



IOWA
THESPIANS™

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

April 2020

Thespians in Action!



Subtitle

Welcome back Thespians!

This April 2020 issue focuses on YOU as thespians. There are so many amazing opportunities that you can take advantage of even during quarantine. This issue features everything from self-improvement, to awesome baking recipes, to life after COVID-19. Enjoy!

How YOU can help:

Start a thespian troupe! In theatre, there are numerous chances to thrive and succeed. Chartering a troupe in the International Thespian Society boosts the opportunity to create a successful and nurturing theatre department at any middle or high school! From state-wide and international festivals to student leadership and so much more, starting a Thespian Troupe at your school is a no-brainer.

The International Thespian Society, or ITS, does a tremendous job at recognizing and encouraging student success in theatre. It has been doing so for over 90 years! With an International Festival and State Chapter Events in nearly every state, students learn more about theatre arts. Theatre educators, current and retired professionals, and members from other schools give more exposure to students at these events. Also, students can watch, participate, and compete with other schools in individual events! Having the ability to have a relationship with member schools strengthens the community within Thespians. Making connections with one another furthermore expands theatrical horizons and experiences.

ITS also motivates students to succeed in theatre, and to continue to throughout their high school career. The journey to the induction ceremony motivates students to get more involved in the theatre world. At induction, students receive physical items such as pins, certificates, and member cards to display a sense of pride. The motivation for getting inducted continues with a point system, which encourages student involvement in theatre.

Furthermore, this honor society provides countless opportunities for leadership growth in theatre. Every school troupe has various officer positions! These responsibilities to help run a troupe help students by allowing them to practice and hone in their leadership skills as a collaborative group. Along with troupe officers, there are State (STO) and International Thespian Officers (ITO). These opportunities allow for leaders to go beyond their own troupe at a state and international level.

The International Thespian Society has given me countless opportunities to grow as a performer and as a leader, both locally and in my state. Through this honor society, I have been educated on theatre and learned skills that I will take with me for the rest of my life. I have accomplished more, met passionate people, and been open to a world that I would not have if I had not joined. This organization keeps me motivated, and has progressed me to become a better leader, actor, and human.

For more information on how to join the International Thespian Society visit www.schooltheatre.org!

-Luis Avalos, STO Advocacy

Staying together during quarantine...

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!

Social distancing has made it hard for many groups and organizations to get work done. Emails, Zoom calls, and Google Hangouts are some of the only options that we have to collaborate. As STOs who live across the state of Iowa, getting together in person to plan is difficult. Now with COVID-19, many of our planned in-person meetings have been canceled. Social distancing is a hurdle, not a barrier in the way of productive, efficient work. The STOs know quite a bit about getting work done while being far away from each other. Since being elected, we have kept in touch via video call, text, or email almost daily. Consistent communication gives us plenty of reminders of our upcoming due dates and helps us keep each other accountable. Here is an inside look into the ways that the Iowa STOs are able to get work done:

- **Due Dates/Calendar:** Goals become attainable when you stick to a schedule!
- **Meeting Minutes:** Notes are taken every time we have a meeting. The notes are useful because everyone is able to go back and look at what we talked about during our meetings. We also include upcoming events, due dates, and announcements within our meeting minutes.
- **To-Do List:** Creating a list helps to keep track of everything that we need to get done individually and as a group.
- **Check-ins:** Sending a quick text, email, or having a simple phone call are all great ways to make sure that the whole group is where they need to be. Since we cannot all be together, we want to verify that everyone has everything that they need and that they are on track to achieve their goals.

You can use these tips within your own drama clubs and to help you stay on top of your schoolwork during these trying times! Remember that communication is key!

-Erica Heislman, STO Secretary

Bettering **YOUR** Community during quarantine:

While we are all currently at home and social distancing, While we are all currently at home and social distancing, it is important for us to think about the silver-linings. We now all have more free time, time with family, time to sleep, and engage in fun hobbies. For me, one of my favorite things to do in quarantine is baking. I love theater and baking, so naturally, the musical Waitress is one of my favorites. It was the first show I ever got to see on Broadway and I was absolutely blown away. In the musical Jenna sings about “What Baking Can Do” and how for her it served as an outlet for her emotions. Regardless of how you are doing in quarantine, baking can be a fun activity to pass the time. So for this month’s newsletter, I decided to share a recipe for an iconic pie from Waitress:

Meet Your Dream Chocolate Cream Pie:

Crust:

- ★ 1 ¾ cups chocolate wafer cookie crumbs (about 36 cookies)
- ★ 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, melted
- ★ 2 ½ teaspoons chili powder (opt. for extra kick)
- ★ ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (opt. for extra kick)

Filling:

- ★ 8 ounces semi-sweet Baking chocolate
- ★ ⅔ cup sugar
- ★ ¼ cup cornstarch
- ★ ½ teaspoon salt
- ★ 4 large egg **yolks**
- ★ 3 cups whole milk

Chocolate whipped cream:

- ★ 1 cup heavy cream
- ★ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ★ ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ★ 3-4 tablespoons cocoa powder

Directions:

- 1. For Crust:** Preheat your oven to 350 F. Either use a food processor, or put cookies in a plastic bag and crush into tiny crumbs. Toss together crumbs, melted butter, and spices in a bowl. Press mixture onto the bottom and up the sides of roughly a 9-½ inch pie pan. Refrigerate for 15 minutes to firm up the butter. Bake the crust in the oven for 10 minutes. Let pan cool while making the filling

2. **For the Filling:** Place the chocolate in a large glass or metal bowl. Whisk together sugar, cornstarch, salt, and egg yolks in a large saucepan. Whisking continuously, add the milk slowly. Bring to a boil on medium heat, stirring with a rubber spatula. Reduce the heat and stir for 2 minutes, or until the filling is very thick. Pass the mixture through a sieve into the bowl of chocolate. Let it stand for 1 minute to start melting the chocolate. Drop-in butter and vanilla and stir until smooth. Carefully pour into pie shell, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to set.
3. **For Topping:** Whisk together cream, vanilla, powdered sugar, and cocoa powder in a large bowl. Use a mixer to beat mixture until it holds firm peaks. It should become a whipped cream consistency. Either pipe cream from a pastry bag onto the pie, after it has set, or use as a topping at your discretion. ‘
4. **Pro Tip:** Listen to the entire waitress soundtrack throughout the process ;)

Happy Baking!!

-Barrett Edwards, STO Communications

In Other News...

Help Needed!

Many essential workers have been working their butts off during this pandemic. If you're anything like me, you've probably felt a little useless during this time. Though we are teenagers and can't fight on the frontlines, there are many things we can do from the safety of our homes to aid others in this difficult time.

1) Write letters: It is so difficult to work at a hospital or other care facility all day. Tell these people how grateful you are for them. You can write a letter addressed "Dear Healthcare Professional" and mail it to your local healthcare facility. This time is also especially tough on those in elderly homes. Most facilities are not allowing any visitors, so these people are extremely lonely. Consider writing notes to elderly people and mailing them to nursing homes and elderly homes in your area. These notes can include poems, artwork, kind words, or whatever your heart desires- after all, we are creative people!

2) Call people: Many people are struggling mentally to get through this time. You can call a friend, relative, or other important person in your life to boost their morale. Even if you haven't spoken to them in years, you will not regret calling. No better time than the present!

3) Donate blood: Many blood centers are very low on blood these days. If you are 16, call your local blood center to schedule an appointment (no walk-ins are allowed). If you aren't 16, encourage a parent, friend, or sibling to donate blood. Make sure you are practicing social

distancing measures, proper hygiene, and wearing a mask when you attend your appointment!

4) Help the environment: While social distancing, consider walking around your neighborhood and picking up litter and properly disposing of it. Since we're all at home much more than usual, we're wasting more energy in our homes; make sure to turn off lights when they aren't needed. I love opening my blinds to let the natural light brighten my workplace or doing my homework on the porch!

5) Donate to the arts: Many community theatres have been forced to cancel their spring and summer seasons and forfeit their annual ticket sales profit. Your help now allows them to continue putting on productions when it is safe to do so. Another donation opportunity is through Broadway Cares at <https://donate.broadwaycares.org/campaign/covid-19-emergency-assistance-fund/c276873> . This organization is famous for their "Equity Fights AIDS" program, but they're also starting an emergency fund for entertainment professionals that are out of work due to the pandemic. Whatever you choose to do during this social distancing period, remember that you are deserving, loved, and world-changing. If even getting out of bed is an accomplishment for you, celebrate it! Keep being passionate and remember the ghost light still shines on, thespians!

-Madeline Murphy, STO Special Projects

Self-Improvement?

How to get up and get moving! In quarantine, it is very difficult to get up everyday and feel motivated, so I decided I would tell you guys some things I've been doing to stay motivated and get things done! Firstly, either the night before or right after I get up I make a to-do list for the day so I know exactly what I want to accomplish. Something that really helps me throughout the day is taking breaks! I'll do some school work or STO work, and then take a break to watch a show, take a walk, paint, etc, and then go back to work. I've also been trying my best to get moving, doing little workouts here and there helps me work through stress and gets my mind off of things for a while. I always encourage myself to try new things throughout the quarantine, like baking (which I'm not very good at), painting, or trying to finally learn the piano. Keeping a planner has also been very helpful so I can remember all of the due dates for my assignments. The world is in such a weird place right now, and I hope with these tips you can feel a sense of normalcy in your day to day life. Stay safe, stay in touch with those you love but cannot physically see, and try your best to stay healthy

-Hannah Wilson, STO Membership

Looking Towards the Future...

Life Beyond COVID-19:

In my family, the topic of conversation at the dinner table is usually CoronaVirus. Although it is important to focus on, we also need to recognize there are other things happening that we can be appreciative of. As much as I wanted to travel to see shows around Iowa, to help lead the Junior Festival, and to attend International Thespian Festival, I am discovering the positives in what I initially thought was all negative. Firstly, shows will still happen in the near-future and so I can set a goal to see twice as many than what I planned on. Along with still being able to see shows, just later than anticipated, ITF is still happening. Even though we can't be on campus, more students will be able to partake in this wonderful week full of theatre, which means more exposure to the arts. Finally, we are doing everything we can to stay safe but still incorporate theatre into our lives. Taking advantage of Zoom to organize an event with your troupe is a great way to keep up with your department.

Along with finding the positives about theatre, there is so much more to be thankful for. In these tough times, families are bonding, there is more time to reflect upon yourselves, and it is easy to find what you really appreciate in life. First off, some parents staying home from work can allow you to bond much more than you would have before because you have a significant amount of time on your hands. Even though there are points where I want to slam my bedroom door on my siblings, this is a fantastic time to spend more time with your brothers and sisters. Along with family bonding, this time can be great for reflecting. By focusing on yourself, you will be able to improve whatever you want with all this time. Finally, I have found that I take my friends for advantage. I miss seeing those wonderful human beings every day even if it was just at school. I have also found that I appreciate the arts and everything they have done for me. Find what you miss and when all this chaos is over, enjoy every moment of it.

Rather than complaining about everything that has been cancelled or postponed, find the good things in life and look beyond Covid-19. I agree, there can be times that you just can't get the negative stuff out of your head but don't push away all the good things because there is still so much in store for your future. Be thankful we still get the opportunity to have an ITF, take advantage of virtual calls so you can keep in touch, spend more time with your family, and find what you appreciate most outside of quarantine.

~Maria Markus, STO Junior Thespians

STO Update:

April was a very busy month for your State Thespian Officers! Throughout the rest of the year, the STO introduced a new social media program targeted at you as Thespians. Be sure that you're following all of our social media profiles because there is TON of awesome stuff that YOU can take part in including Theatre Meme Thursday, where thespians create their own theatre memes and may be featured on the official Iowa Thespians Account! STO Erica Heiselman also introduced a new program called "Thespian Tuesday" where troupe directors can nominate students to be featured on the Iowa Thespians Instagram for all their hard work and dedication to theatre arts.

Along with all the emails and (virtual) meetings, we had not one- but two- ITO candidates from Iowa! STO Erica Heiselman and STO Barrett Edwards both advanced to the second round of candidacy and did an excellent job in their Interviews Monday and Tuesday. Barrett moved on to the final round of candidacy and we are awaiting final results, but we are all hoping for the best!

If you have any questions, feel free to visit the new and improved student board section of the Iowa Thespians website: <http://www.iowathespians.org/studentboard.html> There, you can also find past newsletters or contact information!

-Casey Scott, STO Chair

Tell us about your shows! We have a new form where anyone can send us information and posters for their troupe's productions. Find it at <https://tinyurl.com/iashowform> or posted to our Twitter and Instagram. Of course, you can still Direct Message us on social media about your shows or for any other information you need!

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