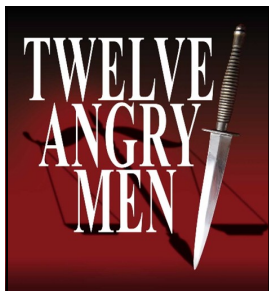




TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

12 Angry Men Cast, Opens April 5th for Three Weekends



David Adkins held auditions on February 15 and 16. Since several men have left for different reasons this last year, Dave opened the auditions to

both men and women in case he was unable to cast all 12 men. It worked out well and the final casting is both modern and current. The title changed to "12 Angry Jurors," something the playwright has agreed upon in his copyright.

The entire play is set in a jury deliberation room after a murder trial. A young man is accused of murdering his father. Considering eyewitnesses, timelines, a murder weapon, and the character of the young man, the jury enters the room feeling like it is an open and shut case. However, there is one juror who has cause for a "reasonable doubt" and there the drama unfolds.

Heading the cast is **Patty Kotlicky** as Juror #8, a thoughtful woman who sees all sides of every question and constantly seeks the truth. Full of strength but tempered with compassion, she wants justice to be done and will fight to see that it is.

The antagonist is Juror #3, played by **Sue Howe**, who is very forceful, extremely opinionated, and somewhat sadistic. She is intolerant of others' opinions and accustomed to forcing her wishes and views on others.

The rest of the cast includes:

Juror #1: The Foreman, played by **Angie Cotter**, who is impressed with the authority handed to her, making her quite formal.

Juror #2: **Glenn McGowan** as a meek hesitant juror, who finds it difficult to maintain any opinions, is easily swayed and usually adopts the opinion of the last person whom has spoken.

Juror #4: Played by **Deb Smith**, she is a person of wealth and position, a practiced speaker, whose only concern is with the facts in the case.

Juror #5: **Dylan Gamble** plays a naïve, frightened young man who takes juror obligations in this case very seriously but who finds it difficult to speak up when elders have the floor.

Juror #6: **Pam Cook** plays the honest juror who comes upon decisions slowly and carefully. Not being able to create positive opinions, she must listen to and digest those opinions offered by others

which appeal to her.

Juror #7: **Craig Perry** plays a flashy salesperson type who has more important things to do than sit on a jury. He is quick to show temper and equally quick to form opinions on things about which he knows nothing.

Juror #9: **Tammy LeBrell** is a mild, gentle old woman, long since defeated by life and now merely waiting to die. She mourns the days when it would have been possible to be courageous.

Juror #10: **Jerome Sexton** plays an angry, bitter man who antagonizes almost at sight. He is a bigot who places no values on any human life save his own.

Juror #11: **Jim Smith** plays a refugee from Europe, who is ashamed, humble, and almost subservient to the people around him. He will honestly seek justice because of his experienced suffering through so much injustice.

Juror #12: **Rowan Laidler** plays a slick, bright advertising woman who thinks of human beings in terms of percentages, graphs and polls and has no real understanding of people. She is a superficial snob trying to be a good person.

Guard: **Larry Gehrke**.

Inside this issue:

Setting The Stage	2
Vandalism	2
Soliloquy	3
Blue Collar Director's Notebook	3
Magic of Theatre	6
Commedia dell'arte	7
Tips from AACT	8

Board of Directors:

Michael Johnson	Chairman
Angie Cotter	Vice Chairman
Anne Johnson-Loftis	Treasurer
Shirley Spitzer	Secretary
Tammy LeBrell	
Paula Hill	
David Adkins	
Amy Stuart	

MEETING TIMES

BOARD MEETING, MARCH 11, 2013, 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS' MEETING, MARCH 18, 7:00 P.M.

Setting the Stage *by John Eberhard*

Upcoming area productions in February and March.

If you want to improve your theatre abilities, get out and see how and what other people are doing! Upcoming opportunities:

Center on the Square in Searcy is running "Barefoot in the Park" Feb. 1-17 and "The Boys Next Door" Mar. 15-30. www.centeronthesquare.org/searcy-theater-tickets/upcoming

Conway Community Arts is running "All The King's Women" Feb. 8-17. www.conwayarts.org

Rogers Little Theater has "9 To 5 the Musical" February 8-10, 15-17, 21-24, www.rogerslittltheater.org/events.php#show34

Tri-Lakes Community Theater in Branson offers "To Kill A Mockingbird" February 15-17, 22-24 www.tlctheatre.org/productions/tokillamockingbird.html

Theatre Squared in Fayetteville has "Sons of the Prophet" Feb.14-Mar.3 <http://theatre2.org/>

The Weekend Theater in Little Rock has "Ain't Nothing But A Thang" February 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23 And "Company" March 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24.

www.weekendtheater.org/upcoming-shows/

The Arkansas Rep is doing "Treasure Island, A New Musical" March 06, 2013 - March 31, 2013 <http://www.therep.org/attend/productions/default.aspx?prodid=38>

Springfield Little Theater at The Landers has "Seussical the Musical" February 21-March 3, 2013 And "A Chorus Line" Mar. March 22 - April 7 www.springfieldlittltheatre.org/shows/seussicaljr/

Murry's Dinner Playhouse in Little Rock has "'Til Beth Do Us Part" - Feb 12 - Mar 16 And "Rex's Exes" - Mar 19 - Apr 13 www.murrysdinnerplayho

use.com/schedule.php

The University of Central Arkansas is Conway has "A LOVELY SUNDAY FOR CREVE COEUR" by Tennessee Williams February 14, 15, 20, 21, 22 <http://uca.edu/theatre/season.php>

The Imperial Dinner Theater in Pochontas has "Of Mice and Men" Jan. 12 thru Feb. 10 And "Snoopy! The Musical" February 2, 9 www.imperialdinnertheatre.com/imperial/coming-soon.html#2

The Royal Players in Benton have "Steel Magnolias" March 7-10; 14-17 www.theroyalplayers.msu.in.springfield.offers "Almost, Maine" 7:30 PM Feb. 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27; Feb. 24 <http://theatreand-dance.missouristate.edu/productions.asp>

Hendrix College in Conway has "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" February 20- 23 <http://www.hendrix.edu/theatreats/>



Go see a show, visit another community theatre, see what's out there, and compare

Vandalism?

If you attended the February Members' Meeting, you heard about the sign in front of the theatre.

Instead of "12 Angry Jurors" it read "12 Angry Beaners."

What? We spent lots of money to get the sign in the first place, have a Plexiglas case put over it to stop the letter vandalism, and it still happened.

Actually, the vandals are very creative. Too bad we can't get them to join us in

the playhouse where their creativity would be more welcome.

Over the years we've had lots of letter-changing. Usually, it just gets under my skin. It creates more work for those of us who see it. It's really disturbing when they go further than just changing the letters around. We've had them disappear. Once we had to walk quite a way down Sixth Street to recover letters from one of our larger shows.

I'm all for having fun, really. I also have a pretty good sense of humor. But sometimes, it's just a lot of nonsense.

Maybe we should put up a sign for these over-zealous kids and invite them in.

Got any ideas for the verbiage?

Smile.



"Butterflies flap their wings like this, silly. Don't you know anything?"

Soliloquy *by Deb Smith*

Every now and then you run across a project that you are just nuts about. You can't wait to get started on it. You want to share it with the audiences. You want to share it with your fellow members, actors, and directors.

When I ran across "Treasure Island," I had that feeling. Everyday I surfed the internet for anything and everything PIRATE! Costumes, lifestyles, famous pirates, booty; you name it, I was after as much information as I could find. I was passionate about it. And the show was vibrant and full of life. The audiences could tell how much love I put in to that production.

There have been other favorites— "Always, Patsy Cline," "Dixie Swim Club," and "The Cemetery Club," to name a few. I have been very lucky to be able to work with such talented and committed artists and I rejoice in the fact that I can do what I love doing most— creating.

I have another project that I hope will be just as rewarding. There are three one-act plays, Anton Chekhov farces, that fit together and compliment each other. I've proposed these plays to the membership. Now all we need are the directors.

If you are interested in directing one, please con-

tact me at 870-421-4026. You don't have to have experience as a director, just the desire to create and be part of something very special. We can train you. Well, actually, Carol Eberhard holds a director's workshop where you can get trained. I will be the director on call to walk you through the actual rehearsals.

Or, if you are a current director and want to participate, please contact me. These plays will fill our 4th slot of this season. Production dates are June 6-23. Rehearsals should take no more than 3-4 weeks, a couple of days a week. Think about it. It could change your life!

"... the desire to create and be part of something very special."



"I told you I want to do it MY way!"

The Blue Collar Director's Notebook *by Mike Polo*

(Warning: This is not advice for the highly educated or very seasoned director.)

So, what is a blue-collar director? I have no formal training, never worked anywhere except in community theater, never studied acting or directing. I am a blue-collar director. Is this a philosophy? Not on your life... Think of it as a notebook with a couple of good ideas for dealing with people.

Okay, so what's it all about? It's about working with people. Take your ordinary community theater production. You generally have a mix of experienced and inexperienced actors, a tech crew in the same boat, and only a few weeks to put together a quality show.

Theater is about trust. When an actor steps on the stage for a performance, he

is laying his ego on the line. He is exposed to the audience. If he screws up, they will know and he will be embarrassed. He has to trust the other actors, the crew and the director. Especially the director. He has to believe that the director isn't going to make him or let him look bad. After all, the director is looking at the show from the audience's perspective. You, as the director, have to earn that trust.

I've worked with a lot of directors and gotten a lot of different answers - most of them unusable. As an actor, I hate that... as a director, I won't do it. There are two basic kinds of questions in theater - one is interpretive, the other simple (by simple, I mean a yes/no answer is needed). A director who can't answer or discuss interpretive questions

should turn the show over to the A.D. and go home. It's the simple questions that get directors in trouble.

I can't count the number of times I've asked a simple question and gotten a long-winded, philosophical reply, which translated, means "beats me." Or worse, the famous, "I'll have to think about it." That one is usually followed by no reply at all. Give me an answer I can use and I want it right now!

Okay, how about "yes," "no" or "ask me tomorrow night." As an actor, I want to know that my director isn't going to leave me in the lurch... in other words, I want an answer now. However, as a director, I know a director doesn't always have an answer right away. So I came up

with three basic answers for all occasions (yes, it's a Hallmark moment).

Yes. "Yes" covers everything from "let's try it and see what it looks like" to "great idea, go with it!" This is probably the most popular choice of the three.

No. This one's self-explanatory and the easiest of the three.

Ask Me Tomorrow Night. Now we come to the tough one. Directors are the focus of the entire rehearsal and sometimes, especially during tech week, suffer from information overload. This one's the cop-out, designed to handle just such a situation. This is the equivalent of "I need to think about it," but puts the onus on the actor. Before everyone starts squawking, let me explain.

It's tech week (affectionately known as Hell Week); the lighting director has problems, the stage crew isn't clicking, the set needs to be finished, the décor people are fussing and the costumer has a bad cold. One of your walk-ons has a question about blocking. "Not now" won't do. You have to take the time to answer the question. But, the blocking in question could throw off the entire scene, yet he/she might have a point. You don't have the time or patience to deal with this now. "I'll have to think about it," you say. You are busy, things are hectic and you don't write it down. Will you remember? Probably not. Tack on "Ask me tomorrow night." This gives you time to think, and puts the remembering problem on the actor. Yes, it's a cop-out, but you've got ninety irons in the fire, scattering your efforts across half the theater. Your questioner has five lines to remember, as well as working on not bumping into the furniture. And it was his/her question. Realistically, it buys you time, sets up a reminder and temporarily satisfies the actor. And it works. Most of the time, it'll be the first thing that actor asks at the next rehearsal - before you've been bombarded for a couple of hours. Try it.

Collaborative Directing

Directing should involve input from everyone, cast and crew. I know, it sounds like a madhouse, but trust me. Everyone working on a show has ideas. Some are good, others might inspire a better idea from you or someone else, and a few are just bad. Even those have a place. Bad ideas are teaching fodder. Directors have to be teachers, too. Help people learn from their mistakes, and their bad ideas. I even encourage people to argue with me. They learn, I learn, and the show is that much stronger because of it. And the next time they audition for you, they will be better and you will have a stronger cast.

If this sounds like direction by committee, it's close. It's not a democracy, though, it's benevolent dictatorship. Remember that "benevolent" part, it's important. As long as people feel comfortable bringing you their ideas, it'll work. Tell them up front that you want to hear from them, encourage them to talk with you, and remember to credit the person who came up with the idea when you use it. But - and there's always a "but" - the director has final say, no matter what.

Collaborative directing means you're going to get input from all over, including from your tech crew. This is a good thing. Some of them have probably seen more shows and worked with more directors than you have. And some of their advice will actually be about the technical aspects of the show. Of course, what the tech crew wants to do and what you want for your show may be very different.

You need to know how to express what you want in terms that your tech crew will understand. If you're directing, especially in community theater, without any technical experience, *get some. Now!* And do it in the theater where you direct. If you understand the limitations and possibilities of your theater and its equipment, you will be a much better director.

As a director, it's not enough to know what isn't right, whether it comes from your actors or your tech crew. You have to explain why it isn't right, and explain what you want. They don't read minds. It's your vision, don't make them guess... explain it to them. Basic, right? Hah!

How to avoid the pain of beating your head against the wall. We've all had them - the actor that just doesn't "get it." What do you do? As a director, you have to understand that no two people are alike and you can't tackle everyone the same way. If at first you don't succeed, try another way. Don't

hammer an actor with the same stuff over and over again, come at them from different directions. Change your approach, try something different, find out how to reach your actor. It's far easier for you, as one person, to alter your approach than it is for a cast and crew of however many to alter theirs to suit you.

The art of compromise. The promising actor that gave you that special something in audition just isn't measuring up. Now, you have figure out what to do with this part. You can beat the actor up endlessly and hope for the best, but often this just demoralizes the actor and the rest of the cast. Bringing the characterization in line with the actor's capabilities is a good compromise. After all, if there was something there in auditions, the actor can't be THAT far off. Modify your vision of the character to play to the actor's strengths and minimize the demands on the actor's weaknesses and you'll have a compromise that everyone can live with... especially the audience.

Directing as performance. In some ways, directing is just another acting job... it just has a more critical audience - actors.

Getting their attention. The first thing you have to do is get and hold a cast's attention. Sometimes this is difficult, because actors are gregarious by nature and would much rather talk than listen. Counter this by putting on a little show of your own. Don't direct from a seat in the house. Get off your butt and get down where they can see you. Movement holds attention much more than speech, no matter how good you are. Stand in front of the stage and talk to your cast. Get passionate about your notes, use your body to explain, not just your voice. Don't act out what you want them to do, act out the way you feel about what you want them to do. If they see you being passionate about the show, they will start to feel that way.

Curtain Call... Now am I done?

It scares them, and diminishes their trust in you. Directors who lose their temper are not in control - of themselves or their show. They say things that are counterproductive and create an atmosphere of rancor and distrust. However, sometimes you have to "lose it" to get their attention. Note the quotation marks. If you feel you need to get their attention through a display of temper, be an actor. You know, fake it. You get to shake them up, yet you are still in control. You can measure what you say, temper it with the positives that keep a cast from turning on you, and retain the trusting relationship necessary to putting on a good show.

I was wrong. Three simple words that can be the hardest to say. Practice them. You'll need 'em. Sometimes a director tries something that looked and sounded better in their head than it does on stage. Don't let your ego get in the way... admit that it doesn't work, fix it and move on. Your cast will understand that you are not going to let them look bad, no matter what.

Protect the bookholder. "Line, dammit!" "Give it to me!" Ah, the sounds of frustration. First night off book, and nobody's happy. But, it isn't the bookholder's fault. Don't let your cast take their frustrations out on the bookholder. On the first night out of book, introduce the bookholder and explain to the cast that the only word they need is "line." Nothing more. Your bookholder will appreciate it, and your cast will reap the benefits of a happy bookholder.

My stage manager, right or wrong. Introduce your stage manager to the cast with "This is the stage manager. When he/she tells you to do something, you do it. If you think he/she is wrong, do it anyway, then see me after the show. I will deal with it after the performance. Until then, the stage manager is always right." Arguments backstage are bad. Period. This is where the collaborative director model breaks down. Once a show goes into performance, the discussions are over.

It is a true dictatorship and the stage manager is the director's second-in-command. Discussions will take place after the fact, no matter what. The stage manager is the only person who has a pretty good overall feel for the show. He or she knows where the actors are, what scene it is, what's upcoming, and what's going on in the light booth. Even if the stage manager makes a mistake, no one has the time or the overall view of the show to argue with them at the time. Save it for later. That goes for the director, too. If you can't trust the stage manager, don't work with them.

Opening night, my job's over, right? The crowd arrives, the lights go down and you've turned things over to the stage manager. It's time to sit back and relax. Don't even think it. In some ways, your job just got tougher. Now you go from being a taskmaster to a cheerleader. You've worked for weeks to get your cast ready for opening night, you can't just abandon them.

There are several things you can do as a director to keep your show running like a Swiss watch during performance.

Get to the theater early and spend time with your actors and crew. Gauge their mood. Opening night they're going to be wired on adrenaline. That's easy to deal with. Second night, depending on how opening went, they may be mellow and cocky. If your show starts out flat, without the energy and the pacing you had opening night, it's very difficult to bring things up. You can start adjusting their energy levels here with a joke or two, get them talking among themselves, etc. About ten minutes before curtain, I like to gather my actors in a circle in the green room and give a little pep talk. I adjust what I say based on the prevailing mood of the night. If the actors seem over-confident, I tell them about second night let down. If it's the weekend after the reviews have come out, I tell them that the audience is now *expecting* a good show (provided the reviews have been good, otherwise I tell them the

reviews don't matter, the audience still came to see a good show and they deserve our best efforts.) I always try to make the pre-show pep-talk match what they need to do on the stage in order to get them ready to face the audience. It can be a little tough to make this talk fresh, especially when you're working with people you've worked with for years... they've heard all your best schtick.

Showtime. So where are you watching the show from? I know, you've just sat through weeks of rehearsals and, after all, there's nothing you can do now, is there? It's up the cast and the crew now, right? Wrong. By watching the show, you know where the pacing's dragging a bit, which actor's having a down night, or who's rising to the occasion. Armed with this information, you can walk down into the green room and fix things... gently, positively. This is no time to be negative. Be positive, get your show back on track. One word of caution: don't try to do this backstage. Bad place, bad timing. Do it in the green room or the dressing room, where you've a little more time, a little privacy, and you are not in the stage crew's way. I make sure my stage manager knows that he (or, more often, she) can throw anyone out of the backstage area, including the director.

Halftime. Okay, intermission... whatever. Your cast expects a report on the show. After all, they've relied on you to tell them how they're doing from the first rehearsal. Don't let them down now. Get them ready for the second act. And let them know how the audience is taking the show. Especially if it's a drama. It's fairly easy to gauge an audience's reaction to a comedy from the stage; if you're holding for laughs, they like it. But, in a drama, it isn't as easy. If you have time, hang out in the lobby for a couple of minutes and see what you can overhear. If you've been working in a particular theater for awhile, the audience will know you, and many will stop to let you know how it's going.

Curtain Call. Am I done yet?

Nope. These people just laid their egos on the stage. Go back and tell them they did a good job! And remember to thank the crew. This is also the time when you may have to deal with the actor that didn't have a good night and is upset. Remind them that this is live theater and things happen. It isn't the end of the world, and the next

performance will be better. Besides, they ain't the only one it's happened to. Personally, I try not to tell "old theater tales" because they take forever, but sometimes I can't help myself. If you're going to, keep it short. There's celebrating to do!

But all of this just seems like common sense...

Sure. It is. But it's amazing how many directors forget all of this in the heat of the creative moment. It's easy to get caught up in the motivations of your main character while forgetting the needs of the actor or actress playing the part. Blue-collar directing is about keeping the cast and crew on your side.



The Magic of the Theatre *by Lori Conroy*

There's nothing quite like live theatre. That sense of anticipation. The curtain rising. The house suddenly filling with a magical sensation that can only be experienced at a live performance. There is a bond of intimacy between the actors and the audience that simply does not exist in a movie theater. This feeling of fellowship creates a community that together explores the world unfolding onstage at that particular, unique performance.

We all know that participation in arts on a regular, even daily, basis can have a lifelong impact on the lives of children. We also know that all the stats in the world about how involvement in the arts improves test scores fall far too often on deaf ears. Fortunately for students in Boston, just the opposite is true. Despite a budget stressed as badly as every other inner-city school district, private philanthropists and charitable foundations are stepping up to increase access to arts education for all students. The city and its schools have likewise made the commitment to increase public funding for arts teachers. Why? Because they get it. According to Boston mayor Thomas Menino and Laura Perille, executive director of a non-profit school reform organization,

Arts have a positive impact on student achievement, motivation and engagement, critical and creative thinking, collaboration and teamwork skills... We view arts education as a catalyst for renewed energy in the schools, increased engagement by students, and improved school choices for families.

You'll be inspired when you read more about their model, which will hopefully be replicated across the nation, at [Arts education needs to be protected](#).

Theatre leaves its mark on more than just those onstage and backstage; it also impacts the audience. Dramatist and theater essayist Lauren Gunderson calls children's theatre a catalyst for empathy in her blog article, "[How Theater for Young People Could Save the World](#)," [Huffington Post, March 19, 2012]:

"Theater is like a gym for empathy. It's where we can go to build up the muscles of compassion, to practice listening and understanding and engaging with people that are not just like ourselves. We practice sitting down, paying attention and learning from other people's actions. We practice caring."

As you're advocating for — or perhaps even fighting for the survival of — your theatre program for next year, keep in mind the power of theatre to transform lives onstage, backstage and in the audience. Help your administrators envision a generation of engaged students who have skills in teamwork, problem solving and creative thinking, who listen, pay attention, react and care.

We know we're preaching to the choir here, but if you would like more links to arts advocacy articles, please feel free to contact Pioneer Drama Service. Like you, we know the magic that is the stage. That's why we're touching lives through theatre... together.

Commedia dell'arte *from the Pioneer Drama Service Newsletter*

Imagine the joy and love of theatre in an auditorium full of elementary kids as they sit cross-legged on the floor howling with laughter watching your touring show! Nothing delights both the young and the young-at-heart quite like the physical humor and witty banter of *commedia dell'arte*. Because everything needed for these productions — costumes, props and set pieces — fits into a single wagon or prop trunk, these delightfully entertaining shows are perfect for touring or for extremely small playing areas.

Commedia dell'arte, Italian for “comedy of art,” was a popular form of improvisational theatre that began in Italy in the 15th century and continued in its appeal for centuries. At that time, all performances were unscripted and held outdoors, with only simple props and no scenery. The lasting influence of *commedia dell'arte* is still evident in contemporary comedy, most notably in the great *commedia* artists of the 20th century, the Marx Brothers, Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin.

Commedia dell'arte performances derive much humor from the use of stock characters and exaggerated physical comedy. Each character has recognizable characteristics — from their costume to their physical antics to their dialogue — that they bring to the stories they perform. The various talents of the actors — acrobatics, dance, music and quick wit — combine to make the plays as entertaining and relevant today as they were in Renaissance Europe.

When presented today, the *commedia* players — such as Arlequin, Punchin, Rosetta, Pantalone, Scaramouch and Columbine — are portrayed as poor travelers who have made all their props from objects they've found. Their costumes, with the *commedia* diamond pattern always evident, are partly handmade and partly inherited from wealthier people who either tired of that fashion or thought better of it. The magic of theatre materializes right in front of the audience's eyes, as these actors build the show onstage from scratch, producing scenery and props from their decorated trunk and creating all the characters that breathe new life and energy into classic tales.



Commedia dell'arte?

Bringing LIVE theatre to the Twin Lakes Area

TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

600 W. Sixth Street
Mountain Home, AR 72653
P.O. Box 482
Mountain Home, AR 72654

Phone: 870-424-0444

Website: www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

We're on the Web
twinlakesplayhouse.org

Twin Lakes Playhouse is an ever-evolving community theatre, adding new and innovative ideas to our Season, with musicals, children's theatre, youth, teen and adult acting workshops, director, and improvisation workshops. We are always looking for interested members to participate in all aspects of producing plays. Community theatre is a great outlet for both children and adults, a safe place to create and wrangle your imagination. We also award a scholarship each year to a qualified student who wishes to continue their education in some aspect of the performing arts. And we have an active Benefit Program for local organizations.

"It just takes brutal strength. See my muscles? I can lift air higher than any of you can."



Tips from AACT

Working with Difficult People

When dealing with a know-it-all, don't attempt to be a know-it-all in return. When you disagree with know-it-alls, they will immediately freeze their ideas and won't budge. Then you've created a standoff. It's better to ask questions about the idea, since know-it-alls *love* to answer questions. As they look for answers, they might just discover that some ideas you present could be useful. In fact, they'll probably blend some of your ideas with theirs and think they came up with all of them.

Keep It Simple

The experienced actor thinks simply but deeply, and tends to follow a few hunches," writes Hugh Morrison in his book, *Acting Skills*. "A dramatic character will not stand up to psychoanalysis; what's needed is a deep human understanding, and the profoundest common sense."

Audience Focus

A number of theatre companies offer special nights for each of their season's productions: pay-what-you-can on the first Tuesday of each run, for example; audio-described; sign-interpreted; Young Professionals Night (which includes a buffet and post-performance get-together); Lambda Night (offered as a social gathering for the gay and lesbian community); and a Half-Century Singles Night (for patrons who remember sock hops and big bands). Other ideas: audio-described performances for some of the run, before which the blind or visually impaired audience members are invited to visit backstage for "sensory seminars," where costumes and props are available for touching. An Adopt-a-School program involves students from inner-city public schools who attend performances and workshops and then work in their own classrooms with theater professionals.

Illusion is Everything

When costuming a show set before the present time, remember that while you're trying to be true to a period, ultimately it's all illusion. That's the advice of costume consultant Charlotte French. "You want to create something that looks realistic in terms of the period," she says. "However, you can only do so much. Corsets, for example, changed over time, and we don't have access to all those. So you're stuck with boning costumes or using merry widows that can at least give you the stiff body carriage. The best thing you can do for actresses is to get them into a practice skirt, particularly if the costumes will have trains. It will give them the chance to get used to the demands of the costume, and the result will be a more natural, more realistic, performance."

What's Past is Vast

Several companies run a series in their newsletter (one is called "Company Scrapbook") that offers a look at the productions and events that made the company what it is today. One edition focused on the company's 1990s production of *No, No, Nanette*, pointing out its shortcomings and successful moments. This is a good way to remind long-time members of the company's progress--and make newer members more familiar with the company's history.