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www.MontanaPlaywrights.org

The official newsletter of the
Montana Playwrights Network

MPN News



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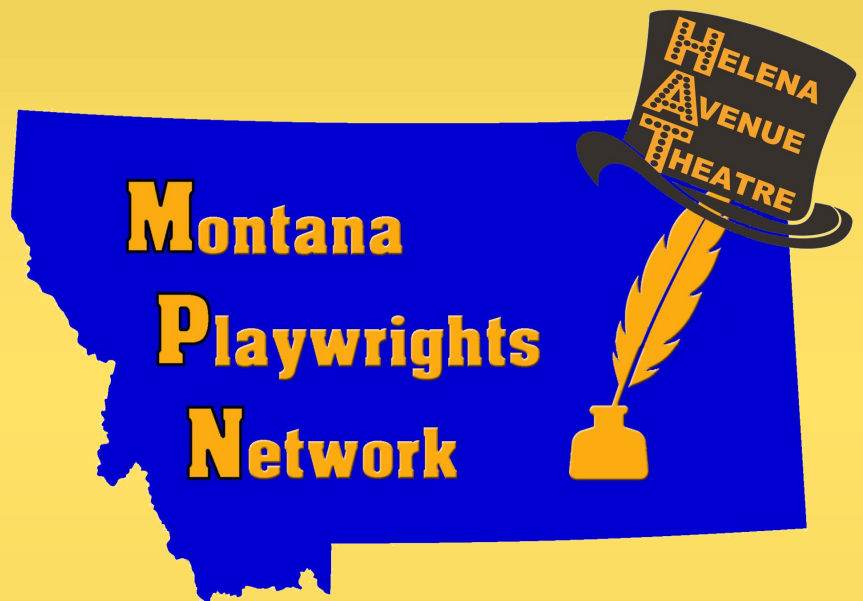
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Inside This Issue:

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Pamela Mencher
MPN President

Greetings from Pamela

It's been awhile since the last issue of MPN News appeared but it doesn't mean that nothing has been happening. It is with great pleasure that I report the long-anticipated opening of MPN's new home, the **Helena Avenue Theatre (HAT)**. After construction delays and negative effects of the pandemic, in September we finally were able to present the Gala Grand Opening of the HAT with a successful production of *Bards of the Big Sky*. Originally planned to be a part of the first **MPN MT Premiere Project** in 2019, this show featured the works of three MPN member playwrights: **Cynthia Webb's *Driver's Ed***, **Jay Kettering's *Flotsam, Jetsam & Bill***, **Montana Fish Story** by yours truly, and original music composed and performed by fellow Bard, **John Hosking**. Produced and directed also by yours truly, the eight performances were well acted by excellent Helena talent, with the HAT's technical capabilities beautifully demonstrated by the show's designers, stage crew and stellar **stage manager, Clare José**.

I also want to acknowledge and extend sincere gratitude for the critical support MPN has received from many **dedicated volunteers, area businesses, organizations, donors, and State and Federal agencies** that made it possible for MPN to continue to grow and thrive in these challenging times. Unfortunately, limited space prevents me from listing them individually here; however, **significant support** from **Humanities Montana** and the **Montana Arts Council** deserve special recognition and gratitude for their timely assistance.

MPN members are working diligently on several projects including the next 3 episodes of our radio series, *Montanans At Work*; housing the *8th Annual Last Chance New Play Festival* at the HAT (November 5-14) produced by **MPN member organization, the Experimental Theatre Cooperative**. We'll be housing a speaker presentation hosted by **World Montana** on **October 28**, and in on **December 3**, MPN will also produce a live show featuring **Native American performers** including **Mike Jetty, Shane Doyle, hip hop artist, "Supaman" Christian Takes Gun Parrish** and other Native humorists.

In winter and fall of 2022, the HAT will host two productions produced by **Raven's Feather Productions** and on February 12, there will be a **music concert** featuring Helena's own **Steven Gores** along with several musicians from Missoula. Other plans for 2022 include a spring **MPN Playwrights Conference** in April. Visit MPN's website: www.montanaplaywrights.org and the **Helena Avenue Theatre's Facebook** page for updates on these events and many more to come.

Montana Playwrights Network 2022-23 MT Premiere Project

The biennial **MPN MT Premiere Project** promotes Montana playwrights in partnership with Montana theatre companies to produce original scripts in full production. Theatre companies rarely risk producing new plays that do not already possess public familiarity because of financial considerations and lack of name recognition. As a result, talented playwrights face formidable challenges in getting their work produced locally and may also be artistically inhibited by not seeing their works in live performance. It is this situation that MPN's MT Premiere Project addresses.

MPN partners with theatre companies around Montana to choose either an original full-length script or a series of one-acts from MPN submissions. Theatre companies in Helena, Havre, Missoula, Lewistown, Billings and Butte have expressed interest in being part of MPN's next MT Premiere Project. For more information, visit the **MPN website** at www.Montanaplaywrights.org.

MPN is pleased to announce that the 2022-23 MT Premiere Project has been awarded a grant from **Montana's Cultural Trust** fund created in section 15-35-108, MCA, and administered by the **Montana Arts Council** on behalf of the Montana Legislature.



If you have questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact Pamela Mencher at montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.

Deadline for Submissions:

Midnight on December 31, 2021



Introducing MPN's new Radio Series:

Montanans At Work!



Recently, MPN created a radio series called, *Montanans At Work!* The series explores and highlights different careers and areas of employment in Montana, and then airs on community and public radio, and some commercial stations around Montana. After airing on radio, MPN also will post episodes on its website. 2021 episodes feature Montana's librarians; game wardens; Humor in Indian Country; and employment associated with western holiday celebrations.

Episode One: *The Montana Librarian* is now available at www.montanaplaywrights.org and is sponsored by Mosaic Architecture & Cluttercountdown.com.

*Montanans At Work! is supported by the
Greater Montana Foundation
and the
William B. Pratt Endowment Fund
through the
Montana Community Foundation.*

Write Radio Scripts!

MPN has been invited to submit radio plays by several community radio stations in Montana. Many short stories can be adapted for radio with minor adjustments to the story. Dialogue heavy stories are easily transformed into great radio plays. Look through your files and see if you have a story that you can adapt to this format and send them to MPN at montanaplaywrights@gmail.com today!



Bards of the Big Sky at the HAT!



Photo: Courtesy of Jay Kettering

Bards of the Big Sky: cast & crew

Helena Avenue Theatre

Opening Night is 9/16/2021



Montana Fish Story
By Pamela Mencher



Driver's Ed
By Cynthia Webb



Cast & Director for
Flotsam, Jetsam & Bill
By Jay Kettering

Post Scripts



Flex your Playwright muscles by doing this Exercise!

1. Think of two people.
2. Choose one of these conflicts:
 - A. One person is late meeting the other.
 - B. One person wants something and the other doesn't understand the request.
 - C. One person is happy to see the other, and the other wishes to avoid the encounter.
3. Write the scene, limiting the number of exchanges to 15 lines of dialogue each, with no line of dialogue being longer than 2 sentences. Avoid run-on sentences with semi-colons or commas. Keep it simple.
4. Use a basic structure of beginning, middle and end in progression of action.
5. Keep it to one location.
6. After writing the scene, then go back in and substitute silence or a one-word response for any 3 lines of dialogue for each character anywhere in the script.

HAPPY WRITING!

- On this back page of MPN News, we'll print any announcements you might like to share with our membership and the general public that highlight writers' news and associated events around Montana.

Send us your information and we'll include it in the next MPN News issue to come out in December, 2021.

- If you want a copy of MPN's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, just send a note to:
montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.
- Share this newsletter with your friends and anyone else who you think might be interested in our events or joining the Network.
- Go to our website to get more information:
www.MontanaPlaywrights.org.

MPN Announcements!

MPN member, Leah Joki's latest work is playing October 16 at the Masquer Theatre in Missoula. For information: <https://grizhub.umt.edu/event/7476526>

The 2022 MPN MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IS NOW UNDER WAY. RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY BY GOING TO THE MPN WEBSITE:
www.montanaplaywrights.org.

MPN Annual Membership Meeting & Writer's Workshop to be held at the HAT in December, 2021. Watch for more information about this annual get-together for members and interested persons. All are welcome.