

President's Welcome

Happy Fall IMTAL!

One of the best parts of my year is always when I get the chance to see and hear from other IMTAL members. It was such a pleasure to welcome you to my own museum for September's Once More With Feeling! Workshop. The long weekend was packed with great performances from a variety of disciplines, practical how-to's and inspiring what-if's. There were more cookies than even IMTALers can eat and, as always, exciting thinking and talking with colleagues from around the country. If you made it to St. Louis—thank you—I loved meeting and hearing from every one of you and learned something from the newest of the new to the folks who have been in this business for all or most of their careers. The workshop reminded me even more strongly than usual of how important our gatherings are to my own practice as an opportunity for renewal. If you couldn't make it to St. Louis, stay tuned for information about our 2016 gathering. We will do our best to get that information out before the end of the year for your budget planning purposes. You will find out more about the September workshop in these pages. If you can stand to see how much great stuff you missed, you will also find great images on our website, imtal-us.org.

Like September's workshop, IMTAL itself is small, but mighty and it helps all of us do our work better. That only happens because members like you choose to get more involved and to give their time to IMTAL. You will be hearing soon from me about a few opportunities to do so. IMTAL is entirely run by volunteer members of our board and election time will be rolling around soon. If you are someone, or you know someone, who would be an asset to keeping us up and running, keep your eyes peeled for board nominations time (it is not only allowed but encouraged to nominate yourself.) If you have an exemplary boss who has been unflinching in their support of IMTAL, **consider nominating them for the 2016 IMTY award**, which recognizes outstanding leadership in support of museum



Elizabeth Pickard, President

theatre. If you have a new theatre piece that you think is just the bees knees, **submit the script for our Lipsky playwriting award**. You can find out more about these opportunities on our website imtal-us.org, and I will send out an e-blast as well as nominations open. Of course, another great way to get involved is to write for this very newsletter. Our next issue will focus on **Amazing Space: adapting/leveraging space for performance and performance to space**; our spring issue will focus on **Management Issues** and the **2016 award winners and AAM**. To submit an article, news, or photos, contact our intrepid publications board member, Judy Fort Brenneman, publications@imtal-us.org, for more information. Submission guidelines are also on our website: <http://imtal-us.org/Resources/Documents/Insights/IMTAL%20Insights%20Submission%20Guidelines.pdf>

continued page 2

Again, it was wonderful to see all of you at Once More With Feeling! If you couldn't make it, know that you were missed. I look forward to seeing all of you at AAM in May and at our 2016 conference. If you have any questions about board service, or about the IMTY award, or musings about IMTAL in general you can always reach me at president@imtal-us.org.

Have a great autumn everyone. You'll hear from me again soon.

Elizabeth

Visit IMTAL On-line: imtal-us.org

Drop us a note—board member email addresses are listed on the last page of the newsletter.

Want to write for *Insights*?

Short, long, article, essay, opinion piece, announcement, photo—if it has to do with Museum Theatre, we're probably interested!

New **submission guidelines** and the 2015-16 editorial schedule are now online:

<http://imtal-us.org/publications>

Editor's Corner

An IMTAL conference is such a rush!

Rush to get work done so I can take off for a few days. Rush to get to the airport, to the shuttle, to the hotel. Rush (reluctant rush, but still a rush) to catch up on work when I get home.

And a rush—of adrenaline, of intrigue, of inspiration every minute of every day of the conference itself.

As a board member, the conference for me began with the IMTAL board meeting on Friday morning. Among our top agenda items was the beginning of planning for next year's conference—a reminder of how much work and planning goes into our conferences. (We're hoping to hold the 2016 conference in Denver, possibly in August, and we'll let you know the details as they are available.) We also discussed ongoing website issues concerning PayPal. Some of you have experienced problems with PayPal not playing nicely with other systems for membership renewal or conference registration. We're making progress on solving those problems, but as of this writing, some systems may still be glitching with PayPal through our website. If you have questions or problems concerning membership or conference transactions, please contact webmaster and vice president Douglas Coler, web@imtal-us.org.

The conference proper launched in fine fashion with a welcome from president, Elizabeth Pickard. Keynote speaker and 2015 IMTY Award recipient Melanie

Adams reminded us that museum theatre tackles issues and remains relevant no matter the era or topic, describing the powerful works created and performed by Teens Make History, including “#Nexthashtag,” a 15-minute long piece that resonated so much with audiences that the talk-back sessions following the performances lasted 30 to 40 minutes. She also pointed out that “powerful” doesn't have to be “big issues” or “heavy”—Missouri History Museum has had successful performances on everything from getting dressed to play football to pirate puppet shows.

Heather Barnes got us warmed up and remembering each others' names (mostly) while guiding us through improv games designed to help us (and those we work with back home) explore and heighten emotion to develop and enhance stories and programs.

Friday afternoon wrapped up with Museum Theatre Showcase 1, with performances by Teens Make History Players, Douglas Coler as the Devil in Discovery Place's *Legend at the Crossroads*, and Michael Ritchie and Dan Hopman in Science Museum of Minnesota's *The Way the Ball Bounces*.

Saturday began with yours truly presenting a session on playwriting techniques (a slightly edited version of the session handout is included in this newsletter). Kirk German set aside his formal paper presentation in favor of leading an engaging discussion on its topic, *Veracity, Verbatim Text, and Viewer Response*. Saturday afternoon included presentations by Todd

continued...

D. Norris on the elements that go into creating extraordinary museum theatre pieces at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Douglas Coler on the benefits of using a Project Planning Checklist; performance plus discussion on implementing STEM education by Stephanie Long, Dan Hopman, and Michael Ritchie; a public performance by Elizabeth Pickard as Charlotte Cushman; and Showcase 2, a readers theatre production using conference attendees to present an excerpt of Tina Chapman DaCosta's play *Brick* by *Brick*.

On Sunday morning, Catherine Hughes and Mark Wehlage of Conner Prairie presented ideas on best practices for engaging audiences by allowing them to take on well-defined roles, participating in meaningful ways that are vital to the action or interaction of the performance. Following the mid-morning break (cookies! specialty doughnuts!), Michael Ritchie discussed the method, madness, and success of interactive mysteries held at the Science Museum of Minnesota (we'll have more about that in our next issue of *Insights*).

And throughout it all, Elizabeth Pickard, our indomitable IMTAL President, kept us on track, on time, and well-fed (cookies!).

There's a rush from the challenges, too.

In the days since the conference, I keep returning to Mark Wehlage's portrayal of a slave trader and wanting to know more. Questions like, Is the reaction I had because this is an excerpt, out of context? How do we "put audience in role" without traumatizing (or re-traumatizing, in the case of PTSD) our audience, keep our performers safe, and convey the important elements of story, all while furthering the purpose and mission of the story and our site?

In this and the next couple of issues of *Insights*, we'll be covering several of the topics from the conference in greater depth, beginning with an article in this issue on three techniques for playwriting. You'll have to supply your own cookies, but I hope you'll find the wisdom, tips and techniques, ideas, and enthusiasm of your colleagues useful, thought-provoking, and inspiring.

Judy



T. L. Brenneman

Judy Fort Brenneman, Publications Officer

The Promise of a Good Story: three techniques for playwriting

by Judy Fort Brenneman

and presented at the 2015 IMTAL Americas Conference

How do we find the stories that capture—and keep—our visitors' attention? Let's explore and experiment with three writing and story techniques to create memorable interpretive stories: Mystery & Surprise, Electric Details, and the Big Problem.

(Note: although we're emphasizing character-based stories for performance here, the principles apply to all forms of interpretive writing—and to most other types and genres of writing, too!)

continued on page 4

Mystery & Surprise

Every story begins with a mystery. We expect something to happen; exactly what is a surprise. If it isn't, the story is less satisfying. From unexpected twists to novel analogies and unusual words, surprises reinforce our need to know what happens next. Surprises also increase dopamine levels in our brains—the same thing that happens when we fall in love. This combination of mystery and surprise—the promise of a good story—keeps us engaged with the story and makes the story's content more memorable.

The audience member is begging us: Intrigue me. Entice me. Tell me something I don't know, or tell me something I know in a way that stimulates me—and start now, because if you don't, I'm gone. This is especially true in nonfiction. Folks have heard “truth” and “facts” a zillion times; they want something more, something different. Remember surprise?

To “hook” our audience—capture their attention and keep it—we're making a promise:

I promise that something will stimulate you if you keep watching.

And we must keep that promise as we travel through the story.

There are lots of ways to create mystery and surprise, from the type of lead (opening) and word choice (strong verbs, for example) to character choice (human or otherwise), setting, and elements of style, including symbolism, understatement, contrast, and intimacy. We're going to play with one approach, an improv game called *Lines*, created by Nick Turner of la-de-da... performing arts.

Lines

You will need: index cards; pens or pencils; some space to move around in

Lines is a great first exercise because everyone will always have a card to read from. It's a way for members of your team—interpreters, performers, content experts, volunteers, anyone you choose to have involved—to experiment with creating stories without fretting about writing, acting, remembering lines, or content knowledge. No worries about “I'm not sure I can do this” or “I have no experience”! This makes it a great warm-up as well as an excellent story-starter exercise.

Each participant takes several index cards. Everyone needs at least one card; they can have as many as they want, up to any limit the workshop facilitator cares to specify. (You'll need a minimum total of 3 cards times the number of people in the group, but it doesn't matter if some have 1 card and others have more than 3.)

Each person writes one line (a sentence, a phrase, an exclamation, etc.) on each of their index cards. The text can be longer than a single written line—especially for people with large handwriting—but it should be relatively short and may not overflow to the back of the card.

For some of their cards, the person should tap into their own perspectives or expertise on the topic being explored. For other cards, to mix it up and encourage creativity, they should write snippets of “everyday dialogue.”

The facilitator collects everyone's cards and shuffles them.

Two people either volunteer or are selected by the facilitator to be the Creators. The Creators stand in the open area; everyone else is the audience.

The facilitator gives each Creator 3 or 4 cards, face down so they can't read what's on the cards. (Facilitator can pull cards randomly or in any order from the stack, but should not read cards to decide which ones to give Creators.) Creators do NOT look at their cards.

Either the facilitator or the audience comes up with a starting scenario.

For example:

One of you is trying to persuade the other.
You've lost something (or something is lost).
You're at a middle school dance.
You've forgotten something extremely important.
You've just remembered something extremely important.
You're about to leave on a trip.
You're in a haunted house (or the dentist's office, a cave, a big field, the revolving door of a hotel, etc.)

The two Creators begin improvising a scene based on the starting scenario. At any time, either Creator can pull out one of their cards and read it as their dialogue for that moment in the scene. When using a card, the Creator can say **ONLY** what's on that card—no preamble, no pulling the card out half-way through something else they're saying, no additions or tag-ons at the end. Don't even clear your throat. **JUST READ WHAT'S ON THE CARD.** Then toss the card on the floor.

For the Creator who is reading: You must “make the line work”—your goal is to use the line in the scene as logically as possible. Hold the card up so you gain your partner's and the audience's full attention—make it clear that you're reading from the card, read the line, toss the card on the floor, and **DON'T SAY ANYTHING** until your partner responds with their own dialogue.

For the Creator who is not reading: You must also “make the line work”—you must respond as logically (in the context of the scene) as possible, to whatever your partner just said. You can do that by saying whatever comes into your head; you can also pull out one of **YOUR** cards and read whatever's on it.

To keep yourself (and your partner and the story) moving forward, remember YES, AND. *Yes, and* is a creativity builder and a central tenet of improvisation. When your partner delivers a seemingly impossible line, think (or say out loud), “Yes, and—” and continue from there.

When a Creator tosses their last card, they're done and can leave the scene. When both Creators have tossed their last cards, the scene is done. Their cards stay on the floor (or get moved aside); do not reuse the cards during the same session unless you run out of cards.

The Creators join the audience, and two new people volunteer or are selected to be Creators. The facilitator gives each of the new Creators 3 or 4 cards, and they improvise a scene using their cards.

Key points for every pair of Creators:

- Don't look at the cards before using them.
- Don't add to or change the line.
- Your goal is to use the line in the scene as logically as possible.
- Get full attention by holding up the card.
- Toss the card on the floor after use.

At first glance—and the first few times you try this exercise—you'll be convinced that it can't possibly work. But it does. As Nick reminds every group, *Trust the cards.*

VARIATIONS

SAVE YOUR CARDS.

- Next time, make new cards and shuffle them into the old stack, and draw cards from the entire stack.
- Use the same stack, no new cards, with the same or a different group, the same or a different topic.
- Instead of the facilitator giving the Creators cards, have the Creators draw their cards from the stack (no peeking!).

continued on page 6

Electric Details

Good stories have specific details. Great stories have *electric* details. More than a simple list of facts, these are the details that “zing.” They connect us to the physical reality of the story, which in turn helps us understand and remember.

Details bring the reader more fully into the topic and the experience. Details can also dictate the pace of a passage by slowing down or speeding up the interval between two actions. Detail can create tone, too.

And especially important: the more specific the details, the more universal the story.

Try this:

1. Put an object in front of you. (We used lemons in the conference session.)
2. List at least twenty details for that object. Be exhaustive in your detailing of it. Keep going! (Can you do forty?)
3. Next, go back over what you’ve written and pick out the electric details—the ones that make you zing.
4. Now write about the object, incorporating your electric details: 2 paragraphs or so (or as much as you can write before I call time).

The Big Problem

Every story also has a “big problem” to tackle. The problem (also known as conflict) drives the story forward, taking us through the middle all the way to the end. It’s part of the story’s mystery, too—will the problem be solved? How? By whom? If not, why not? What happens next? What happens at the end? (What happens after that?)

A story is INTERNAL, not external. Plot is external.

Stories are not about the things that happen IN them—the stuff that happens is the PLOT. Stories are about what those things (the external stuff that happens) force the protagonist to struggle with, and what they force her to overcome internally in the process. These are things that pre-date the plot. They are also the things that the plot itself is then constructed from to force the protagonist to deal with (often kicking and screaming).

- ◆ “Beginning, middle, end” alone will not make a story.
- ◆ Without a clear problem to solve, there is no story.
- ◆ Story is about struggle that leads to change.

Choose a character, give them a tough problem to solve that they’d really rather not solve, force them to struggle with what to do in the hardest possible way, and allow them to find a solution that means something in particular to them, forcing them to change.

Decide what point you want your story to make, because the point will tell you exactly what kind of problem your story will be about. Then you’ll move from the abstract/general point and problem to concrete/specific elements of character and story draft.

Examples of “points” (including some interpretive themes):

Friends stick together when times are tough.

Believe in yourself even when others don’t.

When you tug on one thing in nature, you find that everything else is connected.

The least-known history is sometimes the most significant.

Death becomes her.

Think about how others will feel before you act.

An entire world thrives in a water droplet.

The “McCabe Method”

I call this the “McCabe Method” because I learned it from storyteller and playwright Tom McCabe. The method leads you into and through a story by forcing you to identify a main character and a problem to solve, and to then break down action, emotions, and results into tiny steps. It works as both a solo and a group story-development exercise.

In this step-by-step approach:

- ◆ Begin with a character (can be a person but doesn't have to be).
- ◆ Add in a problem (a need, want, conflict, or desire). You can list several problems, then choose the one you want to play with; if it doesn't work or you don't like it, try another one. Remember, every story has a problem at its heart, and it's the combination of character and problem that creates the story. Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* and Odysseus from *Odyssey* both have the same problem—getting home—and very different stories.
- ◆ Ask your imagination questions, using “question words”: who, what, when, where, why, how, which. Question words lead to deeper answers than the more common “nonquestions,” which lead to simple yes/no answers. For example, “Are you going to do X?” results in yes, no, or maybe. “WHEN are you going to do X?” and “HOW are you going to do X?” result in deeper, more complex answers that contain additional information.
- ◆ Make notes (a list, short paragraph, scribbles on the whiteboard) about the details that surround your character. McCabe calls this “the 360”: what can you (your character) see in front, to the left, to the right, up, down, behind? Some of this detail may stay, some may go; there's no way to know yet.
- ◆ State a feeling (i.e., what your character feels) and ask “Why?”
- ◆ Ask and answer a set of three questions over and over, until you've solved the problem. The three questions are: “What do I (the character) do? What happened when I did whatever it was? How do I feel now?”
- ◆ Write the story or script, using the list and solution you've created.

Now, the details of each step.

There's a template for all this at the end of this article.

Step 1 Along the left side of a plain piece of paper (lined or unlined), write WHO the main character is, what PROBLEM that character is trying to solve (what they want or need), and WHERE they are (“the 360”).

Beneath that, write “FEELS,” “WHY,” “DOES,” “HAPPENS,” and “FEELS” on the next five lines.

Below that, write “DOES,” “HAPPENS,” and “FEELS” on separate lines, leaving a line or two of space between each (see template below). Then repeat “DOES,” “HAPPENS,” and “FEELS” on subsequent lines to the bottom of the page (and probably the bottom of the next page, possibly even the page after that). And yes, you can do this on your computer, if you prefer.

Step 2 Now, sit for a minute and imagine a specific moment in the scene—just one point, sort of frozen in time. This can be the very beginning of the scene, a particular section that you want to work on, or any random point in the story.

When you've got that image pretty clear in your head, jot down more details about WHERE (the 360). What's the weather like? What do you smell? What's close by? What's off in the distance? What do you hear? (Remember electric details!)

Step 3 Write a one word emotion next to “feel” that describes what your character feels. NOTE: Do NOT use “easy” emotion words, that is, avoid “mad, sad, glad.” Instead, use “rich” emotion words—find the word that exactly, precisely describes the emotion your character feels at that moment, for example, furious, cranky, stunned, weepy, morose, ecstatic, overjoyed.

continued on page 8

Step 4 Next, answer the “why”—why does the character feel that emotion?

For example:

FEELS: furious

WHY: That husband!

or

FEELS: glum

WHY: all the chocolate is gone

Step 5 Now move the scene a tiny bit forward, imagining/seeing what your character does, and write that next to “DOES.” This can be a big action, a little action, a bit of dialogue, or some combination. It does NOT have to be a complete description of anything, and it may feel like it’s “telling” (as opposed to “showing”) because it’s going to be very short. But if you stay focused on what the character does, it’s actually “showing” (and will be more so when you translate it to the draft). The challenge is to hold back from writing/describing/running into the next moment—you want to stay in this moment.

Step 6 Now that you’ve noted the specific action, imagine/visualize what happens next and write that beside “HAPPENS.” Again, it can be something big, something small, a response in action, dialogue, even something that seems unrelated but fits (e.g., a knock at the door, or the TV suddenly shifts to a really loud commercial).

Step 7 Keeping that image of what happens in your head, imagine/visualize how the character FEELS at this new moment—they did something, something happened, and now they feel something different. That new one-word emotion might be very close to what they felt the first time, but it won’t be the same.

Step 8 Next, remembering the emotion your character is feeling at this precise moment, what does your character do? Write a brief description beside the next “DOES.”

Remembering what your character does, what happens? Write a brief description beside the next “happens.”

Remembering what happens, how does your character feel now?

Step 9 Then repeat, repeat, repeat: what does the character do, what happens, what does the character feel now, what does the character do, what happens, what does the character feel now? Let your intuition and imagination guide you. When your character has solved the problem, stop (or when it feels like the end of the scene, stop).

Step 10 Pull out fresh paper (or open a new file) and, using your list and notes as a guide (not a rule-set), write the scene, story, or script. Flesh it out where it feels right to do so; skip something if it feels like it doesn’t belong or feels boring; include it but keep it extremely short if it feels right to do so at that spot.

Not sure who your character should be? Experiment—try several different characters, all tackling the same problem. Where does each begin (what’s their 360)? What does each feel? What does each do, and what happens next? Step each (one at a time) through the first page or two of the McCabe Method. Which character works best for the story?

Not sure what the problem should be? Experiment—try different problems. What does your character feel about each? Why? What does your character do? What happens next? Does trying to solve that problem work for the theme, story, character? If not, try another problem.

Feeling stuck? If the emotion is positive, go back in time to see where it began or where it came from. If the emotion is negative, go forward and solve it.

TEMPLATE for McCabe Method

CHARACTER: WHO is your main character (protagonist)? Name, BRIEF description (e.g. 12-year-old Sam, General Talksalot, Frankie the Salamander, Alien 1 from Arcturus)

PROBLEM: What do they want or need? The problem will be related to the interpretive theme in some way, but exactly how is up to you and the character (e.g., is thirsty, wants to cross the river, is trapped in a shoebox, is hungry)

WHERE (the 360): What does the character see, hear, smell, notice? The more detail, the better. Remember, these are notes—and nouns are ten times more important than adjectives.

FEELS: One-word emotion goes here. Remember: use “rich” words (e.g., cranky, miserable, frightened, confused)

WHY: BRIEF description of why the character feels that way (e.g., can’t find clean water, he sank the only boat, there’s a giant hand overhead, thought the picnic basket was edible)

DOES: BRIEF description of action and/or dialogue goes here

HAPPENS: BRIEF description of action and/or dialogue goes here (usually this means what happens as a result of “does” but can be something that seems random or unrelated, but if it happens, it happens, and because it happens, it affects the character’s emotional state and is therefore connected)

FEELS: NOW how does the character feel?

DOES: NOW what does the character do?

HAPPENS: NOW what happens?

FEELS: NOW how does the character feel?

DOES:

HAPPENS:

FEELS:

(And repeat “DOES HAPPENS FEELS” until the problem is solved.)



Recollections: Life Through Art

Harriet Lynn, IMTAL Board Member-At-Large, presented a successful museum theatre program in a poster session at the Western Museum Association Conference in San Jose, CA, October 24 – 27, 2015.

Harriet, who is the Producer/Artistic Director of Heritage Theatre Artists' Consortium (HTAC), moved in May 2015 from Maryland to the Monterey Peninsula. She was invited to present a poster session about an oral history performance project she created and directed previously on the East Coast. The result was *Recollections: Life Through Art* for the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) to encourage more African-Americans to attend the museum and the museum's annual *African Spirit Series*.

Ten elders from the local African-American community came together and, through their impressions of various artworks in the BMA's collection, found a connection to express their own personal stories. The result was a live performance to a full house at BMA, the auditorium packed with predominantly local African-Americans who never or rarely entered the museum.

Also, members of the production were invited to discuss the project and share their stories airing on The Signal, a Baltimore public radio station, (WYPR-FM). The BMA also released the program to HTAC and under Harriet's direction the cast performed (under the title of *Reflections: Life Through Art*) at various community sites, including ArtScape, a major summer arts festival on the East Coast.



Recollections: Life Through Art

Harriet Lynn

History's Most Misunderstood Character Competition

If you're attending the NAI conference this November in Virginia Beach, VA, be sure to join us for a fun (and educational!) evening of some of the best living history and museum theatre performances anywhere.

The 2015 installment of "History's Most Misunderstood" contest is Wednesday evening, Nov. 11, 2015 and is free to NAI conference attendees. Discover the truths behind the myths as historical characters (human and otherwise) attempt to set the record straight and convince us that they deserve the coveted crown. Learn how they were shaped by their cultures, environments, and periods in history. Why do they dress, speak/sound, appear, and behave as they do? Why do they hold their particular views of the world from which they have come? What supports their claim as "Most Misunderstood"? And then, when the contestants have made their cases, cast your vote for the character that most deserves the title of: History's Most Misunderstood Character!

This year's contestants include IMTAL's own Membership Chair Todd D. Norris of Indianapolis Children's Museum. IMTAL Publications Officer Judy Fort Brenneman is one of the event's organizers as well as a member of the judges' panel.

History's Most Misunderstood Character competition is a special event of the National Association for Interpretation's annual conference, hosted by Cultural Interpretation and Living History (CILH). Following the contest and crowning, CILH will hold a Social Hour. Please join us to meet the contestants and CILH leadership. Cost: included with NAI conference registration. Cash bar.

Once More with Feeling: 2015 IMTAL-Americas Conference



Amber Davis Parham

Michael Ritchie, MMS, *That's the Way the Ball Bounces*



Amber Davis Parham

Dan Hopman & Michael Ritchie perform from MMS's, *That's the Way the Ball Bounces*



Amber Davis Parham

Tidy Tina (Deja Steward) & Deckhand (Romiyus Gause) get to work in *Teens Make History's* new show, *What did they do all day in the past?*



Amber Davis Parham

(l-r) Aaron Bonds, Elizabeth Pickard, & Mark Wehlage help deckhand Romiyus Gause fold items

Monèt & Jonèt Davis, who co-wrote the play with the other teens, are in the program but could not be there that day.



Amber Davis Parham

IMTAL as audience: watching *Teens Make History* perform *What did they do all day in the past?*



Amber Davis Parham

Scott Joplin (LaMont Webster) shares his love of music in *What did they do all day in the past?*



Grace England

Board members Douglas Coler, Stephanie Long, Amber Davis Parham, Todd D. Norris, & Judy Fort Brenneman



Grace England

Board members, revealing our true selves



Judy Fort Brenneman

The Devil (Douglas Cole), *Legends at the Crossroads*



Amber Davis Parham

Misty Steam (Jojo Taylor) is steam power in *What did they do all day in the past?*



Judy Fort Brenneman

IMTAL President & conference chair, Elizabeth Pickard (I) in her natural habitat, with Grace England



Judy Fort Brenneman

Keynote speaker & 2015 IMTY Award Winner Melanie Adams, Ph.D., Managing Director, Community Education & Events, Missouri History Museum



Judy fort brenneman

Our Metrolink stop near the hotel



Judy fort brenneman

Tina Chapman gives last minutes direction to the IMTAL-only cast of her play, Brick by Brick



Judy fort brenneman

Supper at Blueberry Hill. Facing camers (l-r): Amber Davis Parham, Todd D. Norris, Suellen Winstead; facing away: Grace Inland



Judy fort brenneman

Mark Wehlage, presenting Put Your Visitors into Role



Judy fort brenneman

Todd D. Norris, presenting The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly: Elements of "Show"



Judy fort brenneman

Catherine Hughes, presenting Put Your Visitors into Role



Judy fort brenneman

Charlotte Cushman (Elizabeth Pickard) backstage in St. Louis



Judy fort brenneman

Heather Barnes, Michael Ritchie, & Amber Davis Parham in mid-improv



Judy fort brenneman

Annie Johnson makes an identifying gesture during Heather Barne's improv presentation



Judy fort brenneman

Dan Hopman & Michael Ritchie deal with a body (MMS's Science Live repertoire)



Judy fort brenneman

Dan Hopman, Aaron Bonds, & Steve Schroth survive improv (and boating)



Judy fort brenneman

Tina Chapman Dacosta, Elizabeth Pickard, & Grace Ingland experience brain freeze mid-improv



Judy fort brenneman

Dan Hopman, Geeky Science Guy, performing a show from MMS's Science Live repertoire



Judy fort brenneman

Kirk German leads a discussion on Veracity, Verbatim Text, & Viewer Response

Announcements & Calls for Submissions & Auditions

Auditions and Cool Events for Museum Theatre

Calls for Submissions

IMTAL-Europe Call for Proposals
2016 IMTAL-Europe's European Regional Conference will be Sept. 5-9, 2016, at Altpernstein Castle, Altpernstein 1, 4563 Micheldorf in Upper Austria, Austria. Call for proposals is now open. More info and to submit a proposal:
http://ku-linz.at/bibliothek/imalt_european_regional_conference/

Scripts on a science-related topic or person, 20–45 minutes in length, no more than 2 actors, for Carpenter Science Theatre Company's quarterly staged readings of "science theatre" scripts at Science Museum of Virginia's Lunch Box Science events. Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis; royalty payment of \$50.00 for single staged reading performance of accepted scripts.

Email copy of your script to lgard@smv.org OR submit hard copy to:

Larry Gard
4716 Scouters Pl
Chesterfield, VA 23832

OR to

Larry Gard
Science Museum of Virginia
2500 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23220

Conferences, Workshops, and Events

National Association for Interpretation Annual Conference

November 10–14, 2015
Virginia Beach, VA
<http://interpnet.com>

Submit articles, news, and ideas for Insights!

Send us your article, opinion, or news to
publications@imtal-us.org

no later than December 28, 2015.

(It doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be reasonably coherent. If we have questions, we'll contact you.)

Winter 2015 issue: Amazing Space: adapting/leveraging space for performance and performance to space

Spring 2015 issue: Management Challenge: starting, keeping, and growing museum theatre programs

Be Included on a Map of Conservation Theaters

Bricken Sparacino is creating a map of Conservation Theaters to share with teachers, community leaders, and others who bring groups on field trips or have tours visit their facilities. Conservation Theater uses theatre as a teaching tool to inspire young people and their families to love wild things and wild places, helping to create the next generation of conservationists. Here is what the map looks like so far.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zYPI9ZckjnWc.k7YnqoF4Gjgk>

If you feel that your work fits under the Conservation Theater umbrella, please fill out this survey and she will add you to the map:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zDJ8t1tN2Aduo6xBaTO_QL0u5eyYUG5X3KIwcUyVSxI/viewform?usp=send_form

Once it is finished, it will be searchable on a blog and Facebook.

IMTAL Board of Directors

Elizabeth Pickard, **President

Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, MO
president@imtal-us.org

Douglas Coler,* Vice President

Discovery Place, Inc., Charlotte, NC
vicepresident@imtal-us.org

Josh Moore, Treasurer

Minnetrista, Muncie, IN
treasurer@imtal-us.org

Amber Davis Parham, Secretary

Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver, CO
secretary@imtal-us.org

Todd D. Norris, Membership Officer

Indianapolis Children's Museum, Indianapolis, IN
membership@imtal-us.org

Judy Fort Brenneman, Publications Officer

Greenfire Creative, LLC, Fort Collins, CO
publications@imtal-us.org

Stephanie Long, Past President

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN

Members at Large

Dave McLellan, Liaison to AZA

Zoological Society of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Animals@imtal-us.org

Cat Chiappa

Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey, CA

Harriet Lynn, Member Relations

Heritage Theatre Artists Consortium, Baltimore, MD

Advisory Board

Catherine Hughes, PhD, Director of Interpretation,

Conner Prairie, Fishers, IN

Tessa Bridal, Independent Consultant

IMTAL *INSIGHTS* staff

Editor Judy Fort Brenneman

Graphic Design Shawna Turner

The International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) is a nonprofit, professional membership organization and an affiliate to the American Alliance of Museums. IMTAL's mission is to inspire and support the use of theatre and theatrical technique to cultivate emotional connections, provoke action, and add public value to the museum experience. For more information, to become a member, or to volunteer, please visit our website, <http://imtal-us.org/home>, or contact a board member via email.

Copyright 2015 International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL). Request reprint permission through publications@imtal-us.org.

**Doug also continues as IMTAL Website and Social Media guru. Please send questions about such things to him at web@imtal-us.org.*

***Elizabeth is also the 2015 IMTAL Americas conference chair.*