

# ANPF

## ASHLAND NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL

VOL. 3 NO. 3

FALL 2011

### ANPF 2011 Has an Excellent, Eclectic Lineup

The festival is almost here! We are thrilled with our winning scripts and know that you will be, too. Tickets are on sale now, and advance purchase is recommended. See inside for the full schedule and the Ticket Presale Order Form.

#### **Couples by Gary Dontzig**

*Couples* explores the question *What happens to a couple over the 30 years of a relationship?* The nervousness of the first meeting, the excitement of the attraction, the warning signs, the inability to resist, the fear of the commitment, the leap into the void, and then, 30 years later, who have they become – as a couple and as individuals. Told through a series of vignettes, *Couples* is a dramedy about three relationships – their love for each other, their resentments, their anger, their needs, their wants, their ability to negotiate the difficult terrain of a partnership, and their willingness to compromise . . . or not.

#### **Countdown to the Happy Day by Thomas W. Stephens**

*Countdown to the Happy Day* is a two-character drama that depicts, in vivid street language and with occasional grim humor and profanity, the chance involvement of Gertie, a self-inflicted street person in her thirties, and Cervin, a hulking 15-year old, both of whom are African American. From their first encounter on a nighttime city street, the two are chary of each other and emotionally combustible. Gertie, a troubled US Army vet, resists being drawn into the world of Cervin, a seventh-grade dropout. Their relationship nonetheless grows ever more overlaid, complex, and inevitable. In the play's final moments, they together chant a "countdown" to a happy day they both so crave and for which they continue waiting.

**ANPF  
2011  
OCTOBER 19–23**

#### **Fernando by Steven Haworth**

In *Fernando* Zachariah Smythe, assistant professor of art, has come to Madrid to study an enormous painting by Fernando De La Cruz. Zach considers the painting a masterpiece and the painter one of the greatest Spanish artists of the past 100 years. He is entirely alone in this. Still, Zach is willing to bet everything on an article about the painting. Unfortunately, he has run out of professional chances, the memory of his wife's suicide preys on him, his time in Madrid is limited, and his sobriety is tenuous. Enter Teresa, an astonishingly brilliant and beautiful Spanish woman full of secrets and rage.

#### **Spin, or Twilight of the Bohemians by Carol Verburg**

In *Spin, or Twilight of the Bohemians*, Jerome Hart's unexpected death devastates Mimi Locke. What will she do? What will Jerome's family do with his cats, belongings, and the home he and Mimi shared? She's already fighting off Vince, a handyman sniffing for loot. When Jerome's sister, Catherine; her husband, Anton; and their daughter, Stella, move in, Mimi feels as besieged as Lavender Jones, the lesbian warrior-heroine she and Jerome secretly created in the 1960s. Stella, who hates her parents and idolizes Lavender Jones, becomes a soft target for Vince. Meanwhile Anton's making friends with ex-monk Ricardo Yount, who wants Jerome's house for the new headquarters of his Ethical Wealth Institute. As betrayals and losses pile up, both Stella and Mimi must rediscover their inner Lavender Jones.



**EM Lewis, an ANPF 2008 winner, is reprising her role as our host playwright, welcoming the four winners of ANPF 2011, moderating the talkbacks, and leading the playwrighting workshop.**

### The Play's the Thing at the ANPF 2011 Playwriting Workshop!

Join host playwright EM Lewis and the four ANPF 2011 winning playwrights for a three-hour hands-on playwriting workshop that will help you find the playwright in *you*.

The workshop is open to both beginning writers and experienced playwrights, young and old. There will be something for everyone – from finding ideas, to conquering dramatic structure (with a little help from Aristotle), to building your characters (with insights from Arthur Miller) and writing dialogue that sings.

Please join us on Saturday, October 22, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Room E of the Campbell Center on the Southern Oregon University campus, 655 Frances Lane in Ashland. Bring paper or a laptop and come ready to write!

R.S.V.P. to [info@AshlandNewPlays.org](mailto:info@AshlandNewPlays.org). For more information as the event approaches, visit [www.AshlandNewPlays.org](http://www.AshlandNewPlays.org).



Help! Having run a theatrical organization for the better part of my professional life, I have witnessed telling moments in development. I believe that ANPF is approaching one now. In October we will be presenting four new plays that are quite remarkable, and we are casting them with a group of actors that is absolutely second to none. If you attend plays at OSF, you will recognize them immediately. It is a combination of plays and performers led by a group of wonderfully talented directors. Our problem is letting people know.

In a regularly scheduled play that runs for six weeks, rave reviews from trusted critics and extended word of mouth allow for attendance growth. We are not afforded that luxury. ANPF 2011 runs just one week, so it really is not reviewable, and there is not enough time to let friends know not to miss it. As a play is an equal partnership between creation and production, a theatrical organization is an equal partnership between production and patronage. Most of you have seen and enjoyed our presentations. I promise you this year will be a treat; but for it to have a true impact on the growth of ANPF, we need you to spread the word – *beforehand*. All of you have gone to the theater with

*continued on back page*

# Order Tickets in Advance for Savings and a Guaranteed Seat

Tickets for ANPF 2011 are on sale now! Take advantage of the Festival Ticket Package for \$50 when you purchase one ticket for each of the four readings. You pick your preferred dates and times. Please use the order form below for both the \$50 Festival Ticket Package and the \$15 individual tickets. Advance tickets are also available for \$15 at Paddington Station, 125 East Main Street. Although tickets will be available at the door, they are sold first come, first served, so we recommend advance purchases.

## ANPF 2011 Ticket Presale Order Form

*Limited-time offer: Your order must be received by Wednesday, October 5, for discounted ticket prices to apply.*

name \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ alt. phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Each Festival Ticket Package includes one reading of each play. All performances are at the Unitarian Center, 87 4th Street in Ashland. Please indicate your choices below. Questions? Call (541) 488-7995.**

### ***Countdown to the Happy Day***

*Directed by Claudia Alick and Brian Demar Jones*

Wednesday, 10/19, 8 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Friday, 10/21, 8 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Couples***

*Directed by Caroline Shaffer*

Thursday, 10/20, 2 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday, 10/22, 8 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Spin, or Twilight of the Bohemians***

*Directed by Lenny Neimark*

Thursday, 10/20, 8 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday, 10/22, 2 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Fernando***

*Directed by John Stadelman*

Friday, 10/21, 2 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday, 10/23, 2 p.m.

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Festival Ticket Packages at \$50 each: \_\_\_\_\_ Total tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ Total cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of individual play tickets at \$15 each: \_\_\_\_\_ Total cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Your tax-deductible donation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Ashland New Plays Festival  
PO Box 3314  
Ashland, OR 97520

**Total enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable to ANPF*

**To qualify for this discounted pricing, your ticket order must be received by Wednesday, October 5, 2011.**

*Tickets for the Playwriting Workshop at SOU on Saturday, October 22, are available at the door.*

## ANPF Needs You!

As a nonprofit organization run entirely by volunteers, ANPF relies on contributions from people like you! Whether your gift is large or small, it is *you* – our members – who make it possible for us to continue bringing new plays to the public. These fresh works come to life through the voices of professional actors on our Ashland stage. During the magic moments of rehearsals, readings, and discussions, a playwright may very well discover new insights to refine a good script into a masterpiece. You can help make this happen by becoming a member of ANPF – one of the premier new plays festivals in the country. Check out our membership levels at [www.AshlandNewPlays.org/Membership.html](http://www.AshlandNewPlays.org/Membership.html). All gifts are significant and tax-deductible, and every little bit helps. We appreciate your ongoing support!

# Spotlight on the ANPF 2011 Winning Playwrights

## Gary Dontzig

My early post-student years were spent as an actor, performing great roles in some of America's major regional theatres. I also spent a number of years performing mediocre roles on some of America's most successful mediocre TV sitcoms as well as doing some truly dreadful pilots. The desire for security led me to become a TV writer/producer on such shows as *Murphy Brown*, *Suddenly Susan*, *Becker*, and *State of Grace*, where I won three Emmys, the Humanitas, Alma, Prism, and other awards



I can't remember. After being hired by Disney to co-write and producer the pilot of *Hannah Montana*, I realized I either had to leave television or lose my mind. Fast forward: I now reside in Santa Fe, where I wake every morning to a spectacular view of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. After an appalling cup of Chinese medicinal tea, I hike my dog, Max; have a soy protein shake; and then joyously

write plays. I'm a proud vegetarian/vegan of 36 years; this is amazing since I tell people I'm 34 years old. I consider the number of animals still living because of my diet to be far more important than all the years in television.

## Thomas W. Stephens

A retired educator, I currently – along with my wife, Sue – divide time between Washington, DC, where I am active with Playwrights Forum, a workshop group, and Lynchburg, Virginia, our home for many years and where I founded the Department of Theatre at Randolph College. After a career of teaching, directing, and producing theatre, as well as involvement in regional professional organizations, I now enjoy being able to fully commit to playwriting, which in the past most often had been a secondary but consistent undertaking. I try to take in as much theatre as practical, appreciating the varied theatre scene in Washington, DC; seeing shows in New York City whenever possible; and most recently once again attending Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival of New American Plays. Travel has become a favorite involvement for Sue and me, and we especially look forward to having time with our grown children and their families, spread out over three time zones. While in Ashland this October, we plan a jaunt to Bend for a get-together with our son and his family. *Countdown to the Happy Day* was written this past winter and is still evolving, so I am particularly eager to see the ANPF presentation and hear the audience feedback.



## Carol Verburg

When my mother died, we found a photo I'd never seen: me at age one, performing for an audience of stuffed animals. If only I'd known! I could have skipped years of agonizing over my destiny. I never really left theater. My parents loved Broadway musicals, and my sister and I (and a cast of imaginary friends) grew from jumping off furniture as Peter Pan and Wendy to staging *South Pacific* in the backyard. In high school I won my first playwriting award; in college I wrote the first (as far as we knew) rock musical. A publishing career detoured me into science and international literature. With my first book contract, I left Boston for that hotbed of theater, Cape Cod. After stage-managing David Mamet's *Revenge of the Space Pandas*, I joined the nascent Provincetown Playwrights' Workshop and adapted Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* for his ex-company. From P-town to Bourne, I produced plays by my neighbor Edward Gorey, directed plays by Shakespeare and Shaffer, and wrote plays of my own. To write better, I learned directing; to direct better, I tackled acting. In London I studied how the pros do it, and I stepped in awe onto the Globe's wooden stage. Now I live in San Francisco, publish books, write scripts for a new crowd of imaginary friends, and rejoice to visit Ashland at last.



## Steven Haworth

I am extremely delighted to be included in this year's Ashland New Plays Festival. I have never been to Ashland before, though I have heard many wonderful things about the place and the festival, so I am anxious for October to get here. I live in Garrison, New York, which is on the Hudson River about 55 miles north of the city. It's in the Hudson Highlands, so it's beautiful and full of woods and Revolutionary War history, as West Point is across the river. I have had new works produced in a number of festivals, but I can feel in my bones that working on *Fernando* in Ashland is going to be an especially fun and rewarding experience; everyone's been so wonderful already. When I'm not writing plays, I am forced to slave as an advertising executive in Manhattan. I am right on the verge of finishing a new play about a woman trying to learn about her murdered runaway daughter. The theatre season in New York has been a good one, with new plays by Stephen Adly Guirgis, Jez Butterworth, David Lindsay Abair, Ravi Joseph, and a good revival of *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard – all playwrights I like very much.



Return Service Requested

*Don't Forget!*

**ANPF Day at Yogurt Hut**

Tuesday, September 27  
11 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
140 Lithia Way in Ashland

Tickets for ANPF 2011 are available at **ShowTix4U.com** and by e-mailing **tickets@AshlandNewPlays.org**, calling **(541) 488-7995**, or visiting **Paddington Station** at 125 East Main Street

All performances are at the **Unitarian Center** 87 4th Street in Ashland

**ANPF 2011 runs October 19 through 23**

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ANPF is seeking a few more play readers. After two training sessions in November, Reading Committee members will read 50 to 60 scripts and participate in the selection of the finalists for the 2012 season.

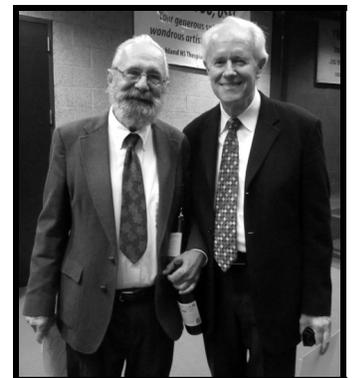
The reading begins in December and will proceed through two rounds, culminating in a general meeting in May 2012. Along the way, readers will also have the opportunity to meet in discussion groups.

Committee members will be treated to a kick-off party sometime in early November and will attend two customized training sessions, designed for returning readers as well as those who are new to the process.

Anyone who would like to participate in this exciting venture and help choose the plays for ANPF 2012 should contact Gray McKee ([gray@AshlandNewPlays.org](mailto:gray@AshlandNewPlays.org)) or co-chair Norma Wright ([norma@AshlandNewPlays.org](mailto:norma@AshlandNewPlays.org)).

**Front Rowe Center** *continued from front page*

friends. Let them know! Bring them! We have big plans and high hopes for ANPF to operate year-round, witness our recent reading of *A Walk in the Woods* with Mike Farrell, Molly Best Tinsley's *The Limits of Bliss*, and last year's revival of *Death of a Salesman*. We are hoping to present in January a sister event called Act Two. If these productions are to continue, we need your help getting the word out. We need *you* to spread the word!



**Doug Rowe and Mike Farrell**  
after *A Walk in the Woods*