The Envelope Please...

The Winning Playwrights for ANPF 2013

Robert John Ford of Des Moines, Iowa, for Sleeping Dogs
Richard Manley of New York City for A Question of Words
Jamie Pachino of Los Angeles for Other Than Honorable
Bo Wilson of N Chesterfield, Virginia, for The Boatwright

Are we blind? You bet we are! When a playwright submits a script to Ashland New Plays Festival, we strip all identity marks from it before any member of the Reading Committee sees it. Only after the top four plays are selected are the playwrights’ names revealed to anyone. So when Richard Manley is chosen two years in a row and Jamie Pachino three times in 15 years, we can tell you absolutely that the cream has risen to the top. ANPF receives scripts from the top tier of playwrights in the United States, and you will see those plays—and talk with those playwrights—during Festival Week, October 21 to 27. Mark your calendar!

ANPF TheatreTalk
with Lue Morgan Douthit

Last year’s highly successful Theatre Talk series returns with three special events in addition to our scheduled presentations during Festival Week in October. Theater Talk is a series of conversations with prominent local actors and theatre professionals, inspired by the James Lipton television program Inside the Actors Studio, that focuses on the ways their lives merge with their process, skill, and inspiration to create art. The series gives audiences a unique glimpse into the art, craft, and nature of theatre and provides a better understanding of these hardworking artists.

The first Theatre Talk of our 2013 season is on Wednesday, July 31, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the Ashland Springs Hotel; admission is $15. Our guest is Lue Morgan Douthit, PhD, director of literary development and dramaturgy at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In addition to discussing her views about Shakespeare, acting, and her 19 years at OSF, Lue will be talking with ANPF Board member and Theatre Talk producer John Rose about the vital role of developing new works at OSF as well as the importance and the relevance of staged readings. As most Ashland theatre-goers know well, Lue possesses an original and remarkable intelligence, and her thoughts and opinions about theatre are always interesting and entertaining. Her participation in Theatre Talk, with its spontaneous conversational format, promises to provide a fascinating and unique look at this truly great theatre professional.

Volunteer Spotlight

Dolores Marx

Most people who live in Ashland, and even beyond, know Dolores Marx as the friendly, efficient little lady who bustles around volunteering at countless community events with an adorable Yorkie in her pocket. Others of us know her as the most dependable, conscientious volunteer in town, often ready and willing to take on tasks others refuse. As ANPF President Fred Wright says, “Dolores is one of those gracious people you can always count on to do what she’s promised.” And as she retires from our Board of Directors, we’re honoring her in the ANPF Volunteer Spotlight.

“When we first moved to Ashland, we kept seeing this sweet diminutive lady and her little dog at practically every event we attended,” says Bill Faiia, ANPF board member. “I quickly learned that she was the Queen of the Volunteer Universe. That was 18 years ago, and she is no less active today than she was then and all through the years. I can’t imagine going to an ANPF event and not seeing her there. On a more personal note, when I was ill last year she continued to send cards and messages of encouragement throughout the yearlong ordeal. I’ve never met a more giving person who goes about her day quietly making the world a better place.”

Dolores hails from Indiana, where she earned a master’s degree in library science from Indiana University. She later moved to California, where she began her career as a children’s librarian. She helped start a performing-arts library and became a district librarian, supervising 10 school libraries and ordering and cataloging their books. After 25 years she retired to Ashland.

Hitting the ground running in her new town, she became part of the initial group coordinating the first Ashland New Plays Festival in 1992 and has been involved with the organization for all of its 21 years. In her quiet, unassuming way, Dolores has been the hub of ANPF’s organizational wheel: managing all ticket sales for each and every event, supervising the box office, serving as treasurer and keeping track of every incoming and outgoing penny, as well as pitching in with countless other tasks.

We’ve all seen her doing her share at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Ashland Library, Spay and Neuter Your Pets of Ashland, Oregon Stage Works, and Ashland Community Theatre, where she was one of the organization’s founders and served as a board member for many years. She’s the “ticket lady” for more events in town than anyone can possibly count and has ushered more shows at Oregon Cabaret Theatre than any other volunteer. Even with all of this, she finds time to visit local retirement communities, bringing residents the joy and the love of her sweet little dogs.

Dolores Marx is a special friend to Ashland and is particularly loved by ANPF. Thank you, Dolores, for everything you do. We salute you!
In the second semester of my freshman year at Bates College in Maine, I had to take a speech course and I happened to draw the drama professor. After my first speech, she asked me to try out for a play. “A play?” I said. “I’m here on a baseball scholarship and living in a dorm full of athletes who would make my life miserable if I were to wear some of those funny Shakespearean pants and hats with feathers.” Upon returning home for the summer, my father, who had never even seen a play, told me it probably wasn’t a bad idea. “That’s why you go to college—to learn about new things.” At any rate, I auditioned for the first play of my sophomore year, got a part, and after the first rehearsal walked out of the theater and said to the person next to me, “This is what I am going to do for the rest of my life.”

That same professor told me that the next course I must take was Oral Interpretation. It was far and away my favorite class. It is an art form unto itself and is the reason why I am so taken with Ashland New Plays Festival. Dramatic literature without the set, dressings, costumes, and props enables the listener to truly focus on the words. You can close your eyes and paint the pictures yourself. When my boys were in grade school, I revisited “Oral Interp” by reading to their classes once or twice a week. Word soon spread, and soon I was reading to several classes every day. At one point I read a book—one in a series of 26—and within two months the library had to buy several copies of all 26 because the youngsters were so anxious to read. The kids were so taken with dramatic literature that two months later the school brought busloads to my theater.

ANPF is blessed to have the acting resources of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival so that this wonderful art form truly comes to life. All of you have thrilled to this art form. Help us get the word out. Tell your friends. They will be thankful, and we will be grateful.

A MISSIVE FROM ANPF 2013 HOST PLAYWRIGHT EM LEWIS

Dear Friends of Ashland New Plays Festival,

Happy summer! I hope you’re having a good year—your tomatoes thriving, your sunflowers blooming, and your OSF season tickets purchased!

This has been a busy year for me. I’m still living in Princeton and have been working on new plays with both New York’s Page 73 playwriting workshop and Playwrights Theater of New Jersey’s Emerging Women Playwrights Project. Song of Extinction had a big reading in New York featuring Francis Jue and Reed Birney. I went down to Shreveport, Louisiana, to respond to student work and teach a playwriting workshop at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival’s Region 6 Finals (great fun and great gumbo!). I wrote a one-man play called The Gun Show (about guns and gun control), which was performed in New York City; and I finished If I Did This, which had a reading at PlayFest Santa Barbara in January, will be workshopped at the Arkansas New Play Festival in June, and then will have its world premiere at Passage Theater in New Jersey in the fall.

I’ve also had the pleasure this year of keeping in contact with some of our wonderful ANPF winning playwrights. Living New York adjacent as I do means that many playwrights live nearby, and the rest of them have plenty of reason to come to town. Over the past few months, I’ve spent time with our own David Hilder, Jamil Brandl, Bob Clyman, Suzanne Bradbeer, Richard Manley, and Steven Haworth. I’ve e-mailed back and forth with Josh Rebell, Andrea Stolowitz, Jamie Pachino, and Gary Dontzig. And I went to the Six Women Playwrights Festival with Barbara Lindsay last year. ANPF consistently chooses plays by playwrights I want to know—smart, big-hearted, strong-minded people who are writing bold stories for the stage. I can’t wait to see what they’re writing about next.

I hope you’re looking forward to ANPF 2013 as much as I am. We’ll have the opportunity to meet four new playwrights, hear their work, and come together as a community to talk about the art and the craft of playwriting and the ideas that these playwrights bring to us. With your presence and participation, I know it will be the best year yet.

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All Hail the Reading Committee!

Between January and March, the 48 volunteer readers who compose ANPF’s Reading Committee met repeatedly in six discussion groups to cull 36 semifinalists from the 273 submissions ANPF received this year. Between March and May, almost every reader succeeded in reading and scoring all 36 semifinalists. Then our fabulous tabulator-in-chief, Penny Mikessell, sorted and averaged more than 1,700 scores, producing a spreadsheet with all 36 semifinalists in rank order. The four top-scoring plays were placed immediately into the capable hands of Artistic Director Doug Rowe.

At the delightfully raucous June meeting, which has become an ANPF tradition, dozens of readers assembled in a Southern Oregon University classroom to debate the merits of the remaining 32 plays. For two hours readers held forth, advocating passionately both for and against. The meeting concluded with the distribution of ballots, and the committee voted to add an additional eight plays for Doug’s consideration, bringing the list of finalists to 12 very strong scripts, from which he programmed the extraordinary twenty-first festival to be presented at ANPF 2013 in October.

If you are interested in becoming a reader next season, let us know! Below are the names of the illustrious members of the Reading Committee for ANPF 2012.

ANDERSON GROUP
Sunny Anderson*
Cheryl Goldman
John Hunt
Barbara Mathieson
Peggy Moore
Sandi Risser
John Rose*
Audrey Thompson

ANSNES GROUP
Terry Ansnes*
Barbara Bobes
Kathy Brown
Brandy Carson
Debi Dieterich
Philip Lang
Martha Stadelman
Carol Sunahara
*Group leader

FLORIAN GROUP
Carole Florian*
David Florian*
Mike LeTournau
Stan Mazor
Gail Richter
Brady Rubin
Ira Rubin
Leslie Solomon

GEISMAR GROUP
Jane Bardin
Candice Chapman
Rosemary Dalton
MJ Daspit
Paris Geiken*
Beth Geismar*
Ellen Reiterman
Julie Simon
Ann Stein

SPENCE GROUP
Blaire Finney
Patricia Fuhrman
Dorothy Ormes
Carolyn Peake
Judith Rosen
Patricia Sempowich
Karen Spence*
Nina Winans

WRIGHT GROUP
Susan Bartholomew
Gray McKee*
Carol Okenburg
Jim Schellentragen
Marguerite Schellentragen
Marlene Teichert
Norma Wright*
Linda Young

ANPF Jean Collinge Memorial Scholarship Fund Established

The untimely death of ANPF Volunteer Coordinator Jean Collinge in March was heartbreaking for the ANPF family. Wife of Board member Joe Collinge, Jean was very active in ANPF; she was also a member of our Reading Committee, an event volunteer, and a contributing writer to our marketing efforts as well as a significant donor. She gave her time to numerous other community organizations as well, including OLLI, Camelot Theater, and the Tudor Guild. In honor of Jean’s countless contributions, we have renamed our annual $500 writing- and performance-based scholarship for a graduating senior of Ashland High School the ANPF Jean Collinge Memorial Scholarship. If you would like to honor Jean’s memory and help defer the costs of college for a talented local writer-thespian, please make a donation to the scholarship fund by sending a check to: ANPF Scholarship Fund, PO Box 3314, Ashland, OR 97520

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ANPF 2013 scholarship winner Maya Zundel participated in six shows at Ashland High School: The Merry Wives of Windsor, Grease, Chicago, The 39 Steps, And Then They Came For Me, and West Side Story. She also understudied at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as Jean in August: Osage County. She was involved in Drama Club all four years, her junior year as vice president and her senior year as president. She is a member of National Honors Society, Math Honors Society, and the Red Cross Honors Program. She will graduate a Thespian Scholar and a valedictorian. She is attending Columbia University in New York in the fall. While her major is currently undecided, in the future she hopes to help battered women. She is eternally grateful to theater for the skills she has gained and to ANPF for helping her pursue her dream.

“She’s a triple threat—singer, dancer, and actor—with intelligence and a smile that lights up a room,” says Betsy Bishop, AHS Theatre producer and teacher. “She has a heart of gold and is a shining star onstage! She is a classic student of the world, embracing the work of a lifelong learner and possessing maturity and wisdom in her pursuit of all kinds of knowledge.”

Since winning the ANPF Scholarship in 2012, Nick Mckernan has been spending much of his first year at Portland State University delving further into his major of theatre. In the fall term, he began technical theatre courses that included both hands-on and traditional course offerings. As the year has progressed, he has learned extensively about lighting, sound, and set design. In the winter term, Nick was cast as Silvio in the university’s mainstage production of The Servant of Two Masters. The role challenged him to sing, dance, and fight with both sword and pen—all in the ancient style of commedia dell’arte. In short, he absolutely loved the experience. Since then Nick has enrolled in a new play development course and is continuing to study both the technical and acting sides of theatre. In his free time, he has written songs, gone for runs, worked on an original screenplay, painted, and thoroughly enjoyed his time at college.

Since winning ANPF’s first scholarship in 2011, Aurelia Grierson has become a real New Yorker. In her first year as a theatre major at Fordham University, she played Mercy Lewis in Arthur Miller’s The Crucible. In her sophomore year, she was assistant costume designer for Eurydice by Sarah Rule, acted in a new work by Sean-Patrick Monahan titled The Verse Play, was assistant puppet designer for A Masque of Reason by Robert Frost, and performed in Horse Girls, another new work that showed in the Fordham Studio before being mounted at the Ars Nova All New Talent (ANT) Festival in New York this past June. Outside of school, she participated in a workshop with The Outfit Theatre Company. Aurelia will be spending the fall semester in Dublin, studying at the Gaiety School–National Theatre School of Ireland and working at the Dublin Fringe Festival.
**SAVE THE DATES**

**Theatre Talk with Lue Douthit**  
Wednesday, July 31 = 7:30 to 9 p.m.  
Ashland Springs Hotel

**Theatre Talk with Michael Elich and Robin Goodrin Nordli**  
Tuesday, October 1 = 7 to 9:30 p.m.  
Ashland Springs Hotel

**ANPF 2013 Festival Week**  
October 21 through 27 = Unitarian Center

**Kickoff Gala**  
Monday, October 21 = 4 to 6 p.m.  
Schneider Museum of Art

**Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol**  
December 4 and 18 = Ashland Springs Hotel

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**Snail mail or e-mail?** In our efforts to be green, we also deliver this newsletter via e-mail if you prefer. Let us know at info@AshlandNewPlays.org.

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**PLAYWRITING WORKSHOPS OFFER SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR**

This year’s Festival Week playwriting workshops are all new! As usual, they will be held in the OLLI space: Campbell Center, Room E, SOU campus, 655 Frances Lane in Ashland. The cost is $10 for one workshop or $15 for both. Reserve your seat today by e-mailing gray@ashlandnewplays.org.

**Playwriting Workshop: Creating Character and Building the Dramatic Scene**  
Friday, October 25, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Led by host playwright EM Lewis

How do you go about creating the people in your plays? Our favorite characters in literature are as fully dimensional as our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. Learn techniques for creating characters, then use those new skills as we move into building the dramatic scene. Open to both new and more-experienced writers. Don’t forget to bring pen and paper!

**Ask the Playwrights: A Panel Discussion with the ANPF 2013 Winning Playwrights**  
Saturday, October 26, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Moderated by John Rose

Peek into the creative process with a frank and far-ranging discussion of the playwriting world with this year’s four winning playwrights. Bring your questions about becoming a playwright; what it is like to work with directors, designers, and actors to bring your play to life; and anything else you are curious about. What do you want to know?

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