



Colleen's Corner

Expect the Unexpected:
 what to do when the unexpected
 happens on stage...

Every actor has experienced a moment onstage where the unexpected happens. They forget a line. Their scene partner forgets a line. An entrance is missed, a prop disappears, or a costume snags on a chair. Actors are truly brave to take on a job where anything can happen at any time.

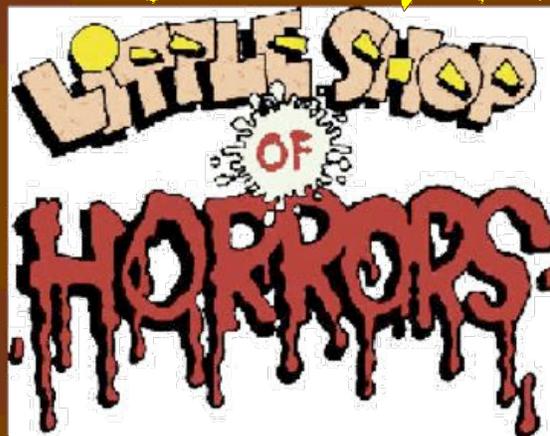


Luckily, there are ways to prepare yourself for the wild ride of performance.

How can you prepare for and avoid onstage disaster? First, know your lines, solid. I worked with a director who used to

Continued on page 2

Come See Our Winter Musical!



Spring Shows

Romeo & Juliet



Directed by Matt Lundeen

Ages
12 and up

Registration Opens February 11th!

Performances May 9th and 10th

Dorothy Meets Alice or the Wizard in Wonderland

Directed by Kate Wisnioski

Registration Opens February 11th!

Ages
7 to 11

Performances
May 16th and 17th



Friday, February 8th, 7 PM

Saturday, February 9th, 2 PM

Saturday, February 9th, 7 PM

Sunday, February 10th, 2 PM

the Regent Theatre
 7 medford St. Arlington

Tickets: \$15

ACT.arlington.ma.us

An interview
 with the
 Plant, page 3!

Colleen's Corner

Continued from Page 1

say you should be able to recite your lines while standing upside-down in a snake pit.

This goes for song lyrics as well. If your partner drops a line and you need to jump in, say something that makes sense, but that is brief and helps your partner to get back on track. Don't deliver an entire monologue from your imagination. Know your cues. Go over your blocking, so you are sure of where you need to be in each scene. Check that your props are where they need to be, whether it is somewhere on stage, on a table backstage or in your pocket. Be sure to be in place offstage with enough time before your entrance comes up. Just like developing the habit of brushing your teeth regularly keeps your teeth clean, developing good habits as an actor keeps your scenes clean!

But, what about those things that are out of the actor's control? I was once in a production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. The set was a realistic living room in 1900, with lots of big, beautiful furniture, vases, paintings and other objects. One of these objects was a mirror, set on a piano. At some point in a scene of about ten actors, someone jostled the piano and the mirror came crashing to the floor. Everything went silent and all ten actors turned, looked at the pile of reflective bits on the stage, and continued on with the scene.

Continuing on with the scene may have seemed like the best choice for the actors at the time. However, where we went wrong was that nobody reacted to the unexpected event *in character*. It simply didn't make sense for these people to carry on as if nothing had happened.

On the other hand, "covering" the mistake should be a very brief moment that justifies what happened and puts everyone back on track. A simple solution to the mirror incident would have been for the cast to react audibly to the crash (as one would if something fell to the floor!) and for the character of the servant to go over and pick up the pieces, while the dialogue continued on. This "cover" wouldn't take more than a few seconds and get the play back on track. Yet, it also keeps the on stage events as part of the play, and doesn't take the audience out of the experience.

Successful "covering" usually keeps the audience unaware of any problems at all. And ultimately, audiences are very forgiving. So, if a mess-up happens on stage, above all, don't beat yourself up about it. Carry on and make the show the best it can be.

Colleen

Registration Open for Summer Drama Camp!

Still Accepting Registrations for
February & April
Vacation Week Drama Camps!

This summer, ACT is offering **five** weeks of fun and exciting theatrical and musical adventures for 7 to 10 year olds with *Seussical*. The show can be adapted easily and performed in parts, highlighting both individual and ensemble pieces. At the end of each week, the campers will perform their scenework and songs for family and friends at the Regent Underground Theater on Friday evening at 7 PM.



Week One, July 7th-11th

Week Two, July 14th-18th

Week Three, July 21st-25th

Week Four, July 28th-August 1st

Week Five, August 4th-August 8th

The cost of ACT's Summer Camp is \$275 for one week, with multiple week and sibling discounts. Extended day is available for an additional fee.

We are now accepting applications for Junior Counselors (JCs) for kids 14 and older, and for Counselors in Training (CITs), kids 11 to 13.

For more information and to register, go to ACT the website.

ACT Board Expands, Welcoming New Members

Over the last six months, ACT's volunteer board has grown to 17 members, with the addition of Howie Rafal, Maryanne Lamar, Jimmy Del Ponte, and Lisa Davenport. Moreover, with the movement of Steve Smith to Managing Director (see page 5), Jackie Daley assumes the role of President, with Andy Atkins as Vice-President, Norton Allen as Treasurer, and Gretchen LaPan as secretary.

All of these changes are sure to bring new energy and excitement to ACT. Want to join in the fun and become a board member? Just contact us at info@act.arlington.ma.us. The initiation ceremony is relatively painless and involves lots of chocolate. :)

Voices of ACT

On the weekend of February 8th, Arlington will be attacked by an enormous man-eating plant, of unknown origin, from the stage of the Regent Theatre. This plant, named Audrey II, is actually made up of several puppets and manned by two local teenagers for the Arlington Children's Theater production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. Jeff Landale, 16, from Medford plays the role of the puppeteer for the Red cast in the double-cast show, while 13 year old Kevin Dowling of Stoneham plays the role for the Blue cast. We stopped by a recent rehearsal to ask them some questions about their experience.

What exactly do you do when you are inside the puppet?

Jeff: I do a lot of lifting and tugging and grunting. It's physically very hard

Kevin: And there's a lot of time when you are standing still, because it's supposed to be a surprise when the plant finally moves.

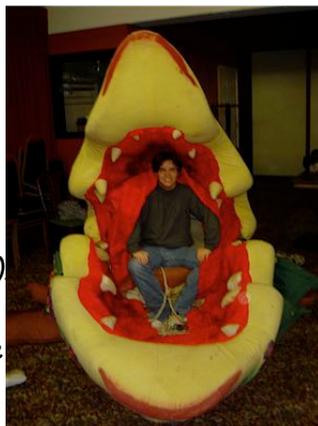
What is the hardest thing about doing this?

Kevin: Learning to move the plant because there's no instruction manual.

So how did you learn?

Kevin: Trial and error.

Jeff: Mainly error (*laughs*) OK, so we broke it a little and tinkered with it. We've also worked together to find out some neat tricks—



Kevin: Like there's a rope to lift it up the lower jaw.

Sounds hard.

Jeff: It's pretty physically taxing...

Kevin: Yeah. My back hurts.

Jeff: But it's also been a challenge. Like the lip-synching.

Lip-synching?

Jeff: With all the grunting and lifting, it'd be hard to also do the voice. So there's an actor backstage doing the songs and the voice, and we have to lip-synch along with that.

Aren't there more than one plant?

Kevin: There are a couple of smaller plants that are easy to move. I have to sit inside the third plant, and then the last plant is gigantic.

How do you get into the plants?

Jeff: With great difficulty.

Kevin: With the small one, you slink it over you and adjust it around you. There's actually a backdoor in the big one.

So what happens when you eat somebody?

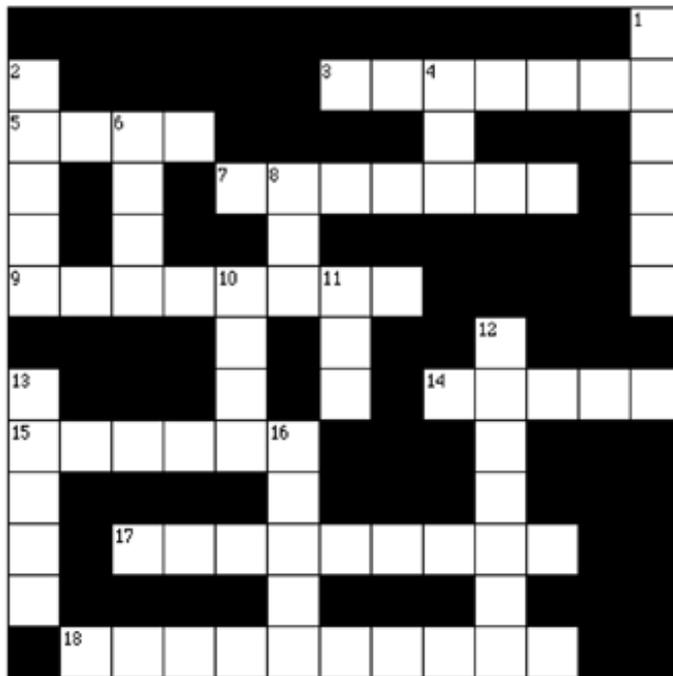
Kevin: When they get inside the mouth, I have to close it. Then while the lights are out, the person crawls out through the back, and while they're coming out, I shake the top of the head so it looks like I'm chewing.

Jeff: I get to tell everyone I'm a giant-man eating plant, and I get to eat Ryan and Cecille. How cool is that?



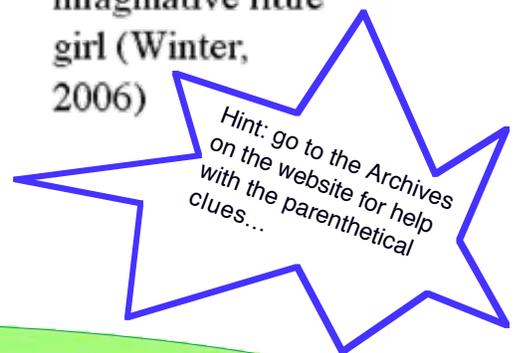
ACTing Out

an ACT crossword by Andy Atkins and Irving de la Hoya



- stage curtain (5)
- 4 Tailless primate (3)
- 6 Did she get what she wanted? (Summer, 2006 and February, 2007)
- 8 Nothing much fracas (Spring, 2007)
- 10 Memorized bit of dialogue (4)
- 11 Perform (3)

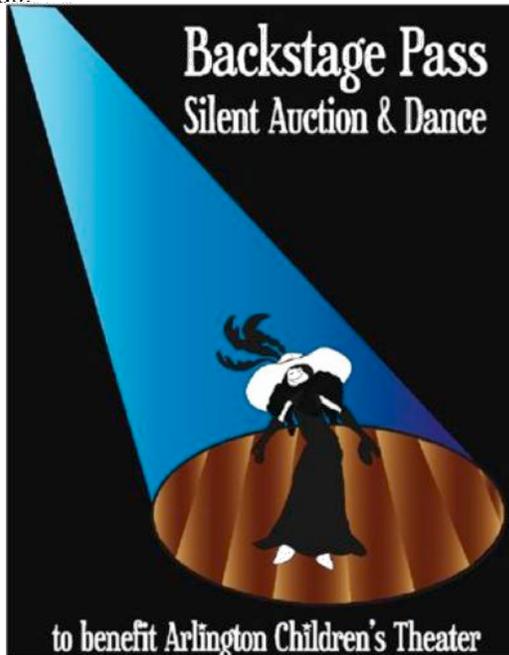
- ACROSS**
- 3 One of five who survived (Fall, 2005)
 - 5 One and a half hours before showtime (4)
 - 7 Bronx nemesis (Summer, 2004)
 - 9 Oft-repeated entree? (February, 2004)
 - 14 Aunt or Purebred
- (Summer, 2004)
- 12 She can be direct (7)
 - 13 Bucket's benefactor (Fall, 2005)
 - 16 Sendak's imaginative little girl (Winter, 2006)
- DOWN**
- 1 ACT's summer home (6)
 - 2 See-through
 - 15 He wanted more (Summer, 2003)
 - 17 Huck's friend (Summer, 2004)
 - 18 Where Alice ended up (spring, 2004)



Crossword Contest: Be the first to send your fully-completed, correct puzzle to ACT and receive two free tickets to our next show! Send entries to: ACT Crossword Contest, POBox 1076, Arlington, MA 02474

ACT's *Backstage Pass* Silent Auction

ACT is holding its first ever *Backstage Pass* Silent Auction and Dance, scheduled for **March 15th, 2008**. This exciting fundraiser will be at The Sons of Italy in Arlington, and our guests will enjoy a light dinner, cocktails, dancing and a silent and live auction. Funds from this event will help ACT in its mission to provide affordable theater education, scholarships, and quality productions.



Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend the auction on **Saturday, March 15th, 2008**. Tickets for the event are \$25 per person. Find out more about this event, including a sampling of the great auction items available, by visiting our web site at <http://act-backstagepass.org>. Tickets may be purchased online at the web site.

We are still accepting auction item donations. Remember, all items are tax-deductible. Suggested donations include: gourmet gift baskets, vacation rentals, hotel stays, services such as landscaping, house painting, or tax preparation. To obtain a donor form, contact Jackie Daley at 781.648.1477 or MJ Michaels at 781.438.3716. We are also happy to pick up any donation items at your convenience, if it is not possible to mail it.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support of this important event. Together we can make a difference!

ACT Names Steve Smith Managing Director

The Arlington Children's Theater has announced the hiring of its first Managing Director. Steve Smith, long-time president and board member of ACT, agreed to take on the administrative role as of January 1, 2008.

Steve's new responsibilities will include overseeing all of ACT's workshops and productions, including ACT's pilot programs in Arlington Elementary Schools and creating many opportunities for young people to become involved with theater. He is busy with plans to move in to a permanent home at Arlington Center for the Arts in March.

"I'm excited about this and thankful to the board for allowing me to have this opportunity to continue working in this capacity," says Smith. "I love this organization. ACT has given my family so much over the years. I am proud and thrilled do this work to help ensure its long-term health and continuance."

This decision by ACT follows the hiring of Colleen Rua in 2006 as Artistic Director and some changes in the board of directors. Each of these actions by ACT exemplify the excitement and synergy that has allowed the organization to fulfill its mission, expand programming and further enrich the lives of the children and families in the community. We take this opportunity to wish good luck to these talented individuals as they embark on an exciting future for themselves and ACT.



Steve, with some of his favorite people—ACTors (in this case, Andrea Perkins, Nicole LaPan, and Mari Watson)

CONTRIBUTE TO THE
ACT ANNUAL FUND



If you believe in us and in what we do for your family and for others, please consider contributing to ACT's Annual Fund! Keep current on our programs and support an important cultural resource! Our donors include families and friends from Arlington and throughout Greater Boston.



"ACT is such a great community of kids and parent volunteers. I feel privileged to work with them."

ACTor—\$50 Stage Manager—\$100
Director—\$250 Producer—\$500
Executive Producer—\$1000

If you received this issue of the newsletter by snail mail or found it lying in the gutter, please consider letting ACT email you future newsletters. It saves us postage and saves paper. To have the ACT Newsletter emailed to you, just fire off an email to: steveACT@verizon.net. Thanks!



P.O.Box 1076
Arlington, MA 02474

Inside:

**** Backstage Pass:
The ACT Auction
March 15th, 2008**



**** Drama Camps
and Spring Plays
Open for
Registration!!**



More than 75 ACT Friends enjoyed the original *Little Shop of Horrors* in the Regent Underground Theater recently. The evening included free popcorn, ACT memorabilia, and ACT memories (in the form of a short compilation of scenes and songs from ACT shows over the years). Do you have an idea for a movie that'd be fun to watch with the ACT community? Email your suggestions to steveACT@verizon.net.

We need your help! Contribute to the Annual Fund today!