



# The Institute of Outdoor Theatre Newsletter

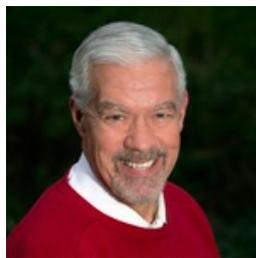
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## Next Newsletter:

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



During the past year, we have been having conversations with SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference, [www.setc.org](http://www.setc.org)) about the possibility of the Institute moving from our current home at East Carolina University to become part of SETC. Our board has discussed this, and the SETC staff and board have been actively considering it as well. Since the subject is very much out in the open, we thought I should comment on it in this space. Those familiar with the history of the Institute will know that we have moved before: in 2010 we left the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and moved to East Carolina University.

I should first note that no final decision has been reached: this is an ongoing investigation of whether there would be sufficient mutual benefit to the two organizations to make this change. The timeframe for a decision is somewhat elastic, but it will probably be concluded by the early fall of this year.

Why would we consider a relocation at this time?

While the administration on the East Carolina campus cannot have been more welcoming or supportive, the Board of Governors of the statewide UNC System has for a number of years been under pressure to reduce the number of institutes within the system as a whole. With continuing cuts to all North Carolina campuses now beginning to jeopardize their core academic programs, institutes

that do not provide actual academic services are increasingly under scrutiny. This has led us to realize that the IOT almost certainly will not have a permanent home at East Carolina, even though there may be no immediate pressure to leave. This, combined with the fact that I will retire from East Carolina in 2017 after five and a half years in this role, led to a discussion with our Dean and Provost about whether this might be a prudent time to better secure the future of the IOT. We then made an overture to SETC to see whether it might have an interest in acquiring the organization.

## Why SETC?

SETC, also based in North Carolina, was founded 13 years before the IOT in 1950, and several of our Institute's leaders are Past Presidents of SETC (i.e. Mark Sumner, David Weiss, and Scott Parker). It is an independent not-for-profit organization, financially healthy, with a professional staff and a large engaged membership. That membership was originally centered in the Southeastern United States but now stretches across the country. The two organizations have always maintained a close relationship, and our missions are quite compatible. SETC has an extensive conference and audition program each Spring that many of our members already take part in. In fact, with one significant exception (see below), most of the services of the two associations are similar.

On its side, SETC recognizes the fundamental compatibility of our missions. It has also expressed an interest in the one exception mentioned in the previous paragraph: the feasibility studies and consulting services that the IOT has always provided. Joining the two organizations would provide a significantly larger market for these services as well as a larger field of the theatre professionals available to consult.

Without going into more detail in this limited space, it is fair to say that our conversation is fully engaged, everything is on the table, and both parties are hard at work evaluating whether this is the right thing to do at this time. If an agreement is reached, the next year will be spent in planning the transition and move of the IOT. If the parties decide not to proceed, the IOT will begin a search for a new director to take the helm in the Summer of 2017. As always, we welcome comments and questions from the membership as this process continues to unfold.

Michael Hardy  
Director

## 2016 Conference - Hold the Date!

Mark your calendars now, the 2016 Conference on Outdoor Theatre will be held on October 21 - 22, 2016 in Chillicothe, OH, hosted by The Scioto Society, producers of *Tecumseh!*. We are working to finalize details and will pass them along as soon possible. For more information visit: [www.outdoor-theatre.org/conference](http://www.outdoor-theatre.org/conference).

## Nominations Now Open for Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Mark R. Sumner and Scott J. Parker awards. These awards will be presented at the 2016 Conference on Outdoor Theatre in Chillicothe, Ohio.

The **Mark R. Sumner Award** recognizes significant career contributions by an individual to a specific drama, or to the outdoor drama movement 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 deadline for nominations is Friday, August 12, 2016 at 5:00 pm. [Click here to access form.](#)**

The **Scott J. Parker Award** is presented to an exceptional volunteer in the field of outdoor theatre. This award includes a cash prize of five hundred dollars (\$500) and 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. **The deadline for nominations is Friday, August 12, 2016 at 5:00 pm. [Click here to access form.](#)**

## Remembering Barbara Polly



The outdoor theatre community has lost one of our own with the passing of Barbara C. Polly of Big Stone Gap Virginia on March 18, 2016. She had been involved with *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, the official outdoor drama of the Commonwealth of Virginia, for over 50 years. She

started out as an actress, portraying the lead character June for the first five years of the drama. Then as Artistic Director, General Manager, Producer, President of the Lonesome Pine Arts & Crafts, Inc. and last, but not least, contributing her considerable musical talents to the show. She was the 2005 recipient of the Mark R. Summer Award and served on the IOT Board of Directors.

Those of you that had the honor of working with Barbara and meeting with her at our annual conferences know what a special lady she was. Jackie Mills from *Salado Legends* remembers when she first met Barbara at the IOD conference in El Paso, TX about 25 years ago. Scott Parker, then Director of the IOD paired them up and told her to “stick with Barbara, she will teach you the ropes,” and she did. Jackie also shared the following story; “Last year we had a man in *Salado Legends* who grew up acting in *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. He told me he had a terrible crush on Barbara as a young buck. He was also in the movie made there a couple of years ago. I related that to Barbara, but I'm not sure she remembered him.....but then, I bet crushes on Barbara have always run rampant!”

Marion Waggoner, retired Producer from *Tecumseh!*, said, “Barbara was a gem... a beautiful and generous soul. All of us are better individuals for having had the opportunity to spend time with her.”

I have had the honor of knowing Barbara for the past 10 years seeing her annually at our conferences and speaking with her from time to time on the phone with IOT business. Her can do attitude was infectious and she was always striving to improve her drama, embracing new technology and looking to

the future. She was one of the faithful conference attendees, only missing the conference during her battles with cancer, which gave her several years of remission-- a gift to all of us. I will remember her smile, her humor, her kind words and her tremendous love of the outdoor theatre.

Susan Phillips

<http://www.holdingfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Barbara-Polly/#!/Obituary>

## Member News



**Horn in the West's** (Boone, NC) director, Teresa Lee recently accepted the 2016 Sara Spencer Child Drama Award on behalf of the Appalachian Young People's Theatre, which she has been the Artistic Director for the past 28 years. This award was presented at the 2016 Southeastern Theatre Conference.

**The Mormon Miracle Pageant** (Manti, UT) announces it's 50th Season Celebration Events that include a Community Celebration honoring the important events that have shaped them on May 28, 2016. They have a new historic costume exhibit, concert and the fireside series during the pageant June 16-25, 2016. All events are open to the public and are free of charge.

**Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival** (Cold Spring, NY) celebrates it's 30<sup>th</sup> season under the tent at Boscobel. A trio of works by Shakespeare — including an all female production of *Macbeth*, will be joined, in a nod toward honoring its Hudson Valley community, by a volunteer driven production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* populated by a mix of professional actors and designers who will work alongside members of the community.



**Montford Park Players** (Asheville, NC) announced a big change for their 2016 season. They have decided to offer all tickets for both the Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre (outdoor) and the Masonic Temple (indoor) will be available on a pay-what-you-like basis. The donation value for all tickets will remain at \$15 at both locations but moving to an entirely donation-based model will allow the whole community to enjoy Shakespeare and other classical theatre year round, regardless of their ability to pay.

**The Utah Shakespeare Festival** (Cedar City, UT) mourns the loss of Jerry Leroy Crawford, the former Literary Seminar Director. He joined the Festival when the new Randall L. Jones Theatre opened in 1989, becoming the literary seminar director for the plays shown in the Randall Theatre. He also served as

the director of the Festival's Plays-in-Progress program, the precursor to today's New American Playwrights Project.



**Kentucky Shakespeare** (Louisville, KY) is proud to announce its Shakespeare with Veterans program has been fully funded for the year due to a personal donation from General David Petraeus. The program brings veterans together to tell their warrior's story, on stage, using the works of William Shakespeare. The free 40+ hour course culminates in a pre-show performance on the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival Stage in the summer of 2016.

**Tecumseh!** (Chillicothe, OH) announces Monday night food drives. Each Monday night during the *Tecumseh!* season, residents of Pike, Ross and Pickaway counties in Ohio will be invited to save \$10 on their regular adult tickets when they provide proof of residence and AT LEAST two cans of food per person. Residents of other counties are welcome to bring canned food along, but will not be eligible for the discount.

"The Scioto Society believes it has a responsibility to assist, when it can, with economic issues that the residents in our target counties of Pike, Ross and Pickaway face. Hunger in these areas is among the most severe in the US. We can help, and while this program isn't going to fix the problem we believe it will make an impact." Said CEO, Brandon Smith. They have partnered with a food bank in each county and estimate that between 600 – 1300 cans will be collected each Monday night resulting in 2400 - 5200 cans going to each county.



**Snow Camp Outdoor Theatre** (Snow Camp, NC) welcomes a new Artistic Director, Jessica Nunn. Jessica is a Snow Camp native and performed with the outdoor theatre in her teenage years, before moving to England and founding the theatre company All The World's a Stage. She returned home in 2014 and is excited to also be returning to her home theatre for the 2016 summer of Mark Sumner's *Pathway to Freedom* and two original children's shows.

## Other News

**Shakespeare's Globe** (London, UK) teamed up with Transport for London to produce a map that renames Tube stations after Shakespeare plays to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. The special edition map sees the names of characters, plays and modern adaptations of this work replacing the London Underground Stations.



**Single Thread Theatre Company** (Toronto, ON Canada) was awarded an

exploration grant as part of their animating historic sites funding program from the Toronto Arts Council. The grant will support the production of Alex Dault's third work written for historic spaces in Toronto. The new piece title *Turkey Shoot*, will be mounted at the City of Toronto's Gibson House in fall of 2016.

**WildWorks** (Cornwall, UK) receives capital funding from Arts Council England to create a sustainable and environmentally light-touch portable theatre facility. They create theatre in real landscapes; woods, castles, harbors where they have no lighting structures, sound installations, backstage spaces or dressing rooms. For each project they must create from scratch and they have to rent equipment thus adding to the production budget for each project.

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](http://www.outdoor-theatre.org).

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