forward to continuing our mission in support of your work.

Michael Hardy

Conference

The next conference will be held following the IOT auditions, January 17-18, 2015 on the campus of East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. The meeting will open on Saturday evening with a cocktail reception at the home of IOT Director Michael Hardy and will continue from 9:00am until 4:00pm on Sunday.

The Mark R. Sumner and Scott J. Parker awards will be presented at the Awards Luncheon on Sunday and other sessions will include the Paul Green Seminar, round table reports, IOT business meeting and professional development sessions. With this year's shorter format, registration will be reduced to \$75 per person. Click on the following link <http://www.outdoor-theatre.org/conference/> to register for the conference. City Hotel & Bistro is offering a nightly rate of \$79 (which includes a hot breakfast). Reservations can be booked online at www.cityhotelandbistro.com by clicking on reservations, click on group code and key in **123545** which is our group's online code. You may also book reservations by calling 877-271-2616 and ask for the group block "Institute of Outdoor Theatre." **The deadline for reservations to receive the group rate is Thursday, December 17, 2014.**

Members arriving by air can fly into the Greenville airport (PGV) or Raleigh-Durham (RDU), a 1 ½ hour drive to East Carolina University.

Conference Awards

Nominations are Open! Annual Recognition Awards

The Institute will accept nominations for the **Mark R. Sumner Award** and the **Scott J. Parker Award** until November 14, 2014. The awards will be presented at the annual conference on Sunday, January 18, 2015.

The **Mark R. Sumner Award** recognizes significant contributions by an individual to a specific organization, or to outdoor theatre as a whole, including but not limited to playwriting, directing, acting, design, theater architecture, patronage, scholarship, musical composition, technology and innovation, producing and administration.

The **Scott J. Parker Award** will be presented to an exceptional volunteer in the field of outdoor theatre. A cash prize of five hundred dollars (\$500), this award recognizes an individual who has been nominated by an IOT member theatre for their extraordinary, dedicated and unpaid service to the organization over a significant period of time. These volunteers may have served on boards of directors or worked in any aspect of a theatre's operation from the front office to backstage to the box office or usher corps. An awards committee will consider nominations for the Scott Parker Award annually, although an award will not necessarily be made every year.

Click on the following link <http://www.outdoor-theatre.org/conference/> for further information and nomination forms for both awards.

The thoroughness and quality of the support materials for nominations are important, and a complete portfolio of support materials and testimonials should be mailed to:

Institute of Outdoor Theatre
201 Erwin Bldg. Mailstop 528
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858-4353

2014 Attendance Survey

We are now requesting attendance and budget data from all outdoor theatres for the past 2014 season. The Institute's Annual Outdoor Theatre Attendance report has been published for almost 50 years, and it is the most comprehensive report of its kind. This request for information is extended to all outdoor theatres throughout the world, regardless of whether they are members of the Institute. To submit your data, please download the attached [Survey Form](#); it is simple to complete and should take no more than 30 minutes. Please add your theatre name to the file's name before you return it to us via email. If you can't send it via email you can fax it to: 252-328-0968. We will publish the results in January.

Last year, we observed the first overall increase in attendance in a number of years, and it is vitally important to all of us to continue observing these trends accurately. Financial support, grants and public information officers can all make use of this industry-wide data.

If you are concerned about confidentiality, please note that although attendance data will be shown for each organization, budget numbers will NOT be attributed to specific theatres and will instead be aggregated by type of theatre. The results will be summarized in an overall report with secondary reports compiling and comparing the data individually for history dramas, paid and free Shakespeare theatres, religious dramas and variety theatres.

All theatres, large or small are very important and meaningful to this survey. As your advocate for outdoor theatre, this gives us the data we need to evaluate trends and can provide valuable information to theatre managers in making decisions regarding management and production.

We can accept your data until mid-November when our statistician must begin to aggregate it and prepare the reports. We urge you to complete your survey form promptly and return by email or fax (252-328-0968) without delay.

2015 Auditions

The 2015 Summer Auditions sponsored by the IOT, the first unified auditions of the season, will be taking place in Greenville, NC on the campus of East Carolina University over the Martin Luther King weekend on January 16 - 17. We are excited to announce we will have 14 theatre companies in attendance. Again this year we will be hosting another "Q&A with Outdoor Drama Casting Directors" on Friday evening, January 16 followed by a Welcome Reception for company members and auditionees. The auditions will begin at 8:30am on Saturday, January 17 and run until 5:00pm.

Member News

American Folklore Theatre will be changing its name to **Northern Sky Theater** in 2015. Artistic Director **Jeffrey Herbst** said that the name change would be a positive move for the company. "As long as the company was generating works entirely from

within, the name wasn't an issue professionally," Herbst said. "However, when Fred died, (2002 Mark R. Sumner Award recipient Fred Alley) we lost one of our most prolific writers. In order to continue our mission of developing new works, it became essential that we reach out and network with potential partnering organizations. It quickly became apparent that these other organizations and their writers had to look past our name in order to understand the kind of shows we create. Our name was a hindrance to making these needed connections."

Pioneer Playhouse celebrated its 65th Season with a new book. **Robert A. Powell** former director of development published a 120-page book entitled "**Pioneer Playhouse: A Kentucky Treasure**". The book is a collection of tidbits and photographs from its 65 year old history. Of course the stars of the book are Pioneer Playhouse founder Eben Henson and his family. The book can be purchased at Amazon.com or Kyhawke.com.

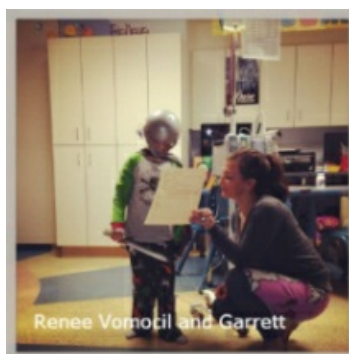


Pine Knob Theatre's founder and director **Honus Shain** was featured on the opening season of **American Pickers** on the History Channel. Honus is a big collector; you should see his Coke-A-Cola collection. It is hard for him to part with many of his treasures because they are from friends and

family and represent the history of their town. American Pickers was lucky to get two small signs and two 1957 Ford cars.

Commonwealth Shakespeare Company kicked off its 20th anniversary season on September 19, 2014 with a once-in-a-lifetime gift to the City of Boston – **Shakespeare at Fenway**. This was a first-ever event of this kind to be presented at a major league ballpark. They presented a starting line-up of local and national celebrities for an evening of famous scenes from Shakespeare's plays.

The Scioto Society, Inc., the producers of the outdoor drama **Tecumseh!** recently announced that **Brandon Smith** will join them on October 6, 2014 as its new Chief Executive Officer. He will bring a tremendous wealth of experience to the organization, having spent the last decade as a Performing Arts Professional in the areas of management, program development, fundraising and community engagement. Brandon's first paying job was taking tickets at Tecumseh! then later he was theatre manager and ran the gift shop. He also worked trying to get Calico Thunder established then he was theatre manager for Johnny Appleseed. The last four years he has spent as Theatre Manager for The Lost Colony (Manteo, NC) where he also was Interim CEO for 10 months.



An idea from **Renee Vomocil**, Education Director for the **Idaho Shakespeare Festival** resulted in a grant in 2012 from the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation. Renee's idea was named the Helena Project and its purpose is to bring the works of Shakespeare to the children at the St. Luke's Children's Hospital School. The school continues education for the children while they are receiving treatment for chronic and life-threatening illnesses. Teaching artists work with students to analyze, interpret and perform Shakespeare's works. In the

past few years following the grant, Renee has shared her curriculum with educators

across the country at the annual Folger Shakespeare Library conference and she has spoken at a national conference for hospital schools. Now a short film has been produced called “**A Different Kind of Battle**”; this short film aims to spread the importance of theater and Shakespeare in the lives of hospital students. The film can be found at <http://youtu.be/dA1ONei7IZY>.

Roanoke Island Historical Association received a grant of \$5,500 from the Outer Banks Community Foundation for masks for PsychoPath, a haunted attraction produced by the Roanoke Island Historical Association. PsychoPath opens its second season this fall, running weekends throughout October. This event generates funds that help sustain the production of **The Lost Colony**.



The **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** has received a \$125,000 grant from the Oregon Community Foundation to support the 2015 U.S. premiere of **Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land**, a hugely popular play in China and Taiwan by Taiwanese playwright **Stan Lai**, who also translated the play to English and will direct at OSF. The **Oregon Shakespeare Festival Costume Rentals** business is celebrating their 10th anniversary this season. For information on costume rentals visit their website at <http://www.osfcostumerentals.org/index.html>.



2014 marks the start of a new era on the grounds of the **Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire**. The Faire’s Human Chess Match Stage Arena has undergone complete reconstruction in preparation for the 34th annual Renaissance Faire, but will also moonlight as a concert venue for multi-genre entertainers.

Theatre Seating



Serenbe Playhouse started their 2014 season with new chairs and risers made possible with a grant from the Serenbe Institute for Art, Culture and the Environment. The chairs are manufactured by Hercules and are designed specifically for outdoor use; slatted so water can flow through when it rains; extra wide seat insures comfort; durable and light weight. The risers are by Bil-Jax, they are flexible to set up; safety railing insures security of patrons; weather resistant. The chairs are easy to transport, which was very helpful when they had multiple shows going on and needed to move chairs between sites. They received lots of compliments on how comfortable they were. Serenbe Playhouse is a site-specific theatre company, they move to different locales around the Serenbe community to an appropriate setting for the plays they produce.

Honus Shain just finished installing the 230 seats he purchased for **Pine Knob Theatre** from Dale Sprinkle. Sprinkle travels all over the U.S. and removes seats from stadiums and re-sells them. This is the second time since he started the theatre in 1987 that he has replaced the seating. His cost was about \$7,000 which did not include labor because they did the installation themselves. Dale Sprinkle can be reached at djsprink@psci.net.



The Institute of Outdoor Theatre (IOT) is a program of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at East 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 challenges 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.

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

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