



# Student State Board

## California State Thespians

### Welcome!

**By Allison Aoun,  
Director of  
Communications**

Happy New Year! Welcome California State Thespians to the 2010-2011 year! The Student State Board (SSB) is so excited to make this year a great one and a fun learning experience for all Thespians. This first edition of the newsletter contains information about California State Thespian Festival, Junior Festival, California Youth in Theater Day, and much more.

If you ever have any questions about Thespians, or Student State Board, or any of our events, we would be more than happy to answer them for you. Our email addresses can be found on the website under "About the Organization" and "Board".

Below are the bios and headshots so that you can get to know your SSB.



SSB at the summer leadership conference.

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### Bios

Hello! I'm Dylan Elhai from Troupe #2129, Claremont High School in Claremont. I am your California Thespian Student State Board President for 2010-2011! I was determined to become a Thespian my first year of high school in 2008. Luckily

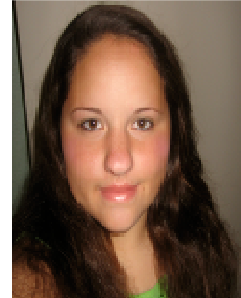
it paid off, in more ways than one. I have attended every California State Thespian Festival during my high school career thus far, gaining new insights on what I can do for my troupe. I have previously organized my troupe's TOTs Eat Canned

Food Drive, helped with troupe registration for State Thespian Festival, aided in my troupe's annual Independence Day and Halloween Night face painting booths, and encouraged many non-Thespians in my high school's theatre department to be-

come a Thespian. I am currently my troupe's President, and am looking forward to everything I can do to help with my troupe this year! Theatre is the community that has opened up the entire world of Thespians to me. My mother is the theatre teacher at my school, as such, my birth interrupted dress rehearsal week of *Peter Pan* (the show must go on---my mom was back in time to see closing night). The first production I performed in was Claremont High School's *Charlotte's Web* in

1999. I can count on two hands the few shows I have performed onstage since. However, my involvement backstage has been monumental. I am very friendly and love talking to new people and learning about others. I am in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at my school, and I am a math geek. I play four instruments and have been involved in music for 10 years. I am on the ComedySportz High School League team at my school. I think one of the coolest

things about me is that I have seven titanium plates in my face.



Hello, my name is Matthew Galligan from Tri-School Theatre Troupe 4566 and I am your 2010-2011 Student State Board Vice President! I first became involved in theatre because I wanted to do something other than lacrosse (which I had played before high school) my freshman year, and before I knew it, I was hooked! By the end of my first year of high school I had already been in two productions, joined ComedySportz High School League, been inducted into the International Thespian Society and was a representative on my school's Thespian board! I LOVE thespians and am looking forward to meeting all of you throughout the year and at California State Festival 2011!



Hello! My name is Leean Gill and I am your Student State Board Treasurer. I am from Tri-School Theatre Troupe 4566 and a senior at Rosary High School. I am excited to be able to begin my second term on state board. I first became involved with Thespians my freshman year and was one of the first of my freshman class to get initiated. Since then I have always been very involved within my troupe and am currently serving as troupe president. I have been doing theater since I was in fourth grade in "Peter Pan" where I premiered as a lost boy. Since then I have performed, directed or teched over 45 shows. I am excited to help make this year a stupendous experience for all Thespians and look forward to meeting you.

Hi everyone! My name is Allison Aoun and I go to the Orange County High School of the Arts (OCHSA), Troupe 6826. I am thrilled to be on the Student State Board this year serving as your Director of Communications. I first got involved in theater when I was four and I did a three-month run of "The King and I" as the king's youngest daughter at the Candlelight Pavilion Dinner Theater. I had to spray my hair black every night but I was hooked! I've been doing professional, college, and community theater ever since. When I started at OCHSA in seventh grade, I was a part of the newly forming Junior Thespian troupe where I ended up serving as President, so this will be my fifth year as part of Thespians. Currently, this is my second year serving as the clerk (points) for our very large troupe as well as my third year as Director of Cemetery Tours (it's really not creepy, ask me about it sometime). I am also a member of our Wild Things troupe that performs children's books in the community, with the goal to inspire a love of books and an interest in performing. I love that Thespians combine service and theater because these are my passions. I have been a Girl Scout for twelve years; my Gold Award project was a free week-long summer theater intensive for girls and has now been held two summers in a row. I look forward to meeting all of you and making this a great year for the Thespians of California!



Hello! My name is Jessica Redmond and I am currently a senior at Sherman E. Burroughs High School, Troupe #1683 in Ridgecrest, California. I love stargazing and storm-watching, eating delicious foods, making up weird voices and laughing at them, traveling, being involved in as much as I can at school, and jokingly telling my troupe director that one day she will be the death of me. I decided I wanted to join theater when I was in middle school. My friends and I started making comedic, quirky videos and posting them on the internet. The next thing we know, people at school are recognizing us and asking us if we're the ones who made those funny videos! It was a blast acting in all those videos and I decided that when I got to high school I was going to join theater, so I signed up for general drama classes when I was a freshman and I absolutely loved it! My sophomore year, I signed up for an advanced acting class and began attending drama club. I took it to the next level my junior year by being elected my troupe's Vice President, taking acting and tech classes, attending my first State Festival, and running for Student State Board. Now in my last year of high school I am my troupe's President and one of your Student State Board Secretaries.



Hello, my name is Geraldine Ramos and I am one of your Jr. Troupe Liaisons. I am from Alhambra High School Troupe # 2524. I first got involved in theater my freshman year of high school because I just happened to have a class available. I ended up falling in love with theater and decided to continue my wonderful journey in the theater program at my school as the president. I am bit quiet but that's only because I don't like to speak aimlessly; I only speak when I have something of slight importance to say. One thing you must know about me: I am a vegetarian. I love shark week and my favorite Pokemon character is Charmander.





I'm Rachael Demendoza from Troupe 1209. I attend Santa Fe High School and am one of your Student State Board Secretaries and one of your Junior Troupe Liaisons. I got involved with theatre my freshman year in high school where I thought the people were really nice and outgoing. It was a positive group and way to spend my time, which really helped me to be more outspoken. Since then I have been constantly involved with my troupe- whether it be on the board with different positions (Vice President, Treasurer, Dramaturg) or attending events with my troupe. When I was little I always saw plays with my family. They always amazed me, especially with story lines that were so realistic (that's what theatre is all about). A funny fact about me is I'm always quoting movie lines like second nature and they're always random.

Hi, my name is Noelle Moore. I am 17 years old and a senior at Salinas High School. I am a proud member of Salinas High Thespian Troupe 501. People sometimes ask me if I did theatre as a child or had planned to be this involved with theatre, and I tell them no to both and the fact that the only reason that I'm involved with theatre is because my friend decided to rock a moustache. When I was a wee eighth grader our teacher had us do parts of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for a class project. My friend and I had to do the death scene between Pyramus and Thisbe from the mechanical's play. We had rehearsed it a thousand times and when the time came to perform it on stage, my friend decided that she would get more into character by drawing on a mustache (she was playing Pyramus) without telling me. So we performed, and me, being the skilled and professional actor that I was, looked down with my last dying breath and collapsed in a fit of giggles at the sight of her "facial hair". We still laugh about that moment to this day, but the point of the story is that at some point during that performance, something lit inside of me that sparked a hunger for performing- a passion to learn more. So the next year I signed up for the beginning acting class at my high school. Needless to say my acting has improved since that fateful day. I've been a member of the International Thespian Society since my freshman year. I was our troupe's historian my sophomore year, and the vice-president my junior year. I'm super excited to be your I'm super excited to be your Student State Board Historian and Northern & Central Representative. I hope to see you at Festival!



Hi, my name is Julianna LaFon and I am a member of Claremont High School's Thespian Troupe 2129. I am one of your Southern Representatives. I started earning Thespian points my freshman year by performing in productions in the musical theatre class and getting involved in set decoration. I continued to sing, dance, act, and paint, eventually being inducted at the end of my sophomore year.



Since then, I've added my talents of stage managing, directing, construction, and improv to my troupe and department. Being involved in theatre hasn't exactly been a family trait, but the one relative who was involved gave me an experience that led me to love the art of performance and production. Theatre has given me a stronghold and family. As a board member, I love to be able to help other Thespians show their love.

Hello everyone! I'm McKenna Warde and I am one of your Southern Reps! I am from Troupe #2527 at the lovely St. Lucy's Priory High School. I have been involved in my school's drama and music program since I was a freshman and I gradually moved up the ranks and began serving on the Drama Board and directing shows my junior year. This year I am honored to be serving as Drama Club President! I have been a Thespian for over a year now and I've also had the pleasure of attending State Festival for the past three years. Well, now that all the formal facts are done with, I CAN BE CRAZY NOW! I painfully tried not to type the phrase "haha" within the beginning of my bio!! My constant laughter can be a problem, but it's what makes me me!!! OH, and exclamation marks!!!!!! Those are SO FUN!!! I use them almost, every other word!!!! I feel like a Chuck Norris joke needs to be in here somewhere: "In the beginning there was nothing...then Chuck Norris round-house-kicked that nothing in the face and said 'Get a job'. That is the story of the universe." I love humor!



## **All-State Act Descriptions**

### **By Matt Galligan, Vice President**

As everyone who attended Summer or Southern Leadership already knows, Act 1 for the All-State show is "Grounded in Reality," and Act 2 is "Dreams Taking Flight". As you begin the search for the perfect audition piece for this amazing production, we invite you to consider the complete descriptions for each act of the show so that you may be able to showcase your talents accordingly. Remember that as you look for your piece, there is no right or wrong piece to choose, as long as it relates to the act themes in some way.

#### **Grounded In Reality:**

The hardships we go through can define who we are, giving us a practical sensibility of life. We become realists, able to see what things are rather than what they were or will be. We transform into the pillars of strength our friends and families need in this fast-paced world in which we live. We are content in our purpose of stability, wanting to make this world the best we can through pure rationality and logic.

#### **Dreams Taking Flight:**

The endless possibilities of the beckoning sky, the world calling to us to reach for the stars and reinvent who we are. It is the starting point of a land of limitless potential. The world is open to us all, finally coming into focus as our blooming identity comes forth. Filled with a renewed innocence, we explore humanity, opening ourselves up to any fleeting thought or passing dream. Living in a world where the ordinary becomes the extraordinary and where nothing can hold us back, we take flight.

## **Leadership and Tech Conferences**

### **By Leean Gill, Treasurer**

Thespians from across California gathered this fall to attend the annual Thespian Leadership Conference. This symposium is designed to train the leaders of our thespians to guide their troupes by learning vital skills such as time management and public relations. In addition, they learn such helpful things as the psychology of a leader and goals/fundraising skills. It was a great experience getting the opportunity to connect and socialize with other troupes as well as to discover new and creative ideas to bring back to our troupes. However, the fun didn't stop

there. Not only was there an advanced leadership conference, to expand upon all the things learned before, but also a technical theater conference. At Advanced Leadership, students could expand their expertise and knowledge of subjects like house management, costume design and more. It was a fantastic day that was well-received by all who participated. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled next year for this fantastic opportunity that you won't want to miss!



## **TOTS-EAT**

**By Noelle Moore, Northern Rep and Historian**

When most people open their doors on Halloween night they expect to be greeted by children requesting candy. What they least expect is teenagers asking for food donations yet scores found themselves in this position this past Halloween. Many troops up and down the state (and all over the country) collected canned and nonperishable foods for this year's Trick-or-Treat-So-Tots-Can-Eat, or Tots-Eat, as it is lovingly referred to. In some areas, TOTSKE is also known as Trick-or-Treat So Kids Can Eat, but whatever the name, it is Thespian service to help the community. For those who don't know, this is a competition of sorts to see which troupe can collect the most cans of food (by the pound), all of which are donated to local food banks. Last year the 280 participating troops raised more than 330,000 pounds of food. Why would these self-respecting teens forfeit precious Halloween loot? "I really enjoyed being able to help other people. It gives you a better feeling than candy," says Alyssa Pappas from Salinas High Troop #501. Collection methods varied from the traditional door-to-door on Halloween night, to month-long food drives. Tri-School Troop #4566 even held a Halloween party with the cost of admission being a few cans of food. Thank you to all the Thespians who participated in this year's Tots-Eat, "Because hunger is a very scary thing."

## **Junior Festival**

**By Geraldine Ramos, Junior Troupe Liason and Rachael Demendoza, Secretary & Junior Troupe Liason**

The sky's the limit at the California State Junior Thespian Festival on Saturday, April 9, 2011. Junior Thespians are invited to join high school Thespians at the Saturday morning All-Festival event, take part in a theater workshop and, new this year, compete with other Junior Thespians in one individual event. Workshops include classes in performing theater, technical theater, and more. Junior Thespians may compete in one of the following: monologues, group scenes, solo musical theater, and duet musical theater. This is a preview to becoming a full-fledged Thespian in high school and participating in all of the activities open to Thespians. This event will provide Junior Thespians with a wonderful opportunity to get feedback on their performances and give them a chance to meet other Thespians from all over the state. We hope to see many junior troupes there!

## **Controversial Shows**

**By Jessica Redmond, Secretary**

Pensively watching and listening, my eyes fill with tears as the show comes to a close. The play: *A Piece of My Heart*, and the story: six female veterans of the Vietnam War. Featuring controversial and heart-wrenching themes, this play, performed by Sherman E. Burroughs High School of Ridgecrest, California, is the perfect example of a high school stepping out of simplicity and touching upon subjects that most do not even like to think about.

The world atmosphere at the time of the Vietnam War resulted in a lack of gratitude and even outward hostility towards returning veterans, both men and women. Since then, a greater understanding and appreciation of our Vets has taken place, but the contributions of women are still not fully acknowledged. *A Piece of My Heart*, written by Shirley Lauro and based on the book *A Piece of My Heart: The Story of 26 American Women Who Served in Vietnam* by Keith Walker, tells the story of six women who voluntarily served in Vietnam: three nurses, one Red Cross girl, one show girl, and one colored military officer. Each woman's story is equally amazing and opens eyes to the truly horrific experience that was the Vietnam War and the effect it had on the women after their return home.

The bravery of the director, Tristan Kratz, in choosing to put such a play on a high school stage shows a new strength in high schools to be able to give their communities plays that contain strong messages and sometimes, adult content. Plays such as these cannot be taken lightly, and therefore require high maturity levels from the performers. Controversial shows are becoming a trend both on Broadway and in high schools. Other shows have created noise and have even been protested by different groups.

## **Broadway Cares, Equity Fights Aids**

**By Julianna LaFon, Southern Rep**

During the 1980s, people across America began to recognize AIDS as a serious and deadly illness. An alarming number of actors died throughout this decade due to AIDS. In October of 1987, the Actors' Equity Association founded Equity Fights AIDS, and in February of 1988, members of The Producers' Group founded Broadway Cares. In May of 1992, these two organizations collaborated to fight their common cause. Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, based out of New York, is a nonprofit organization with a mission to help raise awareness about AIDS, as well as raise money to help those affected by AIDS. The American theatre community has helped BC/EFA raise over \$195 million over the past two decades to help provide essential services for people with AIDS.

The International Thespian Society has adopted Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS as the official charity of the ITS. In the state of California, Thespian troupes fundraise throughout the year for BC/EFA. At the CA State Thespian Festival in April, one check is presented to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS from California State Thespians. California State Thespians raised about \$26,000 at State Festival last year. We are striving to double that amount. It is our job as Thespians to help to raise money and to contribute as much as possible. This is important because we want to help our fellow performers and let them know that we care.

\*Thank you to Taylor Elhai for the background information on BE/EFA

## California Youth in Theater Day

By McKenna Warde, Southern Rep

Congratulations to the Thespians who auditioned to represent California State Thespians at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual CA Youth in Theatre (CYIT) to take place in Sacramento, on March 15, 2011! Thank you to those who took the time to audition and to the sponsors/directors who informed them of the auditions. We auditioned approximately fifty-five Thespians at the Northern and Southern Leadership conferences.

### Honorarium Recipients (alphabetical by school)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Performance Category</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Charris Gabaldon	dance	Burroughs	Tristan Krantz
Hillary Manning	tech presentation	Fremont	Billy Houck
Doris Munoz	song	San Bernardino	Olivia Parker
Julissa Cardenas	monologue	Santa Fe Springs	Alison Johnson
Leean Gill	song	Tri School	Hillary Pearson
Tasha Tormey	song	Tri School	Hillary Pearson
Briana Rapa	monologue	Westmont	Jeff Bengford
Zoe Moran/ Junior Dominguez	duo	Woodcreek	Tom Fearon

Judges also selected the following Student State Board Officers to emcee the California Thespian section of the California Youth in Theatre Day performances:

Dylan Elhai & Julianna LaFon with Tech Presentation  
From Claremont HS (Director: Krista Elhai)

McKenna Warde with a Song  
From St. Lucy's Priory HS (Director: Kim O'Rourke)

## One-Act Festival

By Dylan Elhai, President

The first annual California State Thespian Southern One Act Festival kicked off without a hitch on Saturday, November 13 at Arlington High School in Riverside. Five schools compete, opening with a production of *I Am*, written and directed by Mr. Chuck Kuhn, theatre director at Rancho Cucamonga High School. This creative one-act deals with how commercials, slogans, products and fads impact our individuality. Second on the bill was Orange County High School of the Arts, Troupe #6826, performing *In the Mansion of Billy Roads*, directed by Wendy Tobiska. Three young children discover that they are fathered by a rock star, Billy Roads, who had just passed away. They eventually find friendship and solace with each other. Next up was *Perspective*, performed by Alhambra High School, Troupe #2524. Directed by Emily Coalson, this one-act addresses those who have a mental illness and the way they are perceived. Troupe #2129, Claremont High School, performed *No Show*, a hysterical

25 minute one-act about a high school drama class final. Senior student, Katrina Tran, directed this show with an assistant, junior Dalanee Hester. The final performance, by Notre Dame High School, *The Least Offensive Play in the Whole Darn World*, took first place. Hilarity ensued as the show--an infomercial for the ScriptCleaner5000--progressed.

The judging was done by four well-qualified evaluators: Ms. Gai Jones, Ms. Kim O'Rourke, Ms. Barbara Masters, and Ms. Carla Fallberg. These four lovely ladies came to a unanimous decision concerning first place. For Notre Dame, this means that their performance will be featured main stage at the 2011 California State Thespian Festival at the Ontario Convention Center. First runner-up is *I Am*, from Rancho Cucamonga. For them, if a show from the Northern California Thespian One-Act Festival is not chosen as a first place winner, or if that winner does not attend the Festival, then Rancho Cucamonga gets the second spot main stage at State Festival. The Northern California Thespian One-Act Festival will be held Saturday, January 29, 2011 at Westmont High School in Campbell, California at 8:00 a.m.



Runners-Up from Rancho Cucamonga



OCHSA Actors



Claremont Actors



The 1st place winners from Notre Dame



Alhambra High Actors

Photo Credits: "I Am", "In the Mansion of Billy Roads", "No Show", "Perspective" - Carla Fallberg  
"The Least Offensive Play in the Whole Darn World"- Megan Brown