



# California Educational Theatre

# News

## Meet CETA's New President Amanda Swann



Amanda Swann has just begun her term as President of CETA after having served as its President-Elect. She is the current High School Registrar for the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC).

Amanda has her B.A. in Theatre Arts

from Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA, and her teaching credential from California State University Northridge. A 2004 Bravo Award Finalist, Amanda has been a theatre educator for 15 years, directing numerous productions, entering her students into various festivals, participating in California Youth in Theatre Day (Sacramento), and sponsoring Thespian troupe #578. She is the chair of the Birmingham High School Performing and Visual Arts Academy in Lake Balboa, CA. In 2003, her department was selected by the American High School Theatre Festival to perform at the Fringe Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland. Amanda is also a member of CTA, ETA, and the English Speaking Union.



The CETA Board also welcomes Rozan Gautier, VP Middle Schools and Peter Novak, VP College and University.

CETA South will be actively represented by its new President, Corky Dominguez.



Brad Koepenick, Amanda Swann, Lynn and Paul Beal on the town

## Capitolizing on Theatre

“Three Planks, Two Actors, One Passion”  
(Lope de Vega)

There was a wonderful synergy last month as CETA members gathered for our annual state conference in Sacramento. By mid-morning Thursday, an avid group of theatre educators were in the midst of a technical discussion of sound and lighting issues with the tech personnel of Sacramento Theatre Company and spent the whole day getting an overview of how different theatre facilities such as STC and the Music Circus tackle the same issues using varying approaches and resources. No matter how large or small the facility, the budget, the production, or the pool of talent or resources, everyone in theatre faces similar challenges and benefits from sharing. And that, fellow theatre educators, is what CETA's conference is all about! For that evening, Peggy Shannon, Artistic Director of STC and recipient of our 2006 CETA Professional Artist Award, arranged for all of us to receive generously discounted tickets to *To Kill a Mockingbird* an excellent end to a full and busy day.

The Clarion Hotel was the host for the remainder of our conference events and their small staff worked hard to ensure our needs were met from the moment we manned our registration table before 8 a.m. until we called it a night around 10:30 p.m. As those who attended can attest, we pretty much took over the hotel and though it was definitely a tight squeeze, vendors, presenters and attendees were able to interact closely and connect repeatedly as those Passports to Theatre were signed and everyone moved between sessions and workshop meeting rooms on Friday and Saturday.

In addition, there was a panel on taking shows to international festivals and round tables for private/parochial schools and one for middle school theatre teachers, not to mention our perennial favorite, Living Bibliography.



Karen Green at a Vendor's table getting a Passport signed



Ellen Sell assisting David Krassner at the Passport drawing

The workshops were varied, ranging from Shakespeare, creating documentaries to creating solo performances, movement, melodrama, voice, advocacy tools, acting techniques and technical theatre.

Most everyone enjoyed the variety of vendors and getting those passports signed because not only were there some great offerings for theatre curriculum support but many won great prizes at the vendor drawing on Saturday. The majority of those at the conference missed out when they did not stay to attend our Sunday morning intensive on singing for actors. It was truly a shame so few benefited from this final fun and instructive session.



Getting ready for a workshop



By far and away, the most valuable session by general acclaim was our plenary session on the Block Funding coming from the State. Strategizing for proper use of these funds and accessing these funds for our schools' visual and performing arts programs including our own theatre programs, was naturally of paramount interest. Packets prepared as a result of meetings attended by a coalition representing the professional organizations for the arts and physical education teachers on the receiving end of these funds were handed out to everyone there. When I was President of CETA, I attended (along with Amanda Swann, President-elect, and Nancy Carr from the CDE) meetings to create an information packet for Fine Arts. We saw the session as an opportunity to hear, discuss, and brainstorm, ways for taking the dollars from the state and putting them to effective use. These methods were to educate home districts and school administrations. If you missed our conference and did not get the packet, go online at [cetaweb.org](http://cetaweb.org) and you can download copies for yourself.



In between all these interesting and energizing sessions, we were able to see and share performances from all grade levels. We had middle school students presenting puppet theatre, high school students presenting thought-provoking original scripted text, and college students presenting an entertaining look at Shakespeare's words. Each performance was followed by a workshop in which the groups discussed their process for creating their performance piece and while some of us were inspired to perhaps create a similar production, many were happy to learn that each group was also a touring company and could be booked for school visits if so desired.

Everyone at the conference also had the opportunity to see a show at any one of 13 different Sacramento area theatre companies who donated free tickets to their Saturday night performances!



Brad Koepenick and Elena Villa enjoying Happy Hour

Most unfortunately, only a few people took advantage of those very generous donations of tickets and most of them were released back to the theatres.



Jennifer Casey and Gai Jones at dinner

Friday night, CETA was able to book Sara Sackner to speak about her documentary film, "Class Act." Her speech interspersed with film excerpts was the highlight of the conference. As Sara explained, "the film weaves teacher extraordinaire, Jay W. Jensen's, personal story with the fate of arts education in America today giving us a report card of what lies ahead for America's children." Sara, in her warm and articulate manner, shared how the original intent of a tribute to her high school drama teacher turned into an impassioned call for action.

Following this inspiring speech, everyone was able to relax and have some no-holds barred fun when ComedySportz San Jose took the stage and improvised some madcap moments to finish off the evening.



Ron Martin, Terry Miller, Georgina Spelvin, Sean Klaseus, Clavin Hobbs, Brad Koe, and Georgina's cousin.

As you can tell from reading all that went on, we had a fun-filled, busy, invigorating, semi-exhausting weekend. I hope as you are reading this you are remembering some of the great moments spent together with your colleagues at the conference. And if you didn't go, I hope you see how much you missed out and plan to go for sure next year.

Carol Hovey



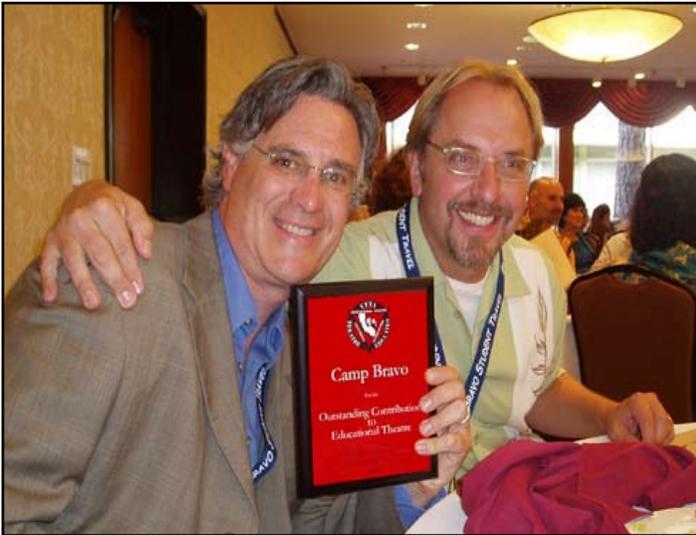
## 26th Annual CETA Awards

The Saturday conference luncheon was devoted to CETA's annual Awards. Each year these highly selective commendations go through a detailed process by a committee approved by the Board. The process begins months before the event, and the membership is requested to submit names of persons or organizations they believe reflect the goals and philosophy of CETA.

This year's committee consisted of Nancy Carr, David Hamilton, Gai Jones, and Maxine Stanoff Lewis. The committee chair was Kaleta Brown. Five awards were presented: CETA Outstanding Contribution to Educational Theatre, the Professional Artist Award, Theatre Leadership Award, Outstanding Administrator Award, and the CETA Medallion for continued service that has been distinguished by leadership, loyalty, contribution, and support.

The following are excerpts from the speeches at the ceremony.

## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL THEATRE



David Krassner and Artur Cybulski of Camp Bravo

### Presented by David Hamilton

While no child left behind has slowly been trying to kill the arts a need was created to integrate kids with the performing arts and to use the performing arts to integrate kids from all levels and backgrounds.

That need was filled in 1995 when David Krassner and Artur Cybulski created Camp Bravo starting with 36 kids. Since then they now have over 400 campers a summer

And this is not your standard summer camp. We're talking eight week-long programs in acting, musical theatre, filmmaking or improvisation. We're talking award-winning instructors working with a curriculum that integrates directly back into the classroom. We're talking master's classes for kids. And all at a price that can connect with low to moderate income families. A one of a kind program integrating theatre (and film) with the human spirit.

Camp Bravo has a 65% return rate and the current generation of counselors are former campers.

And that's not all. One of the great ironies I have experienced as a college theatre teacher is the fact that my high school colleagues have a great depth of training for teaching young people, though they do not often get the breadth of theatre training they would like while those of us who teach college have all the in-depth background of theatre but may not be able to teach our way out of a paper bag.

And Camp Bravo has helped solve that as well with a program for theatre teachers. This is more than the usual conference experience, but the ability to

explore new ideas, learn new skills and come together with other theatre teachers for a four day intensive. It is a "one-of-a-kind" program.

And all this in a beautiful mountain setting as well. Believe me I know something about doing theatre in beautiful mountain settings.

I have to say that we are a little late with this award since Camp Bravo has already received the National Standing Ovation Award from the Educational Theatre Association and the Hall of Fame award from the Californian Thespian Society

But I feel extremely honored to present this award to David and Artur for Camp Bravo.

## THEATRE LEADERSHIP AWARD



Emmett Jacobs with his wife, Dawn

### Presented by Gai Jones

It is my honor to award the Theatre Leadership plaque to Emmett Jacobs. The award is given to recognize a specific event, workshop, authorship, or chairmanship of an event or committee.

Many know Emmett for his voice workshops. Many know Emmett for his hosting at LMU of various CETA board meetings and functions. Many know Emmett for his historical perspective of the history of CETA South and CETA. Many know Emmett for his development of the CETNewspaper, newsletter, e-news online publication and the various forms of which it has taken over the years. Many know Emmett's contribution to the Kennedy Center-American College Theatre Festival.

Emmett was a strong supporter of uniting CETA members from the North and South to make one strong state organization! And he volunteered to edit our first statewide CETN.

He served in various capacities on the Past Presidents Council and always was there to pitch in

and help as Vice Chair and substitute treasurer. Even in partial retirement, Emmett continues to be dedicated to education, his students and colleagues. What you don't know is how Emmett first took part in theatre. Thanks to his wife Dawn, who interviewed him.

"It was the spring semester of my second and last year at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri. I had accumulated so many demerits to work off, that it appeared I would not get off campus until after I graduated. Then one day a notice went up on the call board, that Capt. Sharon, who was also a playwright and English teacher, would be casting and directing a production on campus of the post war hit, *John Loves Mary*. With the notice there was also a comment that the female roles would be played by girls from the local high school! The idea of some female fellowship on my all male campus seemed very appealing.

So this second semester sophomore showed up for auditions for *John Loves Mary* just to see what it might be like. I was cast as John, and we went immediately into rehearsals. The first interesting thing noticed was I (who had stuttered a lot my whole life) didn't stutter when I had someone else's words to say. HmMMM! So I did the play-had a good time-the girls were great fun, etc.

After the dust had settled, Capt. Sharon, who knew several people in the theatre world, said he had written a recommendation for me to D. Franklin Trask who operated the Priscilla Beach Summer Theatre on Cape Cod. In the meantime, as we approached May and graduation, I was given a heads up that I would graduate academically first in my class. Wentworth was in the upper 10% of military schools, and as such, I, the honor graduate, would have an opportunity to take a competitive three days of testing, across the river in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, for an appointment to West Point. Any excuse to get away for a few days was always desirable.

In the meantime, as the honor graduate, I applied for and received a two year tuition free scholarship to Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. At SMU you could enter law school after your junior year and complete the BA and law degree at the same time. I intended to be a lawyer. I had only been back home from the semester's end a few days, when only a week apart I got two notices: first, they wanted me to come do a season at the Priscilla Beach Theatre, and second, the Army requested my appearance midsum-

mer in preparation for entrance to West Point that fall. I spent the summer on Cape Cod, did several shows and was hooked! I did go to SMU, but took general education and theatre classes. The following summer I headed for California and a brand new Theatre Arts Department at UCLA...and as they say, the rest is history."

Emmett is one of the best examples of what a dedicated theatre educator can be. He is a leader of leaders!

I honor Emmett Jacobs for his history, his knowledge, his love and care of the California Educational Theatre Association and his support of theatre educators and college theatre students.

## ADMINISTRATOR AWARD



Cathy Jo Foss with presenter, Amanda Swann

### Amanda Swann, Presenter

Cathy Jo Foss, my assistant principal who costumed my production of *Harvey*...

A woman of many talents, ways and means, Cathy Jo is one of us. She was a drama teacher for over ten years, and she is one of the most inspirational, most productive, and strongest leaders that I have ever known.

When I first met Cathy Jo 11 years ago, she was a top-notch drama teacher at a neighboring high school. Her students were gifted and she spoiled them with theatrical experience, performances, knowledge and passion. We were both running full programs and decided that there had to be a better way: join forces and do it together. After working as sister schools, I finally moved to her school.

Cathy Jo does whatever it takes. With concern

that her principal would not follow through on my job offer, she stepped out of the classroom and has been on a journey that has enabled her to affect far more than her theatre students. She knows of the issues at hand, for students and teachers, and she can support all of them on a different level being an administrator.

Throughout this journey, Cathy Jo has taken board positions in the California Educational Theatre Association, the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California and Camp Bravo.

Cathy Jo is brilliant and works as if things need to happen today, with the understanding that often it takes years: new classes, paid tech support, new seats in the auditorium and, of course, smaller learning communities.

She knows how to communicate, to value each person that she is working with, whether it is her boss, her colleague, her teachers or her students. She listens. And she moves – with power.

Cathy Jo now works at the district level – sharing her expertise of smaller learning communities with over 20 high schools.

I am grateful for her insight... I am honored to have her as a role model – wife, mother, team player, leader, and friend. For all of the work and time that she has given to the world of theatre – and for all that she continues to give... thank you to Cathy Jo Foss.



Carolyn Elder with presenter, Kaleta Brown

**Kaleta Brown, Presenter**

The CETA Medallion goes to those people who have dedicated themselves to our organization. It is for continued service that has been distinguished by leadership, loyalty, contribution, and support. Carolyn

Elder’s career with CETA has been an outstanding example of all of those requisites.

**LEADERSHIP:** Carolyn instituted the CETA, North Board and represented it on the state CETA Board. For the Department of Education at CSU, Sacramento she was the Guest Presenter for a Model Arts Curriculum four years in a row and presented an example of Standards Based Instruction to the California School Board Association. She has served as President of CETA, North and President of CETA.

**LOYALTY:** When she could be sitting on her laurels, she volunteered to replace Jacque Radford as our Executive Treasurer, the only position on the Board that has no specific term. And I must say that she is an excellent treasurer; we can read the reports!

**CONTRIBUTION:** She single-handedly initiated and built the Middle School Fest. It is spreading beyond its northern limits and seems to be the only major project for Northern California. In addition, she has presented workshops at every CETA conference since 1994.

**SUPPORT:** She has represented CETA on the California State Visual and Performing Arts Framework Writing Committee and the Standards Writing Committee. She has also served on the CAAE Board not only as President of CETA but continuing when we could find no one else to attend meetings.

I have known Carolyn for many years. I think I met her around 1993 at a conference. Neither one of us can remember when - it has been sooo many years. . . However, my introduction to her was dramatic. I remember being so impressed with her concerns for theatre education and her forward thinking and outspokenness.

My Presidency of this organization will be best known for the final uniting of the north and south organizations. At CETA’s first Board retreat, a new constitution was written. and Carolyn was an outstanding contributor. Her support, along with a few others, was responsible for what I think was a major step for our professional organization. We now gather as one organization.

Carolyn is one of the most sensitive, compassionate and caring people I know. Let me tell you a little something about her that I think gives insight into her character. She has three dogs - all rescued and abused before she took responsibility for them. The last dog she rescued, Marlowe, is a real case. It is the most nervous and defensive dog I have ever met. Well,

Carolyn not only took him under her wing, she forked out a lot of money for all of them to attend sessions with a doggie psychiatrist. She and her family of dogs still need to attend occasionally but the improvement in Marlowe is incredible. Against the advice of several to put him down, she has saved that little monster.

I tell you this story only to illustrate that Carolyn doesn't operate in our organizations from a political basis; she has no expectations for a personal gain; she does it because she cares; as she cares about her dogs, she cares about the growth of theatre education in California; she cares for her at-risk students at Samuel Jackman Middle School knowing that theater will enrich their souls; she cares about guiding young and inexperienced teachers in the art of theatre instruction.

I could go on forever listing the professional and volunteer work of Carolyn, but I hope you don't think that necessary. What is important is that Carolyn has earned this Medallion because of her unselfish dedication to the improvement of education for the students of theatre in California.

It is my honor to present the CETA Medallion to Carolyn Elder.



**“Starving for Perfection,”  
A Passionate Process of Changing  
Students’ Lives Through Theatre  
Class  
By Gai Jones**



Gai Jones

If any theatre educator has ever had an administrator who said, “Every play must entertain ages 5-95 and have no moral message,” then I welcome you to the world of educating the audience through thought-provoking message driven themed productions or Social Responsibility: Drama and Theatre as a Medium for Positive Social Change.

Over forty years of theatre education, kindergarten through university, I have included within production listings, whether curricular or co-curricular supported, a varied season which includes a variety of

genres, entertainment, and challenges.

A varied annual academic season was assembled with a comedy, drama, musical, children's play, classical, and a contemporary play or a published/original collage based contemporary issues.

In the past years, I have embraced the following titles and/or themes for the contemporary issue productions: Peer Pressure, Teen Suicide, Violence, AIDS and Pediatric Aids.

Published scripts which we have produced include:

*Addict, Alkie, Bang Bang, You're Dead, The Brick and the Rose, Dolls, The Girl in the Mirror, Glimpses, Go Ask Alice, I Just Wanna Tell Somebody, I Never Saw Another Butterfly, Juvie, The Laramie Project, The Lottery, No More Secrets* and William Mastrosimone's new play about teen suicide.

There were thirty-five talented upperclassmen who had been in theatre for three or four years. They wanted to create and produce an original performance based on a relevant topic, eating disorders. Thus began the journey of “Starving for Perfection,” an original collection of monologues, scenes, dances, poetry, songs to be performed for every student during one school day.

Theatre students were filled with passion. How many theatre educators have a classroom filled with laughter and tears daily? Incorporating the emotions into the acting lesson by producing original works empowered the students to find their voices.

Our campus at the time of our process had been rocked by a suicide of a teacher's teen son, the effects of school shootings, and revelations of friends' eating disorders. I approached the administration on the passionate topics; they approved the development of an original collage on eating disorders.

Our goal for the acting ensemble was to create an original collage on an engaging subject matter using collaboration process.

**Discoveries Students Made about Themselves,  
Topic, and Each Other**

The students were inspired and energized because they could relate to the material. They found commonalities of feeling embarrassed about their bodies throughout their adolescence. One discovered that her mother had been hospitalized as a teen for bulimia. Two students revealed that they were working with professionals on their eating disorders. The group was surprised at

the lack of published work about eating disorders for males. There was a plethora of material about celebrities dealing with their press agents stories of their eating disorder experiences.

### Remembrances about the process and production of “Starving for Perfection”

One of our actors who had written an original song dealing with the loss of his girlfriend with an eating disorder, was involved in a deadly car accident before the production. The actors dedicated his song during the performances to him, and each audience took a moment of silence to honor the young man.

An actor who had never danced in public, because she was told by a dance instructor that she was too fat, entered counseling and was able to dance during our performance to a monologue which she had written. The students enlisted her friends and the vocal instructor to write original music for the performance.

Tears of actors during each performance because of their enacting the feelings incorporated in their original work, aided me to teach a new depth of acting after each performance.

There was fear expressed by some actors when time came for the performance of the original collage before their parents. This was the way of communicating to their parents the need of help.

I remember that after the public performance for parents, the counseling staff arranged for private counseling sessions with parents and student actors; parents and student audience members.

On days following the seven class time performances, over twenty-five students made counseling appointments.

I often think of the effect of developing original, emotion-filled material and remember the words of Lope de Vega, playwright, who stated “Give me four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion.” What better way to reach actors and audiences than by integrating passionate topics for productions; ones which stimulate discussions and research by the actors and technicians and talk backs from the audience members for social responsibility.



## A Break for the Arts



Laurie Schell, Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE), greets Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger at the KIPP L.A. Prep school in Los Angeles, Calif., Monday, March 20th. The Governor highlighted his budget proposal, which would provide local school districts with \$100 million to enhance and expand arts education programs. Schell, whose organization has actively petitioned lawmakers to pass this proposal, applauded the Governor’s leadership in recognizing the essential value of visual and performing arts instruction. CAAE is a SupportMusic.com affiliate. SupportMusic.com was launched to provide parents with

# Meet Our Advisory Council

This is the first in a series of articles that introduce to you the members of our Advisory Council.

## Geri Jewell



Geri at Home

Geri Jewell is best known as Cousin Geri on the NBC sitcom, "The Facts of Life." She was the first person with a disability to have a regular role on a prime time series. She began her career doing stand-up comedy at the Comedy Store in 1978. In 1980 she performed at the 2nd Annual Media Access Awards, when she was introduced to Norman Lear by producer, Fern Field.



Geri with Norman Lear



At the Comedy Store

After her ground breaking role on "Facts" she has appeared on such shows as "The Great Space Coaster," the Emmy award winning movie "Two of a Kind," "Sesame Street," "21 Jump Street," "Young and the Restless," "Strong Medicine" and the HBO hit series, "Deadwood."

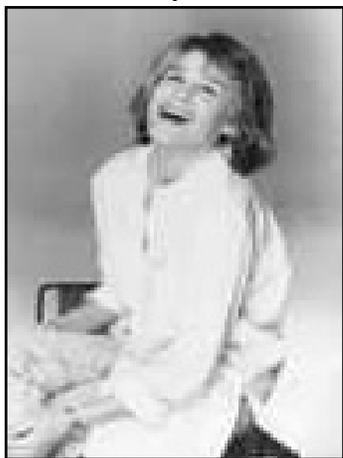
When Geri is not working in television, she is a highly sought after motivational speaker and trainer in the areas of disability and diversity. She has consulted for such companies as Hewlett Packard, Master Foods, Johnson Wax, AT&T, and Amgen. She has also given sensitivity training to such government agencies as The C.I.A., The U.S. Treasury Department, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the U.S. Army.

She is famous for her uncanny ability to captivate the hearts of her audiences by using humor to facilitate attitudinal change. Geri brings to her presentations her personal experiences in life, which in turn allow people to gain insight into the prospect of seeing disability in a totally different light, creating hope where there is none, and joy where there is pain.

In addition to her ongoing speaking circuits, she has never forgotten her roots in comedy. She has appeared on many of the cable comedy shows, including Evening at the Improv on A&E, and Stand Up Spotlight on VHI. She has opened for Paul Anka, Robert Goulet, and Judy Collins. She has been featured on Entertainment Tonight, E Hollywood True Story, and ABC's 20/20.

She is co-starring in a new independent film, "Night of the White Pants" which will be released in 2007.

All in all, Geri has enjoyed a thriving career expanding now over two decades. She has been the recipient of many awards, including the 1992 Founders Award, the 2005 Independent Living Legacy Award, and this year's 2006 Victory award.



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