

# ANPF

ASHLAND NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL

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WINTER 2011

## ANPF 2011 Closed to a Standing Ovation

Was it a festival? Oh, we had no carousels. We had no gypsies. We had no maypoles.

But we had more and better. A festival is a celebration of the arts, and we did that, truly. We had huge audiences—our smallest house this year was as big as the biggest house last year. Our peak was 190 people in 192 available seats.

“We” means *you*—our volunteers, patrons, actors, playwrights, directors, and fellow fans of playwriting. *We* had ourselves a festival! It was a delight to be amidst so many people loving a good show.

Our mentor, Feste, tells us that “present mirth has present laughter”; he was right about that (no fool he). And conflict, and love, and sorrow, and growth—all in the right places.

Are we fools to think that next year will be bigger and better? Mark October 24 through 28, 2012, on your calendar.

*But that's all one, our play is done,  
And we'll strive to please you every day.*

—Feste



Host Playwright EM Lewis applauds winning playwrights Carol Verburg, Stephen Haworth, Thomas W. Stephens, and Gary Dontzig at the close of the festival.



By Douglas Rowe  
Artistic Director

Two years ago, totally enjoying retirement, catching big fish, and improving my golf scores, I was approached by the ANPF Board of Directors to join them. I have worked with boards all my life. A meeting once a month, offering some advice, how bad could it be? At my first meeting, I was asked to be the artistic director. *Hmmm?* Well, it's a once-a-year festival, so why not? Of course, the first thing I did was resign from the board, thereby clarifying duties. Then it happened. I got into it. *Gulp!* I haven't eaten freshly caught fish in a year, and my nickname on the fairways became “Dougie Divot.” We now do readings during the year and plan to increase the activity. I became energized; and after a recent call from Bill Rauch to rejoin the acting company at OSF, I of course responded in the affirmative. There is no doubt my new nickname will become “Double-Bogie Dougie.” But you know what? After participating in this year's ANPF 2011 festival, which offered wonderful writing, incisive directing, and some absolutely brilliant performances, I look forward to the future with both ANPF and OSF—but the first person who calls me “Shankapotomus” is in a world of trouble.



## WE'RE OFF AND READING!

When the Reading Committee Kick-Off Party was held on November 6 at Lithia Springs Inn, the room was charged with energy and excitement as 54 enthusiastic readers met to gear up for the selection of plays for the 2012 Ashland New Plays Festival. Scripts from throughout the United

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**WIKIPEDIA**  
*The Free Encyclopedia*

# ANPF Needs Your Input on the ANPF Wiki Project

Attention past playwrights, participants, and patrons! In honor of ANPF's twentieth year in 2012, we are launching the ANPF Wiki Project to fully document our history. Has your ANPF winning play gone on to subsequent productions? Has it won awards? Did you act in ANPF back in the day? Has a winning playwright you've followed hit the big time? Let the world know! Please check out Ashland New Plays Festival's Wikipedia page and add to it!

Anyone can update a page on Wikipedia. Go to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashland\\_New\\_Plays\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashland_New_Plays_Festival). At the top right are Read, Edit, and View History tabs. When you click on the Edit tab, you'll get a message about registering: it's a good idea if you use Wikipedia at all, but it's not necessary to register before adding to ANPF's page. If you can contribute, please do!

If you'd prefer to simply e-mail us your information, send it to [webmaster@AshlandNewPlays.org](mailto:webmaster@AshlandNewPlays.org). ANPF's website lists all of our winners dating back to 1993 ([www.ashlandnewplays.org/Past\\_ANPF\\_winners.html](http://www.ashlandnewplays.org/Past_ANPF_winners.html)). In the coming months, we'll also be delving into our dusty paper archive to see what more we can unearth and digitize.

Help us celebrate ANPF's rich history by contributing!

Clockwise: *Countdown to the Happy Day* directors Brian Demar Jones and Claudia Alick with actors Christopher Livingston and Kimberly Scott; *Spin, or Twilight of the Bohemians* (back row) director Lenny Neimark, actors Holly Weber Niemark, Brandy Carson, David Kelly, and Terry McMahon, playwright Carol Verburg, actors Rodney Gardiner and (front row) Ellie von Radics, and artistic director Douglas Rowe;



*Couples* actors Dayvin Turchiano, Gina Daniels, Benajah Cobb, Cristofer Jean, Michael Elich, Kimberly Scott, and Ted Deasy; *Fernando* (back row) actor Holly Weber Neimark, playwright Steven Haworth, actor Jim L. Garcia, director John Stadelman, actor Mariam A. Laube, (front row) artistic director Douglas Rowe, and actor Rex Young.



# Spotlight on ANPF 2011

## *Musings from the Winning Playwrights*

**GARY DONTZIG:** How would you respond if someone asked you if you'd like to spend a week in the most perfect, picturesque little town where the residents rarely lock their doors, surrounded by the most beautiful countryside any landscape artist would sell his soul to discover, where every restaurant either has a vegan option or is more than happy to adjust to your needs (if those be your needs), and during that week you will hear a play you've written performed by uber-talented professional actors who'll take your words to places you hadn't imagined possible and you'll get support and encouragement and an outpouring of, dare I say, love, from people with names like Melissa and Elizabeth and Norma and Terry and Gray and Doug, just to name a very few? How would you respond? I responded with a solid "yes" and had one of those weeks one can only dream about. Oh, and as for the unlocked doors, please don't spread the word if you're from New York or LA or any of those other places where crime exists, as the residents of the picturesque little town of Ashland, Oregon, might get upset . . . well, that may be too strong a word . . . they would politely ask you to refrain and then offer you a cup of tea and a scone.

**STEVEN HAYWORTH:** It is almost impossible to express adequately what a wonderful experience ANPF was for me. The town itself is, of course, very beautiful, and autumn there is spectacular. Both the people who run the festival and the artists who participate go to great lengths to make it a creative and dynamic experience for everyone. The main thing is working on a new play and making it better. This happened with *Fernando*, and I am doubly inspired to get the play to the next level, more confident that the play is worthy and ready. The actors (all great Oregon Shakespeare Festival people), director John Stadelman, and artistic director Doug Rowe were all at such a high level of professionalism and commitment that to not improve the play would have been simply embarrassing. When it was time for the readings themselves, there was little doubt the audience would have a blast. They did and so did I.

**TOM STEPHENS:** Festival week in Ashland was unquestionably a singular occasion. From the warm and welcoming reception with ANPF Board members to the final decompression session – two Sundays apart – we playwrights were accorded every courtesy and consideration. My directors were impressively dedicated and my actors immensely talented and giving. The readings of *Countdown to the Happy Day* were solid and gripping, and the subsequent audience talkbacks stimulating and helpful. What I most appreciate about the ANPF experience was the way it tightly focused and concentrated my attention upon my play. The rehearsals, the discussions (with actors and directors; with Board members; with audiences; with fellow playwrights) kept my play so intensely before me that, almost immediately upon leaving Ashland, I launched into a rewrite of the script, working diligently throughout my air travel from the West Coast to the East. And *Countdown*, I believe, is all the stronger because of the festival. My sincere thanks.

**CAROL VERBURG:** ANPF was one of my best theater experiences ever! As a longtime playwright and director in regional theater, I was awed by the combination of enthusiasm, knowledge, and generosity I encountered at every stage of the process: submitting my script, receiving updates, learning I was a winner, and then being welcomed as an honored guest.

Before arriving in this delightful town, I worried about not meeting my director and cast until their final rehearsal; but everyone knew what he or she was doing, including the wonderful actors who squeezed in my play between Oregon Shakespeare Festival performances, and we consulted by phone and e-mail. After our two public readings, each followed by an expertly managed talkback with the audience and an informal discussion with my fellow playwrights, I came home with excellent feedback and a fully informed revision plan. I highly recommend ANPF and look forward to returning, as a spectator and I hope as a participant.



Steven Haworth, Tom Stephens, Gary Dontzig, EM Lewis, Douglas Rowe, and Carol Verburg

Return Service Requested

**Save the dates! ANPF 2012 will be October 24 through 28.**

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**Reading Committee Is Off and Running**

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States are arriving daily. By the submission deadline of January 15, we expect at least 200 new works for readers in the six discussion groups to analyze. The first of two training sessions will be held on Saturday, December 3, from 10 a.m.



**Reading Committee co-chairs Gray McKee and Norma Wright**

to noon in Room E at the OLLI/Campbell Center on the SOU campus. This one is expressly for new readers, with another planned for all readers in January, the date and time to be announced.