

# ANPF

## ASHLAND NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL

*Celebrating 20 Years of New Works for the Stage*

VOL. 4 NO. 2

SUMMER 2012

*The Envelope Please...*

### The Winning Playwrights for ANPF 2012

**Suzanne Bradbeer of New York City for *The God Game***

**Richard Manley of New York City for *This Rough Magic***

**Cary Pepper of San Francisco for *How It Works***

**Joshua Rebell of New York City for *Omission***

All four winners are professional playwrights with impressive bodies of work – but what is it about New York City? Is it in the water? Like last year we have three East Coasters and one San Franciscan! The winners are looking forward to traveling to Ashland for Festival Week, to workshop their plays and have performances featuring actors and directors from OSF and the community. Check out the buzz at [facebook.com/Ashland.New.Plays](https://www.facebook.com/Ashland.New.Plays).

### EM Lewis Returning as Host Playwright

"I can't wait to be back in Ashland!" said returning host playwright EM (Ellen) Lewis. "I know it's going to be a great week of readings and conversations about the winning plays. I hope to see both returning friends and some new faces in the audience this year."

Lewis is still living in Princeton, New Jersey. Her fellowship year at Princeton University is complete, but a new fellowship from the New Jersey Council for the Arts has encouraged her to stay on for a while. She was named the Dramatists Guild Representative for the Garden State and has just received her first commission – to write a short play about the history of Westfield, New Jersey, that will premiere at Liberty Hall Museum this fall. Her play *Infinite Black Suitcase* was published by Samuel French in January.

Ellen's current projects include a summer teaching gig as playwright-in-residence for the New Voices for the Theater program in Richmond, Virginia, where she's been working with high-school-aged dramatists-in-training; the world premiere of her family comedy *Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday* at HotCity Theater in St. Louis, Missouri; and college productions of *Heads* and *Song of Extinction*.

Lewis has worked with ANPF President Gray McKee to organize some new offerings for this year's playwriting workshops. This fall there will be two workshops during Festival Week – one on Friday morning, led by Lewis, and a second on Saturday morning, led by the four winning playwrights. Watch for details in the fall newsletter.



### *Golda's Balcony* Slated for August 27

In the role of Golda Meir, actress Robynn Rodriguez is well aware she wasn't typecast. And that, says the Oregon Shakespeare Festival veteran, promises to provide her with a delightful and daunting challenge.

For one evening only, Monday, August 27, at 8 p.m., Rodriguez will dramatize the tumultuous life of the Israeli prime minister in a staged reading of *Golda's Balcony*, a one-woman show produced by ANPF at the Unitarian Center, 87 4th Street in Ashland.

Still weeks from the performance, Rodriguez says she is intrigued by the task of "capturing the essence" of a woman she grew up admiring from TV news footage as "an unbelievably articulate grandmotherly-looking lady" who helped shape the world.

Compounding that challenge is that, "as a Scots–Puerto Rican, I'm not at all like her." And without the sort of intense rehearsal period that accompanies full-blown staged productions, "how do I take on this person whom I don't sound like and don't look like? How can I make that transformational leap and give the audience a real flavor for her? Always, the best thing I can do as an actor is to tell the truth," says Rodriguez, who can also be seen this summer in OSF's *Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella* and *Party People*. "Accomplishing that would be thrilling."

**ANPF extends our heartfelt thanks to Brenda Barca for sponsoring *Golda's Balcony* with a generous \$500 donation. We are seeking sponsors for all eight performances of the winning plays at ANPF 2012. Show the love!**

# Front Rowe Center

By Douglas Rowe  
Artistic Director

After an 11-year retirement—and a very pleasant 11 years it has been—I have now returned to the “boards,” having rejoined the company at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Currently performing as Adam in *As You Like It* and rehearsing *All the Way*, I am watching my golf game fall to pieces and my fishing reels beginning to rust, and I am definitely feeling my age. But is it fun? You bet!

Watching all of these younger and much younger actors prepare while I struggle with old Adam has been a treat that has been missing from my daily pursuits. And of course, although they may not know it, I am lying in wait to ambush them with requests to appear in ANPF 2012 this fall.

Now that the four winning plays have been selected, I am working on gathering directors and actors for your viewing pleasure. It has been a long and arduous journey for our valiant Reading Committee members, who pored over nearly 200 plays (reading many of them multiple times) and participated in several very lively discussions, arguing both for and against the scripts I was given to consider. I was in the unenviable position of thwarting some hard-fought wishes. However, there are those who will be grateful.

To both sides I feel deeply indebted for all the hours they have spent. These readers are by far the most important cogs in the ANPF wheel, so give them a standing ovation when they are introduced before the readings this fall.

Now back to slowly inserting lines into this tired old brain. See you in October!

## Thanks, B&Bs

for hosting our  
ANPF 2012 playwrights

Albion Inn—Cyd and Gary Ropp

Oak Street Station—Sue and John Blaize

Joe and Jean Collonge

Mary Pat Power and Hollis Greenwood

Arden Forest Inn—

Bill Faiia and Corbet Unmack

## Hats Off to ANPF's Reading Committee!

Forty-nine of our intrepid volunteer readers reached the round 2 finish line, and, according to Penny Mikesell, our scorekeeper extraordinaire, most succeeded in reading and scoring all 34 round 2 plays.

Once all of the scores were tabulated, the six top-scoring plays were handed over to Artistic Director Douglas Rowe. Then, at a delightfully raucous final meeting, dozens of readers convened in a Southern Oregon University classroom to debate the merits of the remaining 28 plays. At the end of the meeting, the committee voted to add an additional six scripts to Doug's list.

From that list of 12, Doug programmed the extraordinary festival we'll be presenting at ANPF 2012 in October.

If you're interested in being a reader next season, let us know!

Here are the names of the illustrious members of this year's Reading Committee:

Alexia Ainsworth	Peggy Moore
Sunny Anderson*	Dorothy Ormes
Terry Ansnes*	Carolyn Peake
Barbara Bobes	Rick Penfield
Kathy Brown	John Rose
Brandy Carson	Judith Rosen
Candice Chapman	Brady Rubin
Jean Collonge	Ira Rubin
Rosemary Dalton	Jim Schellentrager
MJ Daspit	Marguerite Schellentrager
Debi Dieterich	Patricia Sempowich
Chris Donchin	Julie Simon
Blaire Finney	Karen Spence*
Carole Florian*	John Stadelman
David Florian*	Ann Stein
Patricia Fuhrman	Don Stone
Paris Geiken	Carol Sunahara
Beth Geismar*	Marlene Teichert
Dave Hill	Audrey Thompson
Mary Ann Jones	Bill Varble
Andrea King	Nina Winans
Philip Lang	Lyda Woods
Mike LeTourneau	Norma Wright*
Gray McKee*	
Jay Michalson	
Sharon Michalson	*Group leader

## Scholarship Winner to Attend PSU



Nick Mckernan



Left, as Danny Zuko in *Grease*

On May 23 at Ashland High School's Scholarship Night, Artistic Director Douglas Rowe presented graduating senior Nick Mckernan, 19, with ANPF's annual \$500 scholarship. He was selected based on an original monologue, "Speaking on Fours," performed before a panel comprising Rowe and fellow OSF actors and ANPF Artistic Board members Michael Hume and Cristofer Jean.

"It is such a treat to witness a promising young talent in development," says Rowe. "Nick's ability as both a writer and an actor bodes well for a future in the arts. We are delighted to have encouraged him in his pursuit."

"Nick is a force of passionate creativity," says Betsy Bishop, AHS theatre producer and English teacher. "In art, theatre, film, writing, and music, Nick continues to draw attention to his work."

Mckernan has had an impressive career in theatre at AHS, with roles that include Danny Zuko in *Grease*. "In that production, he charmed the audience and his fellow players with his amiable personality and comic ability," says Bishop. He also played Fred Casely in *Chicago* and most recently Action in *West Side Story*.

"He is an artist-athlete," adds Bishop, "balancing his extracurricular with cross-country/track, football, guitar and songwriting, acting, singing, and dancing—all while making films on the side with his friends."

Mckernan has written and directed many short films and won two first-place awards at the Ashland Independent Film Festival. "Nick shows real depth as a budding young filmmaker," says Wendy Conner, AIFF operations manager. "He has a keen eye for creating textural mood, with all the cinematic elements in place, telling a great story."

Mckernan will be attending Portland State University in the fall to study theatre/performing arts and filmmaking. Break a leg, Nick!



# Spotlight on ANPF

## *A Look Back on the First 20 Years*

*This is the second in a two-part series by Norma Wright, who served as ANPF president from 1996 through 1999 and is on the current Board of Directors.*

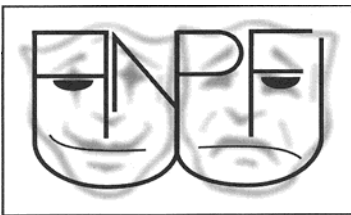
**F**rom the very beginning, three key elements have been necessary for a successful Ashland New Plays Festival: the selection of exciting new plays, the directors and the actors who bring life to the pages, and the many people behind the scenes who do their parts to make the festival one of the premier new play forums in the nation.

It's impossible in this brief article to thank every person who has contributed to making ANPF what it is today, so we've selected a few whose names have appeared in our playbill year after year and who represent the many.

In 1997 when ANPF became the producer of the festival, a committee of local readers was formed to choose the plays. This system has evolved from as few as eight readers in earlier years to this year's 49 hardy souls. From the beginning, regardless of how many or how few, our loyal, hardworking readers have critiqued all of the scripts that have been submitted. As we approach our 20-year celebration, we look back with deep appreciation to the hundreds of readers who have been a part of this process.

There are readers who have served on the committee multiple times, but we'd like to honor Brandy Carson and John Stadelman in particular for the many years they've served as readers as well as acting and directing for the festival each year.

Since the first festival in 1993, many members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival have been involved in ANPF's presentations. Two people stand out from the rest: Michael Hume who served as vice president from 1997 to 1999, has directed ANPF readings for nine years and will be directing one this year. Liisa Ivary was on the first coordinating committee in 1993 and has either acted in or directed readings nearly every year since then.



2002-2004

There are other OSF actors who have been a part of the ANPF family since 1997, and their faces and voices are familiar to and beloved by our audiences: David Kelly, Terri McMahon, Robynn Rodriguez, and Vilma Silva. Cristofer Jean has given generously of his time and talents as both actor and director, as well.

ANPF Artistic Director Doug Rowe, also an OSF actor, brings extraordinary talent and years of professional experience to the organization. First as an adviser and now head of the artistic team, Doug has been able each year to fulfill our promise to the winning playwrights of readings presented by directors and actors of the highest theatrical abilities and training.

Ellen Lewis, our gracious host playwright for three years running, provides a forum for discussions following each reading. Intelligent, warm, and welcoming as she is, audience members are comfortable in sharing their views and personal insights about the plays. For the entire week of rehearsals and readings, Ellen works tirelessly with the playwrights, encouraging and assisting them as they continue to refine their scripts.

Although it is almost entirely volunteers who keep ANPF running briskly, we have had part-time staff who received very small stipends in return for enormous amounts of time and commitment to the organization. Marianne Wunch served as the festival's producer from 1994 to 1997. In 1998 Tracy O'Flaherty traveled from London, England, and spent six months in Ashland as ANPF producer/director. Susan Sincich became ANPF administrative assistant in 1999, a role she filled until her tragic death from cancer in 2005. Her generous bequeathment to ANPF was a sad reminder of how much the organization meant to her and how much she meant to us. Elizabeth von Radics, a professional editor, joined the board in 2006 and became our marketing director in 2010. Elizabeth continues to manage all aspects of ANPF marketing and public relations with remarkable skill and indefatigable commitment. For 18 years, Saj Kirkland, our wonderful and highly competent stage manager, has added the needed technical aspects to our readings.

As anyone who is familiar with not-for-profit organizations knows, it is monetary contributions, large and small, that provide the funding to keep the organization alive and well. ANPF is fortunate to have the support of many patrons who have given faithfully for many years. Amongst the most generous are Anne Decker, Stephen Dowler and Gail Marinelli, David Rambo, Ted and Teresa Rihn, Geraldine Unmack, and most recently Brenda Barca.

The ANPF presidency and the board of directors have passed through many hands over the years, and there are a few who have remained involved for nearly as long as the two decades that ANPF has been in existence: Bill Faiia, Tilly Gibbs, Hollis Greenwood, Dolores Marx, Penny Mikesell, and Fred and Norma Wright.



2005-2007

Return Service Requested

## Save the Dates!

*Tickets go on sale  
later this summer*

### **Golda's Balcony**

*Starring Robynn Rodriguez*

**Monday, August 27  
8 p.m.**

Unitarian Center  
87 4th Street in Ashland

### **ANPF 2012**

*Featuring Four New Plays*

**October 24 to 28**  
Unitarian Center

**Snail mail or e-mail?** In our efforts to be green, we are also delivering this newsletter via e-mail on request. If you'd prefer to receive it in your inbox rather than your mailbox, please contact us at (541) 488-7995 or [info@AshlandNewPlays.org](mailto:info@AshlandNewPlays.org).

## **A Look Back on the First 20 Years** *continued from page 3*

**ASHLAND  
NEW  
PLAYS  
FESTIVAL**

2010–present

ANPF is the product of the love and commitment of countless hundreds of people who believe that the creative arts play a vital role in our history and culture, and in this belief they have continued to devote time and resources to Ashland New Plays Festival.

A standing ovation to those people: playwrights, readers, directors, actors, patrons, board members and officers, and all of those other volunteers who have been part of this unique and

extraordinary organization. Now on to the next 20 years!

**OUR  
MISSION**

Ashland New Plays Festival assists playwrights in the development of new works through public readings and offers an educational forum to the community through discussions and workshops.

**Visit Us Online!**

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**ANPF  
2012**  
Celebrating 20 Years of New Works for the Stage