

Volume IV Issue 1
March, 2021

www.MontanaPlaywrights.org

The official newsletter of the
Montana Playwrights Network

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MPN News

**Montana
Playwrights
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MPN News Updates!

Announcing MPN's radio series, "Montanans At Work!"

As you know, the Pandemic prohibited MPN from producing public activities since March, 2020, and so we pivoted to meet this challenge by exploring other creative story outlets. In addition to creating a music video in August, 2020, *Putting On the HAT*, MPN members then launched a project for the radio waves and created a series called, "Montanans At Work!".

This unique venture highlights careers and jobs present in Montana, with the pilot featuring librarians and libraries. The half hour show was developed by script writers, Pamela Mencher, Julie Burrows and Janice Jamruszka-Wilson, and is sponsored by Mosaic Architecture of Helena, and ClutterCountdown.com. It includes a thematic music jingle written by MPN member, Jordan Mencher and performed by musician, Jeff Wilson; informative interviews with Montana librarians, Ray Dale and Angie Littlefoot at the Big Horn Library in Hardin, Aaron LaFromboise at the Medicine Springs Library in Browning, and John Finn at the Lewis & Clark Library in Helena; a brief historical perspective of Carnegie libraries in our State; an informative scene that takes place in a library; librarian jokes; and a humorous ballad about a Montana librarian with a super-power.

Producer, Pamela Mencher is currently contacting radio stations around Montana to set up a schedule for airing the pilot in March and April, 2021. The radio schedule will be posted on MPN's website; and in May, the pilot will also be available on MPN's website.

Three more episodes of "Montanans At Work" are in the works: the second will focus on game wardens; the third is a different approach and will be titled, "Montanans At Play", featuring humor in Indian Country; and the fourth will showcase holiday-themed employment. Watch for more information about this ongoing MPN project on our website under the tab: "MPN's Montanans At Work!".

In exploring the world of Montana's radio waves, several opportunities are surfacing. For example, we have discussed possibilities with a station manager who is interested in airing radio plays written by our members! Stay tuned for more information about this member opportunity as it develops.



Exclusively for MPN Members!

**You can still submit your work for script submissions
for the**

2nd MPN Premiere Project:

2021-2023

Continually adjusting to the challenges of the Pandemic, the MPN Board of Directors has once again extended deadlines for script submissions, with the terms for script submissions remaining the same. Now you have until December 15, 2021, to send us your best work. For complete guidelines, go to our website at www.Montanaplaywrights.org.

Participating theatre companies include, but aren't limited to:

**Montana Actors Theatre in Havre
Judith Mountain Players in Lewistown
No-Joke Theatre Company in Missoula
Helena Avenue Theatre in Helena**

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

**Deadline for Submissions:
10:00 p.m. on December 15, 2021**



What's Happening at the HAT!



As we see positive signs that the Pandemic is waning, MPN is booking events at the Helena Avenue Theatre (HAT) for 2021, 2022, and 2023. As long as Covid dwindles we'll continue to fill the schedule, adjusting as needed in response to current circumstances. If you would like to book an event, contact us at montanaplaywrights@gmail.com to reserve your dates!



Visit the HAT Box and help MPN!

We have hundreds of one-of-a-kind items, crafts, antiques and more for sale in our gift shop. All proceeds benefit the Helena Avenue Theatre.

**Join us at our
Open House for the HAT Box
April 10, 1-5 pm**

From Page to Stage: Story Creation Series

Workshop attendance numbers will be limited in May and June in order to practice pandemic safety guidelines. (Size restrictions will ease as circumstances allow.)

\$15 per workshop for MPN Members. \$30 per workshop for all others.

Register for any of the sessions today by sending an email to montanaplaywrights@gmail.com

Workshop 1: Creating Worlds Through Playwriting : May 8: 1 - 4 pm

This session is for beginners and experienced playwrights alike.

Refresh world-building skills and explore fresh and compelling ways to bring your ideas alive on the stage.

Workshop 2: Story Dynamics: Exploring Possibilities: May 15: 1 - 4 pm

This session explores creative writing exercises that apply to nearly any story form.

Workshop 3: Tune in and Write a Radio Play: May 22: 1 - 4 pm

This session introduces participants to writing stories for the radio. It focuses on shaping stories for audio delivery as well as opportunities for your stories to be accepted for radio production.

2021 HAT Events Schedule Preview!

September: HAT's GALA GRAND OPENING: *Bards of the Big Sky*

**November: LAST CHANCE NEW PLAY FESTIVAL:
Experimental Theatre Cooperative**

December: Holiday Celebration for the entire family

MPN Tool Box

for Writers and Storytellers

As MPN enters its 5th year of existence, we continue to explore new ways for the organization to serve our membership and the public. With this in mind, we are adding the **MPN Tool Box for Writers and Storytellers** as a new feature in our quarterly newsletter, *MPN News* to stimulate and inspire our readers and writers.

Writer's Tip One: Stimulate Your Imagination

Think of three persons from your past that you 1)knew well; 2)knew as an acquaintance; 3)knew by reputation or rumor. Write the first ones down that come to mind, without overthinking it and assign them code names.

Then, using person one and person three, have them engage in a transaction; then something goes wrong as they are working on this transaction. Person two must resolve the conflict that ensues.

Write this as a short play, no longer than 5 pages.

Writer's Tip Two: Excerpt from Play Submissions Helper

Have you ever seen a play in which there are two characters who get along well? Who never fight or argue? (Or if they do argue, it's good-natured...aka tepid.)

Notice how boring those scenes usually are? Now compare that with any reality TV show: The characters are over-the-top dramatic. They disagree about everything, they fight all the time, and they do it loudly. If there's a character who loves country music, for example, you can be sure there will be another who hates it. Having so many diametrically opposed people makes for lots of drama. And that's the concept to take to heart here...particularly when you're designing your cast of characters.

Look for any and all sources of conflict you can find. If one character is pro-life, make another pro-choice. If one's a conservative, make another liberal. And so on. Not only does this make it easy to keep the tension high in your scenes--it also gives you a wider spectrum of views you can express, which allows you to explore the subjects in your play more comprehensively.

While you may go through this process in the planning/outlining stage, you can do it anytime. Even if your play is complete, it's still not too late to realize that you could tweak one of your character's views to make the play more interesting. And remember: the more diametrically opposed your characters--and the more staunchly they hold their views--the greater the potential for drama in your play.