

ABCDE FOCUS

Spring 2014 Newsletter



President's Message

I hope, wherever you are reading this, there are signs of spring around you. In many areas it has been a long time coming.

Currently, we are all facing big changes with the rollout of the new curriculum from the Ministry of Education, it is essential that we are not apathetic or laissez faire about what is being done. If you have not had a chance to go through the draft proposal of the Arts Education curriculum for K-8, please do so!! This means all of you! The elementary/middle school curriculum has the potential to affect upper level Fine Arts Programs. Gather your art, music and dance colleagues and read through the curriculum. We only have until May to be involved in the feedback process. Please go to this link to see the curriculum. <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/> and after reading through it, please scroll down on that page to get to the Feedback Process. As an executive, we recognize flaws in the curriculum in the areas of the *Big Ideas*, where there seems to be a significant lack of scope and sequence, and a lot of 'word-smithing' of the *Big Ideas* from year to year. Please read these carefully and respond appropriately. Make constructive critiques. And, if you wish to send me a copy of your feedback, I'd love to read it and share it with the executive. lobrien@sd22.bc.ca Thank you, in advance, for your diligence in this matter.

We are rapidly approaching our beloved Provincial festivals. May 1 - 3 Douglas College hosts the Sears ABCDE Provincial Drama Festival for approximately 250 delegates where performing delegates from the active festival zones, the winning Youthwrite scripts, and non performing delegates gather to share their work and their passions while participating in a variety of workshops. May 7 – 10 the Rotary Goodwill Shakespeare Festival hosts approximately 450 delegates from middle school (May 7) and high school (May 8 - 10) in Summerland BC. Students from around the province participate in general drama workshops, or intensive 3 day studies in theatre, film, art, writing, or choral music as well as sharing performances and creating those all-important connections with like-minded people. I wish all students and teachers at both of these incredible events a wonderful and inspirational experience. May you leave exhausted and elated, and more connected to your fellow "drama-peeps."

As we gear up for the big push to the end of the year, wherever you are teaching or TTOCing or supporting other colleagues I wish you balance between your work and the rest of your life. Remember you need to put the oxygen mask on yourself first, before helping your fellow travelers.

PLAY ON!!!

~ Lana O'Brien

Better late than never...



2007 distinguished service award from ABCDE to Juliana Saxton. She was out of the country when the award was supposed to be presented and life got in the way and I finally was able to deliver it in January 2014. Juliana was very gracious and amused about the long delay.



Youthwrite is a playwriting opportunity sponsored by the ABCDE for all secondary students in British Columbia. This year's winners have been chosen, and those students are looking forward to performing at the Sears British Columbia Drama Festival in early May.

It's never too early to be encouraging your students to start writing their scripts for next year!

Information about *Youthwrite*, including guidelines for submission, and the application form, can be found at www.bcdramateachers.com. Follow the *Youthwrite* Link on the website.

ABCDE

Executive

2013/2014

PRESIDENT

Lana O'Brien (SD #22)
lobrien@sd22.bc.ca

PAST PRESIDENT

Colin Plant (SD#63)
cplant@sd63.bc.ca

VICE PRESIDENT

Jon Polishak (SD#78)
jpolishak@sd78.bc.ca

TREASURER

Gordon Hamilton (SD#35)
ghamilton@sd35.bc.ca

SECRETARY

Katie Everson (SD#43)
k.everson21@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS

Christine Knight (SD #72)
Christine.Knight@sd72.bc.ca

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Linda Beaven (Retired)
lindanbeaven@gmail.com

Ryan Grenier (SD #23)
ryan.grenier@sd23.bc.ca

Heather Lytle (SD #54)
hlytle@sd54.bc.ca

ABCDE SCHOLARSHIP—APPLY NOW!

Each year, the ABCDE offers one \$750.00 scholarship to a grade 12 student entering a post-secondary institution to pursue further theatre training. It is time NOW to send in your applications!

Students must apply by May 31, 2014, and their teachers must be active members of the Drama PSA.

Information about the scholarship, including an application form, can be found at www.bcdramateachers.com. Follow the **ABCDE Student Scholarship** Link on the website.

SILLY DRAMA GAME...

HAPPY FAMILIES

It's a classic, and everyone loves it...even mature Grade 12 students!

You will need to make up card sets with family names on them...enough so everyone gets one. For example, one family set may be Mother Hubbard, Father Hubbard, Daughter Hubbard, Son Hubbard, Grandpa Hubbard. Make up a class set (...names like Cruise, Schwarzenegger and Stallone are fun!) If you need to remove family members to match the number of kids in your class...get rid of the grandparent card first. You will also need enough chairs to have one for each family. (5 families=5 chairs)

Cards should be randomly handed to all players who are then told to mill around the room and exchange cards, non-stop, many times. When the teacher calls the signal... "HAPPY FAMILIES!" mayhem will ensue as they try to find their family members. When they do find them, they must pose for a family portrait. The Father needs to be seated in the chair. Mother sits on one knee. The daughter sits on the other knee. The son sits on the floor. The grandparent (if there is one) stands behind the chair. The last family to gather for a portrait is eliminated.

Ideas from colleagues...

A couple of years ago a drama colleague challenged me with the question, "What would your Course Outline look like if you told the truth?" I wrote it in 5 minutes, it's funny how the truths pours out of us so smoothly, yet we labour over less-true sentences designed to sound smart but obfuscate.

When I read it to my Acting 11/12 class that year, it was met with stunned silence and then thunderous applause. It's the only course outline I haven't found lying on the floor in the corner of the room, forgotten. It makes it home in scrapbooks or on their bedroom walls.

Heritage Woods Acting 11/12 Course Outline

In this course you will learn that it's not all about you.

If you're willing you may learn all about you.

You may also learn that:

- Art is essential but you have to earn the right to tell these stories.
- Love is a better choice but takes courage.
- The appreciation of others for their human idiosyncrasies makes your life richer.
- When you give everything you've got, lay yourself bare, open and honest, hold nothing back, you discover that yes, you are enough.
- Risk is essential to both making art AND learning. Embrace failure. Seek it out. That's when it gets interesting.
- The stage is scary, but if you approach it brave and humble, it will take you on an exhilarating ride.

Evaluation:

You will be evaluated daily on your ability to get your ego out of the way of the work. No need to ask me how you're doing; ask yourself. Look around. Feel free to ask me how you can improve at any time.

Shanda Walters

Heritage Woods Secondary School

swalters@sd43.bc.ca

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Pinetree Secondary School, Coquitlam, B.C.
Treehouse Theatre

Programs:

Drama 9, 10, 11, 12

Technical Theatre 11, 12

Musical Theatre 11, 12

Directing/Scriptwriting 11/12

Dance 11, 12



Pinetree's Production of GREASE, 2013

~Canadian Improv Games –Senior Improv team “Code Orange”, Coached by Treehouse Theatre alumni Duncan Crawford and Second Storey Theatre actor Mitch Boliszczuk

~Drama Festival participants at Metfest (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody)

~Summerland Good Will Shakespeare Festival participants 2014

~Fine Arts Trip to New York City

Facility:

Treehouse Theatre at Pinetree is a lovely black box drama space that features a mirrored wall for dance and another wall that opens up into the multipurpose room/cafeteria in order to be set up as a full theatre. We have a decent setup for lights and sound, and thanks to the help of volunteer alumni Dustin Stratford and music teacher Chris Carmichael, our light and sound design for all productions is pretty good. Recent upgrades include buying 6 “new” used scrollers for our lighting grid, which really makes for some fabulous effects for our annual dance recital.

Productions:

Here We Are by Dorothy Parker-Metfest Entry Fall 2013

Seeing the Light by Robert McKay-Metfest Entry Fall 2013

Winterfall by Richard Dixon-Grade 9 class play Fall 2013

Short Original Scene Festival by the Gr. 11/12 writer/directors -Gr. 10 class Fall 2013

Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella – February 2014

25 Minute Macbeth adapted by Natalee Fera—April 2014

25 Minute A Midsummer Night's Dream adapted by Natalee Fera—April 2014

2014 Spring Dance Recital

Teacher: Natalee Fera nfera@sd43.bc.ca

Looking for a play?

One of the biggest challenges Drama teachers have, each year, is finding plays to do with their classes, or for festivals. Here is a short list of tried and true one-act comedies. Perhaps one will fit the needs of your cast or class.

Please share your play ideas with us! Everyone is always looking for shows!

ONE-ACT COMEDIES

The War On Tatem – Mark Medoff: Comedy, 25-30 minutes long, 7m, 4w (flexible) (Dramatists Play Service)

Highly resourceful in its imaginative theatricality, this unique play captures the excitement, tensions and exhilaration of youth in its depiction of a "war" between two neighborhood "gangs." Nostalgic and redolent with memory, the play also foreshadows the later, and perhaps lesser, world of adulthood. Set in a vacant lot, in Miami, in the 50's, two rival kid gangs vie for control of the lot.

"Great for speech, mime, movement. Fun and challenging. A great festival piece."

The Ugly Duckling – A.A. Milne: Comedy, 35-40 minutes long, 4m, 3f. (Samuel French)

Arrangements have been made for Prince Simon to marry Princess Camilla. The King and Queen are nervous because-- let's face it-- Camilla is plain! It is decided that a beautiful maid will impersonate Camilla until the wedding. The Prince hears of Camilla's beauty and, considering himself rather plain, has his extremely handsome man Carlo impersonate him. Simon and Camilla meet by chance and fall in love. Each is beautiful to the other and they live happily ever after.

"Unimpressive when you first read it, but a great script for learning about subtext. It can be really challenging figuring out how to inject meaning into the lines."

"Super fun for working with status, and character."

This is a Test – Stephen Gregg: Comedy, 30-35 minutes long, 13 to 15 actors, either gender. (Dramatic Publishing)

As the ticking clock reminds you, you have only 60 minutes to complete this oh-so-important predictor of your future. But you didn't get the review sheets, the teacher doesn't seem to like you and your classmates are blatantly cheating. Time is passing and the voices in your head keep reminding you that though you may be having trouble with the test, your personal life is far, far worse. Then you reach the essay question. The good news is that it's an opinion essay. The bad news is that it's in **Chinese**. And things aren't going to get better ... *One int. set.*

"Fun, fast-paced comedy. Students love it. Audiences love it. Lots of room for creativity."

Action News: Now With 10% More Action-Jonathan Rand: Comedy, 15-20 minutes long, 9 f, 9m, 6 either (Playscripts)

Welcome to WOMG Action News, the most trusted news team since the invention of trust, news, and teams. Join lead anchors Babs Buttlebee and Jim Pickles as they usher us through tonight's top stories -- from adorable killer puppies, to Apocalypse status updates, to an old man grumbling about old man things. Tune in to WOMG Action News! Or don't and suffer the consequences...

"Bigger roles for more experienced cast members, and many smaller roles as well, so it's great for a mixed grade class"

More plays...

Twitch – Stephen Gregg: Comedy, 30 minutes long, 2m, 2w. (Dramatic Publishing)

Nancy and Don, a young married couple, are arguing. Nancy thinks the new neighbors are creepy. She thinks they're watching them. Don thinks she's imagining things. But why did the new neighbors cut down the tree between their houses? Why does Nancy keep running into them all over town? And what happened to the previous neighbors, the Filkersons, who vanished overnight with no warning? As the doorbell rings, Don asks why, if she dislikes them so much, did Nancy invite them over? "I didn't," says Nancy, "you did." "No," says Don, "you did." But it's too late; he's opened the door. There stand Emma and Aiden, the new neighbors, who are every bit as strange as Nancy said they would be. Now Don and Nancy are torn between wanting to find out who they are and wanting to get rid of them. But that won't be easy, because Emma and Aiden have an agenda of their own, and it's stranger than anyone could have imagined.

"Great for student directors, or as a side-project for self-directed students. Fun characters."

The Least Offensive Play in the Whole Darn World – Jonathan Rand: Comedy, 20-25 minutes, 5f, 12m, 7 either (8-35 actors possible.) (Playscripts)

Want to perform a classic play too offensive for your high school? Then the ScriptCleaner5000 is the product for you! Sit back and relax as Cynocorp representatives Shelly and Tom present sample scenes from plays that have been treated with this exciting new technology. Wipe away that dirty David Mamet profanity! Violence in Shakespeare? Gone. And what about those pesky sex scenes? The ScriptCleaner5000 has got you covered!

"Quick, fun play. Great for a class, especially if not everyone wants big parts."

Check, Please! – Jonathan Rand: Comedy, 25-35 minutes (4-26 actors possible.) (Playscripts)

Dating can be hard. Especially when your date happens to be a raging kleptomaniac, or your grandmother's bridge partner, or a mime. *Check Please* follows a series of blind dinner dates that couldn't get any worse -- until they do. Could there possibly be a light at the end of the tunnel?

"Great variety of characters. A crowd-pleaser."

Two more versions are also available *Check Please: Take 2*, and *Check Please: Take 3*.

13 Ways to Screw Up Your College Interview – Ian McWethy: Comedy, 25-35 minutes, 7 f, 6m, 3 either. (Playscripts)

When two college recruiters at a prestigious university need to fill one last spot to keep their jobs, thirteen eccentric, dimwitted and slightly-insane high school seniors are eager to come in for an interview. What seems like a simple task turns into a nightmare when the applicants turn out to be a reality TV star, a practicing vampire, an amateur magician, and others that are much, much worse. Each applicant's interview hilariously illustrates what NOT to do at a college interview. (This play has a sequel called [14 More Ways To Screw Up Your College Interview](#).)

"Always fun. Easy to cast. Fun to do with a class."

Hard Candy – Jonathan Rand: Comedy, 30-40 minutes, 5f, 6m. (Playscripts)

Job applicants at Banff Enterprises will do anything to claw their way up the corporate ladder. In a fast-paced series of hilarious interviews, the new recruits try every trick in the book -- from bribery, nepotism, and the Old Boy Network to blackmail, seduction, and mind control.

"A silly, fun play...great for class productions, and all skill levels."

Have you had success with a certain one-act Drama? Send the titles, and a quick line about the play, and we will include it in next month's list. Christine.Knight@sd72.bc.ca

Travel Diary

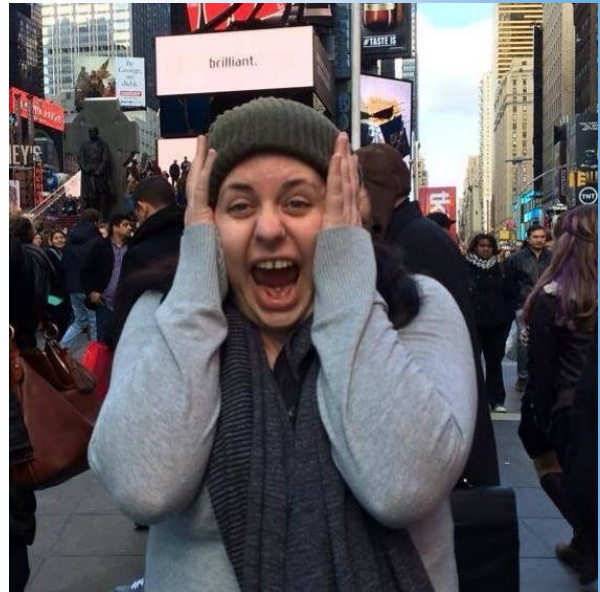
Destination: New York City

When: Spring, 2014

School: Cedar Secondary School, Nanaimo, BC

Teacher: Kelly Barnum

Where does one start when it comes to describing eight days with fifteen kids in the most amazing city I've ever visited? This past spring break, I finally made it to New



York City, a trip I'd been wanting to take since I was in high school. It was not perfect and our group certainly had a couple hiccups before departing (including losing the other school's chaperone and me taking a group of kids I didn't really know far from home), but once we finally arrived in the big city, there was no stopping us. So...what are my big recommendations after doing this for the first time? **Don't take a red eye!** It's not worth the loss of sleep. We did and it took us far too long to catch up on those precious **ZZZZZZZZs**. The group all agreed a day time flight would have been better, even if it cost us extra. **Stay in Manhattan.** We didn't stay in the Times Square area and while it would have been convenient, staying further away (but not New Jersey far) meant the group became experts at using the subway. **First place to visit: Times Square...** obviously. For some reason, we didn't make it there until the third day and had no idea we were there until we got stopped at a cross walk. It was a delightful surprise and resulted in wild teenage screams - a memory that will bring a smile to my face for years to come. **Squeeze in all the major attractions but also give the kids some free time** so they can break off into groups to see other sites, go shopping, or head to the hotel for a rest. Having seven full days allows for such freedom; if you're going to go, don't try to do it in three or four days. You'll have to miss something and it's all too good to skip. We even had enough time to add the 9/11 Memorial, and for many in the group, it was one of their "must see" locations of the entire trip. The museum opens later this spring and it looks like it's going to be a beautiful and moving tribute to that day. **See as many shows as you can.** We had three scheduled as a group, and the kids who took in extras felt it was worth the expense. I had the opportunity to see *If/Then*, and my favourite memory of our entire trip was waiting in line after the show with a few students to get autographs from Idina Menzel and Anthony Rapp. It was an exhausting week and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I felt such a connection to the city and can't wait to introduce more students to its magic. If you've always thought about travelling internationally with students then please do so. It's really not as scary as it sounds and provides everyone with memories to last a lifetime.

REGISTER NOW ...

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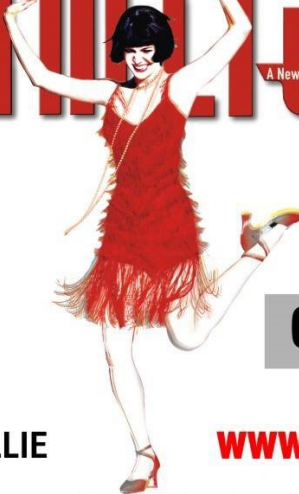
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Choreographer
LINDSAY STERK

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www.CYMC.ca | info@cymc.ca

CYMC sets the stage for young performers and world class faculty to create life changing opportunities in the arts.

CYMC Summer Camp for teens!

What kind of summer camp is perfect for a theatre kid? CYMC summer camps on beautiful Vancouver island! Their Musical theatre camp is attended by youth from around the world, and CYMC has a long history of doing great theatre. Let your students know about this fun and exciting opportunity!

If you have seen any of the last few shows, including *Shrek, the Musical*, *Les Miserables*, or *A Chorus Line*, you probably don't need to be convinced to get tickets this year.

For more information about the CYMC summer camps visit the website at www.cymc.ca



Become a member of the ABCDE... a PSA of the BCTF

#1 Do you want to join/subscribe to the ABCDE? Need to re-new your membership? Online registration can be found at <https://www.bctf.ca/psa/join.aspx>

#2 Do you prefer to print off the application and mail it in? Find a link to the form at www.bcdramateachers.com

#3 Join our moderated email list-serv and connect with other Drama practitioners! Share ideas, ask for help, post info about your shows. Almost anything Drama-related goes. Anyone can read our list-serv, but only members/subscribers can post (membership has its privileges). (*sometimes we will post FREE offers for teachers on behalf of non-members)

To join our list-serv:

Use the drop-down list to select "psa-abcde" (fortunately we are the first one in the list!). To post a message to our list-serv, please send our Past-President Colin Plant an email at colinplant@shaw.ca Our list-serv is moderated to avoid getting spammed.

#3 Not sure of your membership status? Please contact the BCTF at [1-800-663-9163](tel:1-800-663-9163) and ask for the PSA Division.