



# WASHINGTON STATE THESPIANS<sup>SM</sup>

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

## December Newsletter

Dear Theatre Educators and Friends,

I'm looking at my calendar and counting down the days until Winter Break. I continue to count my blessings and long for the days of long rehearsals and student engagement. This is a difficult time, but I'm encouraged by the incredible work happening around our state and country. Directors are still producing work and students continue to show up for class. Some are even turning on their cameras, and many say "thank you" as they head off to complete their online assignments. I'm thinking about what it means to create community and safe/brave spaces through Zoom. I'm wondering if I even attempt to create a virtual musical? So many questions. For right now, I'm living in the moment and planning only a few days ahead rather than months. I remind myself that this is temporary and one day things will be back to a new and hopefully better "normal."

Be encouraged friends! When this pandemic comes to an end, there will be a pent up and desperate desire to return to the stage! Patrons will be longing for a night at the theatre, and our students will be eager to be together in person. I'm confident that this time next year, we will be celebrating a new chapter in high school theatre.

Remember, you are part of a network of theatre educators; and we, Washington Thespians, are here to support you along the way!

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR STO -

Hello my beautiful thespians! 'Tis' The Season and Happy Holidays to you all! Wow! What a whirlwind this last year has been for us all. I hope everyone is staying safe and social distancing everywhere you go! I hope you are all getting ready to prepare for the Thespys coming up in a few months here!! I know everything online is not ideal, but we are in this together and have each other's backs and full support! Stay safe and Have a great holiday with your family!!

### EDTA Thespian Relief Grants - [Informational slideshow](#)

Many schools are struggling to keep their programs alive. Some lost significant revenue from cancelled productions. The Foundation is still raising money for this effort. Thespian Relief Grants are provided by The ETF Thespian Relief program. Two types of grants are offered to assist schools impacted by cancelled productions and budget cuts related to the COVID-19 crisis. Thespian Relief Grants will be offered in cycles through the course of the 2020-21 school year. Grants will be available and distributed monthly, though grant cycles may be longer depending on available funding. If you are in need, please know these resources are available: [apply here](#).

### Monthly Zoom Hangouts

If you'd like to connect with your theatre colleagues throughout the state, we are hosting Zoom Hangouts on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. This is a time to collaborate, share ideas, problem solve, and just enjoy the company of theatre people! As we move further into the year, we may offer specific topics / themes to our gathering. This month's meeting is on Tuesday, December 22 at 7 p.m. A reminder will be sent out beforehand! [Zoom Link](#)

### THE THESPYS ARE COMING! THE THESPYS ARE COMING!

Last week you should have seen an email out with the instructions on registering and submitting for this year's Thespys. In addition to this information, you can find the updated 2020 - 2021 Thespy Program Guide, Summary of Changes for 2020 - 2021, Category Summary Guide, and all Event Rubrics on the Washington Thespian Website <http://www.washingtonstatethespians.com/virtual-thespys-20-21.php>. These documents will help you in your selections.

Here are some tips for your students:

[Technical Theatre Submissions](#)

[Filming your Thespys](#)

To film your selections you will need to follow the National guidelines and the Washington State guidelines for Coronavirus County Safe Start. <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/county-status-and-safe-start-application-process>.

The last date for submission will be February 12, 2021!

## FILM THESPYS

This year, Film Thespys will be submitted with all other Thespys, due by February 12th and submitted through OpenWater. This is different from years' past, so be sure to share this with your students!

Some things you need to know:

- Film Submissions will count toward the 3 events your students may submit for.
- Students can submit for different film categories (for example, submit one "Short Film" and one "Documentary Film"); however, each will count toward the three total Thespy submissions allowed.
- These different categories are identified in the drop-down menu on the registration website.

## EDTA IS EXPLORING A NEW STUDENT MEMBERSHIP MODEL

EdTA is exploring a new student membership model with the goal of reaching students who are not able to be part of a troupe (e.g., home schooled students, students in schools without troupes) while, at the same time, providing a new value-added benefit for current Thespians. The end goal is to help fulfill our mission regarding accessibility to ALL students. Below is a survey designed to collect feedback from a wide range of students. This survey has already been sent to current Thespians. Please share this with your other networks as we try to reach a wide range of non-Thespians to ensure the feedback reflects as many student perspectives as possible.

[World Drama Club Student Survey](#)

## ART focused Professional Development, shared from OSPI -

The Creative Advantage is bringing back Dr. Bre and offering a follow-up workshop, **Pause for Presence II: The Art of Healing-Centered Social Justice**. Below are more details and a link to register. Sign-up and spread the word with your friends- we hope to see you there.

[Pause for Presence II: The Art of Healing-Centered Social Justice](#)

December 15, 4 - 6pm

*Art has the power to heal. At a time when we feel most divided and suspicious of one another, we need one another to reconcile with, and heal from, the compassion deficit accrued from campaigns that weaponized our fears as political arsenal. Now more than ever, we must PAUSE for PRESENCE - and reflect on how trauma impacts both living and learning. In this interactive and experiential workshop, participants will center their own wellness to learn how to apply trauma-informed principles to use art as an agent of healing-centered social justice in education.*

*This workshop is free and open to all educators, teachers, teaching artists, artist and community arts organization staff. Please register here to receive the zoom link. Three (3) Washington State clock hours available for participants.*

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pause-for-presence-ii-the-art-of-healing-centered-social-justice-tickets-130612715147>

## TAA (Teaching Artist Alliance)

If you are looking for any additional support or fun activities/lessons for your students, look no further than the [Teaching Artist Alliance](#).

The TAA is a growing network of highly skilled, vetted, sought-after, experienced teaching artists, who are all qualified specialists in their respective disciplines. TAA teaching artists offer both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Please check out the website for information about what [types of workshops](#) they offer. WA State Thespian board members Suzanne Maguire and Ruben VanKempen are both members of TAA and would be happy to answer other questions you might have!

## Dates of Virtual Events

**Thespys (All regions):** **Deadline February 12, 2021**

**Virtual State Thespian Festival:** March 17 - 20 (More information to come)

## A Note from our Webmaster:

Do you want a photo of your students or one of your productions featured on the WA State Thespians website? The website is undergoing updates often, and we are in need some new photos for each page. We're looking for production photos, photos from troupe meetings or photos from Thespian events. Please send to [sullivanbp@mukilteo.wednet.edu](mailto:sullivanbp@mukilteo.wednet.edu).

Best,  
Bryan

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

We have several ways for you to keep up to date on all our upcoming events. Have you joined our Facebook Page: Washington State Thespians - @washingonthespians?

**WEBSITE** is continually being updated for the 2020 - 2021 school year; we encourage you to see what all we are offering- <http://washingtonstatethespians.com/>

**REMIND** text @wathespiant to 81010 to join the free Washington Thespian text remind system. We will send you reminder texts about upcoming due dates and other helpful reminders throughout the year!

**EdTA COMMUNITY GROUP** just for Washington State Thespian and theatre teachers. You should have received an email from our home office regarding our new communication tool. Please join us in sharing your questions, thoughts, resources, etc. with our Thespian (and theatre educator) community. If you have not been contacted or you need information on how to join, please contact me to get set up.

**UPDATED TROUPE / TEACHER LIST:** [Current Active Troupe List](#) - as of November 8, 2020. This information is taken from our EdTA Data Center. If there is anything incorrect, be sure to check with [membership@schooltheatre.org](mailto:membership@schooltheatre.org).

Truly,

Kristina Cummins  
Co-Director, WA State Thespians

*"When I sit alone in a theatre and gaze into the dark space of its empty stage, I'm frequently seized by fear that this time I won't manage to penetrate it, and I always hope that this fear will never desert me."*

*Josef Svoboda  
Czech Scenic Designer*