



SETC NEWS

May / June 2007

Dream Big with SETC

At our annual business meeting on March 10, after accepting the gavel symbolic of the SETC presidency from Dennis Wemm, I challenged our members to dream big. They are simple words – dream big – but they carry profound implications.

SETC stands at a wonderful place. We continue to experience steady growth in membership and convention participation. We have a favorable combination of size, scope and resources.

Above all, we have maintained our inclusive spirit; some call it a family. In Atlanta, new members, commercial exhibitors and special guests all commented upon the convention atmosphere.

By encouraging us to dream big, I am not talking about changing the fundamental framework of our success. Rather, we should seek to maximize our potential.

In recent editions of *SETC News*, you have read about new or expanded programs. Here I will outline the three dreams that I presented to the membership.

First, we should follow the example of other great organizations and build on our strengths. We have a sound financial situation.

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From the President

David S. Thompson



Convention Statistics

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Registered	3154	4019	4028	4068	4294
Spring Auditions					
Auditionees	944	908	937	940	839
Companies	96	90	88	84	93
Roles Available	N/A	2197	2704	3480	4129
Job Contact Service					
Employers	108	111	108	105	120
Jobs Posted	1633	1874	1307	1609	2299
Employees	729	741	899	717	752
Undergrad School Auditions					
Auditionees	150	228	277	306	273
Schools	61	63	66	70	73
Graduate School Auditions					
Auditionees	41	47	90	80	75
Schools	11	25	22	37	22

Get Ready to Choo-Choo to Chattanooga for SETC 2008

I hope everyone is as excited as I am about going back to Chattanooga for the 2008 SETC Convention. Those of you who were at the 2004 event in Chattanooga will remember what a wonderful facility it was and how hospitable the local theatres and city officials were.

Chattanooga is an incredible example of successful downtown revitalization. Back in 2004, as some of us were walking to a nearby restaurant from the hotel, I couldn't

help remembering what this area was like when I attended the University of Tennessee Chattanooga in the mid-1970s. I made the comment to those with me that this was an area of town we wouldn't even drive in back then – let alone walk through after dark. What a difference a few decades make! The area now is a focus of the city, with an amazing convention center, large hotels, small boutique bed-and-breakfasts, fine restaurants and more. Another invigorating aspect of returning to Chattanooga is that people there are as excited as we are that our convention will again be in their city.

As SETC continues to grow, our success hinges on your participation. When I looked at the vast array of workshops, panels and discussions offered at the 2007 convention, all I could think is: It's no wonder that SETC is growing so quickly. The reason that SETC has grown to a regional organization

enveloped across the nation is because so many talented and intelligent individuals give of their time and talents. The lifeblood of SETC is the flow of volunteers who truly personify this collaborative art we call theatre.

So now is the time to "jump on board," as we are already planning and preparing for next year's convention, scheduled for March 5-9. Now is the time to act on the ideas you took home from this year's event. Let the concepts you are germinating now grow into exciting workshops or presentations that become your contribution to the 2008 convention in Chattanooga.

From the President-Elect

Glen Gourley



How to Propose a Program

Look for program proposal forms for the 2008 SETC Convention on the Web at www.setc.org. Download a form, and send your proposal as soon as possible to President-Elect Glen Gourley via e-mail at glen@setc.org.

COMING SOON

Third Annual Southern Theatre SETC College/University/Training School Directory
Make sure your school is listed! Contact Hardy Koenig via hardy@setc.org for information!

SETC Announces Fall Graduate School Auditions

9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, September 8, 2007
Spirit Square, Charlotte, NC

SETC will offer Fall Graduate School Auditions for the first time in 2008. Here's what you need to know if you're a student or a school representative:

Actors, Designers and Tech Students: Why Should You Audition?

- You want to enter theatre graduate school in fall 2008.
- You would like a head start in looking at schools and programs.
- You want to talk with school recruiters early in the year because you are seeking financial aid.
- You want multiple schools to see your potential, but don't have the time or money to travel to multiple locations.
- You are auditioning for work at SETC's Fall Professional Auditions the next day and want to take advantage of seeing college representatives while you are there.

Cost: Audition fee is \$25.

Application: Available on the SETC website at www.setc.org.

College/University Recruiters: Why Should You Come to FALL Auditions?

- You can get a jump start on recruiting.
- You can see numerous students at one time rather than having to arrange for each one to visit your school separately.
- You can observe auditionees performing on stage in an actual theatre.
- You don't have to pay an extra charge to attend. One fee (\$25) covers attendance at the fall 2007 and the spring 2008 Graduate School Auditions.
- You can set up a tabletop display for all-day viewing in a public area (\$25).

Cost: Graduate Auditions fee is \$25, which covers BOTH the fall 2007 and spring 2008 Graduate School Auditions. Schools must be organizational members (\$70).

Application: Available on the SETC website at www.setc.org.

What Auditionees and Recruiters Can Expect

- Auditions will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on stage at the McGlohan Theatre in Spirit Square, Charlotte, NC, on Saturday, September 8, 2007.
- A piano and an accompanist will be on-site.
- Four music rooms and three dance studios will be available from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for callbacks. Recruiters must pre-register for their use.
- There will be both acting auditions and design/tech portfolio reviews.

Hotel Information

- The Omni Hotel is just a short walk from the audition site at Spirit Square. SETC's discounted room price at the Omni is \$89 plus tax. Reservation deadline is August 16, 2007. Rooms sell out quickly so we recommend making reservations early.
- Hotel Reservations: Call toll-free at 1-800-400-1700 or call the hotel directly at 704-377-0400. To receive the discounted price above, use the DISCOUNT CODE: SETC or Southeastern Theatre Conference.

Committee Explains Rationale for Fall Auditions

Fall Graduate School Auditions were added this year at the request of SETC's membership. The addition of these auditions will not affect the operation of the traditional spring Graduate School Auditions, which will be held as usual during the SETC Convention.

SETC's spring Graduate School Auditions are very successful and continue to grow each year – and we expect that trend to continue. However, the timing of the spring auditions is very late in the cycle for many organizations and students. Traditionally, graduate school acceptances for admissions/financial aid are announced in early March and April. By adding fall auditions, we can provide help to recruiters earlier in the application process, enabling them to recruit a larger pool of applicants for admission and/or financial aid. SETC member Ray Paolino of the University of Georgia, who created SEGTA (Southeastern Graduate Theatre Auditions) last year to offer fall auditions, has worked closely with the Auditions Committee in developing SETC's Fall Graduate School Auditions.

- Don Wolfe, Chair, Graduate School Auditions Committee

From the President

(Continued from Page 1)

It is time for us to solidify our holdings by planning for SETC's first capital campaign. Raising new funds would not only secure endowed scholarships, but possibly endow our employee salaries as well. Doing so would provide unimagined budgetary flexibility and secure operations for the future.

Second, in a concept directly related to fundraising, a first-class organization deserves a first-class home. We should plan to build our own headquarters. The building would house basic services, but might also provide theatrical opportunities and anticipate other future needs. (My father, a retired executive, suggests building twice the needed space and renting the excess to pay the mortgage. Thanks, Dad!) There are many possibilities, but home ownership is a sign of dreaming big.

Finally, as the Executive Committee and Central Office staff visited state conventions, we heard that SETC is not an option for some small theatres in isolated locations. Organizational memberships and convention travel are just not in their budgets. One group asked if SETC could stage a smaller convention in their area. Can we provide services in new or creative ways? Can we work together on a flexible year-round model? This dream may seem complex, but reaching out to groups throughout our region falls squarely within our mission.

Simple words with profound implications – dream big.

William Ivey Long Exhibit Opens

Between Taste and Travesty: Costume Designs by William Ivey Long, an exhibition of the work of the four-time Tony Award winner and North Carolina native, will be at the Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington, NC, April 29 through October 14, 2007. It includes costumes, sketches and accessories from Long's Broadway productions, films, operas, ballets and other shows. More information: www.cameronartmuseum.com/.

In Memoriam

Stephanie Routman, assistant professor of theatre at Georgia Southern University, passed away as the SETC Convention began on March 7, 2007. Routman, who had cancer, was 37. Memorial contributions may be made to the Communication Arts/Stephanie Routman Scholarship, Georgia Southern University Foundation, P.O. Box 8053, Statesboro, GA 30460-8053.

SETC Through the Eyes of a Father and a Son

Among the thousands of attendees working the SETC Convention this year were several who shared family connections. Former SETC President Anthony Haigh stayed busy with workshops, meetings and auditions while his son, Adam, looked for tech work through Job Contact Service. Longtime member Daryl Frank came mainly to see old friends, while her daughter-in-law, Celia Frank, artistic director of Atlantic Beach (FL) Experimental Theatre, spent time networking and attending workshops.

The father-and-son duo of Patrick and James Cronin also came with different agendas. Patrick Cronin, 66, a veteran character actor known best to today's generation as the "bra salesman" on TV's *Seinfeld*, is a professor at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) who was at the convention to present workshops and mingle with colleagues. James Cronin, 25, is a graduate student who came primarily to audition for acting jobs. What was SETC like for two generations of Cronins? Below are excerpts from their SETC diary.

Patrick Cronin:

I arrive at the conference on Tuesday, settling in and meeting the people who have become like my second family – the men and women of SETC. Jack Benjamin, former president of SETC and the soul of South Carolina, and his wife Kathy are always there first to make us realize we are truly ready for the SETC celebration. Then I run into Betsey [Baun, SETC executive director] and the "dream team" [volunteers who give their time to staff the convention] and, boy, does it feel wonderful just to be in the presence of that energy.

So, like a train leaving the station, the week begins, and by Thursday, the leotarded youth are stretching their muscles and their talents in every nook and cranny of the Hilton. By the time my son arrives, I am already awash in the glow that only SETC can provide.

James Cronin:

I arrive in Atlanta late Thursday evening after a six-and-a-half-hour car ride from Louisville. The second I pull up to the hotel, I know I am at SETC. There are groups of well-dressed youngsters standing outside, private conversations taking place at stage volume, and badges – badges everywhere.

The following morning I get my registration packet and head immediately to my audition. I am struck instantly by the fact that my badge has a huge number "314" with my name in size 2 font in the top corner. My father's badge prominently displays his name with his affiliation underneath.

"I can't wait," I tell him over lunch, "until I become an actual person like you and not just number 314. I feel like a convict."

"Someday, son," he replies with smug sagacity.

While I spend the afternoon hustling from hotel room to hotel room trying to sell myself to the highest bidder, my father enjoys a

few workshops and then preps for his own workshop.

Pat Cronin:

Since I arrived at East Tennessee State University in 2000 and attended my first SETC conference, I have been struck by just how much this organization means to so many people and now I can share this celebration with my son, who graduated from ETSU in theatre and who in May continues the SETC tradition, earning his MFA from the University of Louisville.

James attends my workshop on Friday and shares his young wisdom, and I am so proud to have him with me in the room.

James Cronin:

I schedule my afternoon around his workshop so that I can attend and see just how many times I can endure the same stories. I actually enjoy the workshop and afterward get to talk to several people that want to hear about *Blue Jacket*, the summer theatre in Ohio where I played the role of Daniel Boone in 2004, and the University of Louisville's graduate program, which accepted me after an SETC audition that same year.

After the workshop it is time for more emotionally charged monologue work in cramped, poorly lit hotel rooms.

Patrick Cronin:

Because of SETC and his audition work in "those poorly lit rooms," James lands his second professional job – as an actor-in-residence at Mill Mountain Playhouse in Roanoke, VA, starting in September. (His first professional job, at *Blue Jacket*, came from an SETC audition, too.)

James also has started his own improv group in Louisville called The Indicators [www.indicatorsimprov.com], and so he makes time in his schedule at the convention for a half dozen workshops on the art and the business of improvisation. That is another part of the SETC magic – that there are workshops and panels for everyone and



James Cronin (left) and his father, Patrick Cronin, enjoy spending time together while exploring theatre at the SETC Convention.

for all ages and interests.

James Cronin:

By eight o'clock, I am spent. Dad and I meet up in the hotel room and head out to dinner at Pittypat's Porch Restaurant.

No day at SETC would be complete without a stop at the hotel bar. Dad leaves me to my devices, and I enjoy a beer with some old friends and meet some new ones. Around midnight it is time to head off to bed to gear up for a day of workshops. Saturday has quite a bit in store!

Patrick Cronin:

We come back together for the keynote address of Marsha Norman on Saturday, and we sit side by side and across a lot of years (I'm 66 and he's 25). We share the joy of being in and of, and because of SETC surrounded by, our shared love and joy in the theatre. Marsha shares so much of her wisdom with us all, and my son and I float out of the ballroom filled with new ideas and new hopes for the future.

That night we dress up and head to the ballroom for the closing banquet and the awards ceremony, and we both comment on how many different SETCs have been going on, including the wonderful worlds of high school and community theatre. So many people sharing the magic of theatre in so many different ways and yet all a part of SETC.

The night comes to a close, and we stand in the bar of the hotel, meeting with old and new friends of all ages and from all parts of the world. And it is just a bit of heaven to be standing with my son, talking to people who share a love of theatre and to know that for this week, in this place, SETC is the magic wand that brings us all here.

See you in Chattanooga, son. In fact, hope to see you all.

2007 SETC Award Winners Announced at Convention in Atlanta



Distinguished Career Award
Marsha Norman
Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning
Playwright



Suzanne M. Davis Award
Joe Filippo
SETC President, 2000-2001



**Secondary School
Play Award**
*Annie, the Virgin Mary and
the Three-Legged Horse*
by Lori Anne Barkin
Dreyfoos School of the Arts,
West Palm Beach, FL



**Charles M. Getchell
New Play Award**
Two Body Problems
by Don LaPlant
Emory & Henry University,
Emory, VA



Secondary School Theatre Festival, sponsored by Norcostco-Atlanta Costume
Winner: (left) Technical director Mark Gostomski and director Betty Walpert accept the award for the winning high school play, *Wiley and the Hairy Man*, presented by Davidson Fine Arts School, Augusta, GA. **Runner-up:** (middle) Director Suzanne Allmon and assistant director Alyssa Yuen accept the runner-up award for *The Crane Wife*, presented by Oak Grove High School, Hattiesburg, MS. **Best Actor/Actress, sponsored by William E. Wilson Endowment:** (right) Perry Anthony, *Fried Pies: The Tawdry Tale of Mitzi Massingale*, Shelby High School, Shelby, NC; Caroline Blasius, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, Bearden High School, Knoxville, TN

**Sara Spencer Child
Drama Award**
Rex Stephenson
The Jack Tale Players,
Ferrum College,
Ferrum, VA



Community Theatre Festival, sponsored by Dramatists Play Service
Two shows advance to the national community theatre festival. **Winners:** (left) Director Rick Kerby accepts the award for *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Manatee Players, Bradenton, FL, and director David Johnson accepts for *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, Cookeville Drama Center, Cookeville, TN. **Runner-Up** (not pictured): *Smoke on the Mountain*, Starkville Community Theatre, Starkville, MS; **Best Actress/Actor:** (right) Dianne Dawson, *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Manatee Players, Bradenton, FL; Steve Gwilt, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, Cookeville Drama Center, Cookeville, TN.

Scholarship Award Winners (left to right): **Leighton M. Ballew Directing Award:** Sam Sparks, New Stage Theatre, Jackson, MS; **Robert Porterfield Scholarship Award:** Matthew J. Omasta, Arizona State University; **Marian Smith Award:** Emily Strickland, University of Tennessee; **Polly Holliday Award:** Troy Taylor, Corner High School, Birmingham, AL. **Not pictured: William E. Wilson Award:** Megan A. Elsila, Jacksonville, FL; **Secondary School Scholarship:** Gogo Alata Lomo-David, Page High School, Greensboro, NC.



Design Competition Winners Named

Technical/Crafts Awards Sponsored by PatternMaker Software

1st: M. Elizabeth Fontenla (second from left), Ohio University, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching*; **2nd:** Ariel Long (right), Ohio University, *The Comedy of Errors*; **3rd:** Lauren Cecil (left), Murray State University, *Pocahontas*; **Honorable Mention:** Dan Burkey (second from right), Centre College, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*.

Scene Design Awards Sponsored by Sculptural Arts Coatings

Undergraduate: **1st:** Jeffrey Simon (not pictured), Savannah College of Art and Design, *Holy Ghosts*; **2nd:** Kristen Robinson (second from right), Centre College, *Antigone*; **3rd:** Brian Kalin (second from left), Virginia Commonwealth University, *Arabian Nights*.

Graduate: **1st:** Nathaniel Sinnott (middle), University of Tennessee Knoxville, *Assassins*;

2nd: Jennifer Baker (right), University of North Carolina Greensboro, *Macbeth*; **2nd:** Brian Barker (left), University of Tennessee Knoxville, *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.



Costume Design Awards Sponsored in memory of Irene Smart Rains

Undergraduate: **1st:** Maurén Pereira (third from left), Virginia Commonwealth University, *Dracula*; **2nd:** McKinsey Bamber (middle), Virginia Commonwealth University, *Twelfth Night*; **3rd:** J. Theresa Bush (right), University of the South, *Antigone*; **Honorable Mention:** Erin Crettier (third from right), Virginia Commonwealth University, *When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?*

Graduate: **1st:** Emily Strickland (second from left), University of Tennessee Knoxville, *The Birds*;

2nd: Reiko Ishikawa (left), West Virginia University, *The Ice Wolf*; **3rd:** Christopher Mueller (second from right), Virginia Commonwealth University, *Medea*.



Lighting Design Awards Sponsored by Electronic Theatre Controls

Undergraduate: **1st:** Justin King (standing, left), Virginia Commonwealth University, *When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?*; **2nd:** Karla Hemmelgarn (standing, right), Ohio University, *Copenhagen*; **3rd:** Brittany Diliberto (standing, second from left), Virginia Commonwealth University, *Medea*.

Graduate: **1st:** Catherine Girardi (kneeling, left), University of Tennessee Knoxville, *All My Sons*; **2nd:** Jeff Meyer (kneeling, right), University of Tennessee Knoxville, *Assassins*; **3rd:** Brandon Kirkham (standing, second from right) and Rachele Beckerman (not pictured), Ohio University, *Conference of the Birds Project*.



Keynote Emerging Artists of Promise (left to right) Maggie Jo Saylor, Ravin Floyd and Brittany Heitling

KEAP Winners Make Connections in Atlanta

Two years ago, SETC had an opportunity handed to us on a plate. Keynote speaker Samm-Art Williams, successful playwright, producer and actor, offered to turn back his fee for speaking at SETC so that a deserving young person could attend the convention the next year.

This was only a beginning. The Executive Committee and Board approved funding to turn Samm-Art's gift into something that could change lives for years. The Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award was established. The essence: a number of deserving high school students, each nominated by a faculty sponsor, would attend SETC free, receive a room at the convention, get the chance to meet with a keynote speaker, and have opportunities to network and groom their careers.

The recipients of the award this year are three very diverse young women: Ravin Floyd, a junior at Wings Performing Arts High School in Gulfport, MS; Maggie Jo Saylor, a junior at Charleston County School of the Arts in Charleston, SC; and Brittany Heitling, a senior at Tavares High School in Tavares, FL.

Their daily routine at the convention included workshops, activities, meetings and shopping for colleges. Each got the opportunity to meet personally, along with her faculty sponsor, with keynote speaker Tom Key, who offered words of inspiration and support for each of the girls in their careers.

Brittany, a senior, reports receiving 10 offers from highly placed colleges at her interviews. Ravin and Maggie Jo also received a number of callbacks at their auditions, but, as juniors, did not receive any offers.

The KEAP Committee and its chair, Chris Rich, deserve a solid round of applause for their work. The KEAP winners deserve a hand for their enthusiasm and focus. Let's give it to them!

- Dennis Wemm



TechSoup Offers Discounted Software to Nonprofits

Would you like to save money on computer software? If your theatre is a nonprofit organization, you may be able to purchase the latest computer software at a fraction of the retail cost through a website: www.TechSoup.org.

Recognizing that the cost of computer software often makes it difficult for nonprofit organizations to keep up with ever-evolving technology, TechSoup is working to lessen the technology gap. It offers heavily discounted prices on programs to create promotional and marketing materials, manage spreadsheets, compose letters, send e-mail, surf the Internet, develop websites and perform a myriad of other tasks that occur on a daily basis.

The discount program, called the "TechSoupStock" program, allows nonprofits with a valid 501(c)(3) status to gain access to software that has been donated. The types of software available include Microsoft Office products, QuickBooks, Adobe products, antivirus software and much more. The cost to the nonprofit organization (referred to as the "Administrative Fee,") varies by product, but is substantially lower than retail price.

Some examples include:

Microsoft Office 2003 Professional	Admin. Fee: \$20
Photoshop CS 2.0 Windows/Mac	Admin. Fee: \$60
Dreamweaver 8	Admin. Fee: \$25
QuickBooks Premier 2006	Admin. Fee: \$48
Adobe PageMaker 7	Admin. Fee: \$50
Microsoft Publisher 2007	Admin. Fee: \$7

Sound too good to be true? SETC purchased its most recent version of Dreamweaver, the website development software, through TechSoup last year, and hasn't found any "catches" to the TechSoupStock program.

TechSoup also offers access to donated hardware, including refurbished Windows desktop/laptop computers and networking components, both wired and wireless.

In addition to providing software and hardware, the TechSoup website offers helpful content such as instructional articles, worksheets and message boards designed for staff members who use information technologies. The articles are primarily aimed at those who may not have a lot of experience using technology. However, more advanced articles are also available.

To learn more about the TechSoup Stock program, visit the organization's website at www.TechSoup.org and click on the "TechSoupStock" button at the top of the page.

Christopher Chandler is marketing and website manager for SETC. Don Wolfe, who normally writes Theatre Bytes, is on hiatus.



SETC Board of Directors

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South Carolina: Leslie Dellinger
lgdellinger@aol.com
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shaferm@etsu.edu
Virginia: Mac Damron
cmdamron@henrico.k12.va.us
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Q How do I apply for SETC's Fall Professional Auditions?

A Working actors who are not in school, are available to accept year-round professional employment, and have two prior paid acting professional contracts with recognized theatre companies may apply.

Application must be made online and requires: contact information, uploaded digital photo, details of theatrical work and educational background, and two recommendations from professional directors. For more information, visit www.setc.org/auditions/fall.asp.

The SETC Auditions Committee will review each application as to the level of professional work and determine if the theatres and recommendations listed on the application are recognized in the industry as professional. Only qualified applicants will be granted an audition slot for the September 9-10 Fall Professional Auditions, which will take place in Charlotte, NC.

The application fee is \$25 and is fully refundable to applicants who do not receive an audition slot. Current, fully active Actors' Equity Association (AEA) members are exempt from the requirement for director recommendations, but must provide proof of current Equity membership at the time of application.

Forum Inspires Ideas, Development of Practical Tips for Members

I came away from a recent North Carolina Arts Council Public Forum with two major thoughts I would like to share:

No. 1: SETC is very fortunate to be self-sustaining. It is in our organization's best interest to remain financially independent, so we do not have to rely on politics and/or cultural shifts to provide the funding we need to maintain our service and growth. Careful fiscal management by SETC's financial team keeps member costs down while continuing to build useful services and expand convention opportunities. This is a challenge, but it is a gratifying one.

By not seeking arts funds to operate SETC, we also create a side benefit for our members: A greater base of financial support is available to our constituent arts organizations and artists who need funding

for their endeavors.

No. 2: SETC needs to provide helpful data to its members. It was obvious to me that forum attendees craved data that would help them sustain their work, whether they used the data to seek grants and sponsorships or to develop public attention and support. SETC is in a position to help disseminate this type of information to its constituents via our website and publications. We can provide tangible data that is useful to our members, ranging from advocacy tips to suggestions for building audience members and raising funds.

From the
Executive Director

Betsey Baun



I quickly made a resolution after the meeting. I resolved to provide a least one resource in each *SETC News* column and to work beyond that to expand SETC's role in providing practical information to our membership. Look for my first suggestion below – and check the website soon for more.

Service Tip No. 1:

The North Carolina Arts Council is completing a study of creative industry in North Carolina. Scheduled for release this spring, this report will provide detailed information on the economic impact of the arts, including a report on the state's creative work force. Look for *Clusters of Creativity: The Role of Arts and Design in North Carolina's Economy* at www.ncarts.org in June.

What Is 'Reasonable Accommodation' under the ADA?

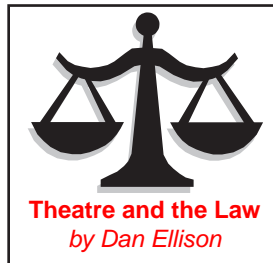
At my "Legal Issues for the Theatre" session at the SETC Convention in Atlanta, a hearing-impaired attendee asked via a sign-language interpreter for some information on accommodation issues.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, "public accommodations" must provide "reasonable accommodation" to persons with disabilities. The fact that this attendee was able to ask her question is a direct result of SETC doing just that – providing her with "reasonable" accommodation so she could participate fully in the convention.

How does a theatre or a nonprofit organization holding a conference or other event determine what is "reasonable?" That determination is, in large part, a financial question. For a university with substantial resources,

hiring a staff of full-time sign-interpreters and purchasing computer-generated captioning devices may be "reasonable" considering the university's multi-million-dollar annual budget. On the other hand, a small nonprofit theatre with a close-to-zero annual budget will be very limited in what it can reasonably do without bankrupting the organization. Most of your organizations fall somewhere in between. So there is no easy answer. "Reasonable" is determined on a case-by-case basis looking at all the circumstances and facts.

Ideally, the quest for "reasonable accommodation" begins with a request, which may initiate a back-and-forth dialogue to determine what can reasonably be done. If you are the person needing an accommodation to attend a program (or a performance), make your request as early as possible. If you are the presenting organization, try to determine the amount of lead time you may



SETC and ADA

SETC is in its second year of offering interpreting services for the hearing-impaired at our annual convention. Two separate requests were received in the Central Office for interpretation services at events at the Atlanta convention. With each, we looked at the needs of the participant and affordability for SETC as we negotiated "reasonable accommodation." SETC staff scrambled to fulfill the second request, which came in very late, but we were proud that we pulled it off. Taking a cue from other organizations and Dan Ellison, we will soon have a policy statement on our website that explicitly states the lead time for requests.

– Betsey Baun, Executive Director

need to handle an accommodation request, and include that advance notice time period in your promotional materials: e.g., "requests for accommodations must be submitted by January 15, 2007."

The benefits of making events universally accessible far outweigh the challenges.

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 the current executive director of the North Carolina Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Have a question? E-mail him at artandmuseumlaw@aol.com.

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.

2007 Statistics

Transfer/Undergraduate Auditions

Junior Actors: 171

Senior Actors: 61

Transfers: 11

Tech: 30

Callback Averages

Juniors: 18 Seniors: 20.5

Transfers: 22 Tech: 27.8

SETC Executive
Committee Meeting

The SETC Executive Committee meets June 15-16 in Chattanooga, TN. All members are invited to attend. Tentative agenda calls for June 15 meeting to focus on 2008 convention location and committee reports, and June 16 meeting to include officer reports and action items. Details and times? Contact the Central Office via e-mail at setc@setc.org.



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

SETC NEWS

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Get involved. . .be part of SETC 2008!

Propose a convention program...Offer to serve on a committee...Submit your latest prose to the SETC New Play Project...Nominate an officer (maybe even yourself) to lead your theatre organization into the future...Make plans now to attend the next SETC Convention...**March 5-9 in Chattanooga, TN.**

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Theatre Symposium Event Examines Comedy

Each spring, SETC's annual Theatre Symposium event brings together scholars from throughout the United States and abroad to present papers exploring an announced topic, with the best papers selected for the *Theatre Symposium* journal that will be published in the summer a year later. The topic at this year's event, held in Morgantown, WV, on April 20-22, was comedy. Look for details in the next *SETC News*.

- Philip G. Hill

T-Shirts, Silent Auction Raise Money for Scholarships

SETC T-shirt sales and the annual Silent Auction helped raise money at the convention in Atlanta for the SETC Endowment Fund, which funds the organization's scholarships.

T-shirt buyers, who commented on the large variety (five styles and colors) they had to choose from, spent \$6,639 to purchase SETC shirts.

The Silent Auction featured wearable art items designed and constructed by costume designers, costume technicians and students. In addition, two items from the original production of *Angels in America* were donated by the designer, last year's guest critic, Toni-Leslie James.

Bidding was fierce the last morning of the Silent Auction, and sales at this event netted \$1,190 for the SETC Endowment.

- Elizabeth Hopper

Where to Send News

SETC News is published bimonthly for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Deadline for the next issue is May 10.

Please send news items to:
 Deanna Thompson, Editor
 E-mail: Deanna@setc.org
 Phone: 336-292-6041
 or to:

Southeastern Theatre Conference
 P.O. Box 9868
 Greensboro, NC 27429-0868
 Phone: 336-272-3645
 Fax: 336-272-8810
 E-mail: setc@setc.org
 Web site: www.setc.org/

Thanks, SETC Endowment Contributors

Dale Becherer	Anthony Haigh	Adena Moree	Nicole Williams
Sandy Cockrell	Joan Haigh	Mike Murphy	Ginger Willis
Catherine Coffey	Tonya Hays	Amber Parker	Kenton Yeager
Martha Cooper	Ashley Isenhower	Luke Russell	American Family Theatre
Mac Damron	James Jenner	Rene Sands	Barbizon Lighting Company
Jenna Ferree	Don Loeffler	Ray Sawyer	Great Plains Theatre
Joe Filippo	Jennifer Matthews	Mia Self	The Lost Colony
Anita Gardiner	Laurie Melnik	Rob Taylor	Troy State University
Hanna Greene	Colin Miller	Annie-Laurie Wheat	Virginia Commonwealth University