



600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

## Candidates for the LTA Board of Governors Election

Monday, June 13, 2022

President:	Frank D. Shutts, II
Governor for Artistic Support:	Beverley Benda
Governor for Building:	Ken Brown
Governor for Development:	Christopher Tomasino
Governor for Education:	Heather Sanderson
Governor for Production:	Hilary Adams
Governor for Public Relations:	Fred C. Lash

### President



**Frank D. Shutts, II:** I joined LTA in 1989 and have been an active member ever since. During those 33 years of membership, I directed 26 main-stage productions; taught many classes; led two “in the steps of Shakespeare” tours to England; designed makeup; served up many double-tech dinners and opening night parties; and served on half of the positions on the Board of Governors including production, education, public relations, seasonal planning, building, and development. In 2006 I received the theater’s outstanding service award.

When LTA was in an economical downward spiral in 2000, I ran for President and was elected. With the board’s support; David Hale’s guidance; and the Trustee’s confidence, we fixed the issues that plagued our theater.

Now, almost twenty-two years later, we face a different crisis. COVID-19 has resulted in three years of deficit budgets. Thankfully, our founders left us a plush nest egg which has sustained us through, what we hope, are the worse years of this pandemic. I believe now we are learning how to create and to produce theater in a COVID-manageable world.

Now it’s time to build back, to hone in on what makes us work and to solidify those elements, to run a more efficient theater, and to welcome all artist and audiences into our fold. Most importantly, we must harvest the

next crop of LTA leaders who not only have a sense of and respect for our rich history but also ideas to carry our beloved theater into its centennial years.

If you would like to ask me anything specific about my positions and platforms and plans, please feel free to send me an email at [fds\\_2@hotmail.com](mailto:fds_2@hotmail.com).

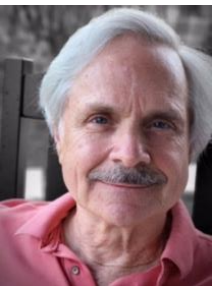
### **Governor for Artistic Support**



**Beverley Benda** has been an active member of LTA since 1985. She has had leading roles in a variety of musicals including *Brigadoon (LTA)*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *HMS Pinafore (LTA)*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man (LTA)*, *Hollywood Pinafore*, *A Grand Night for Singing*, and the first revival of *Call Me Mister*. A private voice teacher and vocal coach, she has taught in the LTA education program since 1985 and been a vocal coach for several shows. She has worked for LTA in Artistic Support (Governor and Costumes Chairman), in Front of House, on the Play Selection Committee, and in set painting. An award-winning costumer, her costumes have appeared in shows such as *The Fantasticks (LTA)*, *Bug, Dirty Blonde*, *Secret Garden (LTA)*, and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers!* A professional singer by

trade, she is retired from The United States Army Band (“Pershing’s Own”) as a vocalist, costumer, and Public Affairs Office NCOIC.

### **Governor for Building**



**Ken Brown:** Ken has lived in Old Town Alexandria for the past 19 years. After a 36-year career as a Director for Giant Food, he has been concentrating on remodeling his 200-year-old historic home and rehabbing his vacation property. While at Giant, Ken was responsible for twelve grocery stores in sales, profitability, store conditions, personnel, public relations and achieving budgetary standards. These skills have helped him successfully be the Governor of Building these past several years.

Ken has been a member of LTA for the past six years and has volunteered to paint and build numerous shows. He was the lead builder for *Red, White and Tuna*, *A Christmas Carol* (2017), (nominated for LTA's award for set construction) and *The Fox on the Fairway*. Ken also designed and built *The Audience*, *The Haunting of Hill House* and *Moonlight and Magnolias*.

Ken is currently the co-Safety Officer and Governor for Building. If reelected as your Governor for Building, Ken is looking forward to collaborating with the other Governors and volunteers to provide a safe workplace, while maintaining and improving the physical appearance and condition of LTA for the theater community of artists, volunteers, and audience members for years to come.

As Governor for Building for the past two years, Ken has concentrated on the safety of our volunteers, members, and guests. During Covid, he has maximized the efficiency of the building filters, limited the room capacities for social distancing and purchased air purifiers for all multi-use rooms. He also schedules and coordinates the sanitizing of LTA and the Academy on a daily basis. Further, Ken updated The Emergency Procedure Manual, created maps for each room detailing location of the nearest fire extinguishers, fire alarm pulls, AED” s, first aid kits and the closest evacuation exits from the building. Ken has been teaching emergency procedures to the producers and stage managers and will continue if reelected. Further, the lobby and hallways have been repainted and he introduced the digital display board to the lobby. In reviewing the contracts of the various trades that we use; Ken dismissed the landscaper for overcharging and the roofer for trying to claim payment for work he did not do. Whenever the alarm company, HVAC technicians or other technical trades are required at the theater, Ken meets with them to get a better understanding of the maintenance issues for which they are responsible.

Ken is a hands-on Governor for Building. He maintains a 24 hour on call state of mind and responds to all issues that occur at the theatre from fire alarms to broken locks. Once the landscaper was dismissed, Ken assumed the role of landscaper and gardener for the theatre grounds.

If reelected, 2022 to 2024, Ken plans to repaint the auditorium and Green Room, power wash the exterior of LTA, improve the landscaping and gardens, and continue to make LTA a safe and welcoming place to volunteer and see great theater.

### Governor for Development



**Christopher Tomasino:** I am running for the Governor for Development. I have the qualifications for this position with my knowledge of theatre; strong attention to detail; strong planning, management, and budgeting skills; and LTA institutional knowledge.

I have been a music director in the Northern Virginia area for over 35 years, and I first became involved with LTA in 1988 as music director for its first production of *Chicago*. Since then, I have music directed 34 shows at LTA and 112 musicals/revues overall. In my non-theatre life, I have been in banking for 38 years.

I have been filling in as the Governor for Development since Frank Shutts was elected president; he nominated me for the position and the BOG approved. In the time I have been in the position, I have worked with the LTA Council and their sub-committee sponsorship program of the Double Tech Dinner, initiated a committee to develop a business plan for LTA, chaired the LTA Budget Committee, and planned the Partners in Art Night (show lottery).

The main responsibilities of the Governor for Production are to assist in helping LTA thrive financially and in its long-term development. Elected to this position will allow me to continue working with the LTA Council's sponsorship program and assist them in finding business partners who can sponsor the Double Tech Dinner, but also to grow the program to include sponsorship of other costs of producing LTA's shows. My election will also allow me to continue the Business Plan Committee work by creating one-, three-, and five-year goals and strategies to help maintain LTA's Mission Statement of "...create[ing] a vibrant, thriving artistic space where our members...can engage in rewarding theatrical experiences that entertain, educate, and build community." Further, as stated in our Vision Statement, help LTA "...evolve for the future", and "continue to operate our own venue, while looking for ways to expand outside our walls." This continued committee work, plus work on the Budget Committee allows me to help LTA meet the main responsibilities of the position and support both Statements.

I thank you for this opportunity and, if elected, I will give 100% of my abilities to the position. I am happy to entertain any questions and can be reached at [ctomasino.lta@gmail.com](mailto:ctomasino.lta@gmail.com).

### Governor for Education



**Heather Sanderson:** All actors remember their first performance. For me it was as a seven-year-old Villager in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. From that time, I've lived and breathed theatre. Whether it was as a teen taking classes and appearing at my local community theatre, as an actress working in the San Francisco Bay Area during my 20s and 30s, or as a mom signing my kids up for LTA classes after we moved to Alexandria in 2001.

In 2002, I started StagePlay, a program for youngsters that introduced children to the world of Shakespeare and the joy of play. In 2011, our beloved Roland Gomez invited me to join the LTA team of teachers. Roland never heard an idea he didn't like and so was open to any and all of the programs I proposed; Shakespeare for kids; classes for the under 5s; teacher

workday workshops; parent night outs; having kids dress up and hand out fliers at Old Town parades; incorporating sample classes into our Open Houses; creating a volunteer program for high school students, collectively known as Student Ambassadors. Mike Baker followed in Roland's footsteps and encouraged me in my ideas and suggestions on how we could grow the Education program at LTA.

When I became the Governor for Education in 2020, the biggest challenge I faced was how to create revenue when we were unable to run in-person classes, and only had a limited number of online classes, which faced competition from all over the country. I increased our online class offerings, hired additional teachers who were willing to run classes with as few as two or three students and sourced alternative online promotional opportunities. These online classes were, as one parent put it, "a nice way to make things feel normal and keep moving forward in life during the chaos."

By the fall of 2020, thanks to Russ Wyland's foresight in appointing Safety Officers, who put into place measures that kept our teachers and students safe, we started running small socially distanced in-person classes. Russ was also instrumental in helping me source funding for those wishing to take a class, but were struggling financially. Since the summer of 2020, LTA's Council has been providing partial scholarships. As a member of The Council, I serve on the Shakespeare Garden Committee, and recognized its value as an outdoor classroom space. It has served us well in this capacity and the outdoor classes that were started during the pandemic have now been permanently added to our class schedule.

As your Governor for Education, my hope is to bring our class and camp sizes back to pre-pandemic levels and resume some of the activities that have been closed off the last two years – interactive Open Houses and public performances by the Student Ambassadors for instance. I'd also like to provide classes at local schools and senior centers, and will continue to explore ways in which we can increase the diversity among our instructors and student body. Above all, I will work to make LTA the go to place in the area for quality adult and youth performing arts classes, camps and workshops.

### **Governor for Production**



**Hilary Adams** - I have been an active member since 2014, served as a producer (Bright Star) and as chair of a standing committee (NextGen).

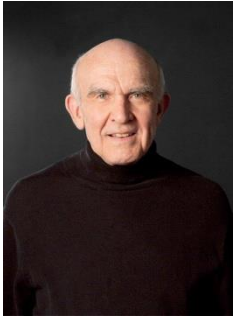
Over the course of my last two productions, I've identified several key areas for improvement, including updates needed for existing manuals and resources for producers, clarification needed for established chains of command, and level of transparency between the Board of Governors and individual productions. I have already taken initiative and updated and expanded the existing Producer's Manual, so producers working on future shows will have more detailed and up-to-date information on the norms, procedures, and expectations associated with their role. Anyone who has met me knows that I am always eager to do more!

As Governor for Production, I will prioritize safety, efficiency, and open communication with each production for the next two years. I have plans to update and organize existing resources for ease of access and use, as well as establish quarterly or at least biannual training seminars for producers and directors new to LTA (or new to producing and directing) so that they will be set up for success. I hope to specifically reach out to, and provide a pathway for, people who are interested in producing at LTA, but may be intimidated by our processes.

It is also my intention to hold all producers, directors, designers, crew, and cast to the LTA Code of Conduct; for too long reports of harassment, favoritism, discrimination, and other inappropriate behavior have gone unchallenged by the theatre's leadership, and I believe as Governor for Production I can help begin the process of making LTA a place where truly *all are welcome*.

LTA has been my home theater since I graduated from college in 2014, and I am eager to step up and shoulder the responsibilities of this Governorship. This community has a tremendous amount of history, but there is so much we must do to ensure our success in the future, and I think I'm the woman for the job.

## Governor for Public Relations



**Fred Lash:** I first became associated with the Little Theatre of Alexandria in 1989, when I decided to audition for a role in its upcoming production of *The Fantasticks*. Having met and worked with such LTA luminaries as Bea Head, Anne Lash, Frank Shutts, and Grace Mechanic, I was destined to be attached at the hip to this organization forever.

I have carried the wonderful feelings of that first experience with me for the past 33 years, always considering LTA my 'home' when it comes to the theatre. To me, LTA has always meant 'community' in the truest sense of the word.

This love of theatre, coupled with a career of more than 40 years as an accredited public relations professional, has compelled me to serve LTA in the best way I know how—as a member of the Board of Governors, heading up the public relations efforts.

I would begin by interviewing several producers, directors, department heads, and long-time LTA actors in order to not only record their experiences, but also seek to gain ideas as to ways that we can better enhance our position as a mainstay in Alexandria and the entire Washington metropolitan area.

It is one thing to produce top quality theatrical productions, and yet another to be a 'social conscience' in an era when generations are tending to drift apart and become socially distant. Bringing people together, especially since we were recently encouraged to separate, will be the hallmark of my duties and I will look forward to the challenge of creating an environment of change at LTA.

For example, I would like to bring in people such as Kathy Ohlhaber, whose passion for the theatre, coupled with her current position in public relations, makes her ideal for membership on our **PR Team**. Kathy, along with others who volunteer at LTA and whose professional work routinely involves website creation and management, strategic communication, and creative design, will form a group to evaluate new and innovative ways to reinvigorate LTA and reinvent the world of community theatre.

Over and above that, I see organizing a **Public Relations Council** for LTA, with members having an interest in not only developing exciting and creative approaches to expanding our sphere of influence and position in the community and theatre region, but also taking a few risks to test these concepts.

To sum it up, I am extremely pleased and thrilled to be in the running for this important position and to serve the Little Theatre of Alexandria even more than I have in the past. I promise to invest my well-known energy, enthusiasm, and extrovert traits to further the best interests of LTA and place it in a position of prominence in Alexandria and beyond.

My professional background includes a career as a Marine officer and then in Public Affairs for the Federal Government, serving in several agencies, Department of Energy; Department of Defense; Department of State; Naval Sea Systems Command; and the National Security Agency.

A Silver Owl member (25 years) of the National Press Club, I have been an accredited member (APR) of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) since 1988. I also served as a senior judge for the annual PRSA Silver Anvil Awards competition during the past ten years. I am currently serving as the Public Affairs Coordinator for the Korean War Veterans Association and Director of Communications for the Iwo Jima Association of America.

I am a frequent contributor to the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Leatherneck* magazines and a source of information for several publications including the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *Marine Corps Times*, and *Foreign Affairs*.

I continue to plan and conduct media and cultural training for senior officials in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security; students in the program management course at the Defense Acquisition University; and officers attending the Marine Corps Command and Staff College