Stratford Tribune

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL GUILD

SPRING 2026

From the TSF Guild President, Sharon Noblit

There is excitement in the air as I am hearing about the upcoming 41st season! Your Guild Board is meeting, planning, and preparing for the company when they arrive from across the U.S. If you stay after a performance to thank the actors, they will be thanking YOU for all that the Guild does. They express to us that they do not receive the warmth, friendliness, and hospitality that TSF provides at any other venue. Each Guild member is making a difference in their lives, just as they do in ours.

The following is what I based my theme on for these two years. As you enjoy Spring Break and perhaps are at a beach, think about this:

Once upon a time, there was an old man walking on the beach. Suddenly, he saw a boy who was reaching down to the beach, picking up something and throwing it into the sea. He continued to approach and asked, "Good morning! May I ask what you are doing?" The young boy paused and replied, "Throwing starfish into the sea." The old man was a little puzzled, and the young boy said, "The tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they will die." The wise man listened and replied, "But, my boy, don't you know this long beach is full of starfish along the way? You can't make a difference!" After hearing this, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the sea, smiling as he said, "It made a difference to this one."

Thank you to each and every Guild member!

Membership Notes from President-Elect, Martha Dalby

We greatly appreciate everyone who has renewed your Guild membership so far this year. (Remember that our membership year runs from Sept. 1–Aug. 31.) As of the beginning of March, the Guild had 601 members, including 40 new folks. Remember that you need to renew or join before May 1 to be listed in the playbill for this summer AND to get the all-important early access to summer ticket sales. By the way, the code for Guild members to order tickets a week before the general public is GUILD41 (all caps, no spaces).

If you haven't yet renewed your Guild membership for this year, please do so soon. You can renew online through the Festival website, texasshakespeare.com. I know that information has also gone out recently about donations to the TSF Foundation; remember that you donate to the Foundation, but you join the Guild, two separate but related organizations working for the same overall good of the Festival but in different ways.

Your membership dues provide the strong foundation on which we can build the structures that make TSF stand out among similar festivals. We provide lots of amenities for TSF company members, including welcome bags, breakfast each day, a noon meal on Sunday, and meals for the changeover crews during the season when there are matinees as well as evening performances — some East Texas hospitality! We also often have a chance to help purchase needed elements for the Festival overall, such as contributions for a new light board in the theater. This year we were able to contribute toward the cost of an assisted listening system for the theater.

YOU, the Guild members, help make these wishes and dreams become realities. Thanks and ever thanks – and remember to sign up for volunteer duties during the season! Watch for more information about what those will be. **The Festival needs YOU!**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Company Activities 2
Calling Volunteers 2
Company Members 2
East Texas Giving Day 2
2026 TSF Season 3
Guild Ticket Sales 3
Before the Curtain Rises 3
Educational Programs 3
Green Group 4
Guild Board 4

Follow the Guild

on &

The TSF Guild is now officially social—on two platforms. Follow the Guild on

Facebook: TexasShakesGuild
or on
X: @TxShakesGuild

We'll be sharing news, photos, and interesting facts that inquiring Festival fans and Guild members might want to know. Follow your Guild today!

Company Activities

by Eileen Kosnik, Co-VP, Events

Spring always brings the new TSF season into view as a bright light on the horizon! The Guild is already at work ordering materials for the welcome bags that will be given to the company when it arrives in May, as well as selecting and ordering the bags themselves. We are also planning the meal that will greet them with a big Texas welcome and offer a hint of the hospitality to come. While the welcome meal is for the company only, you will have the opportunity to meet them on Sundays!

Once the company's dietary needs are known (sometime in May), we will begin asking for volunteers to help provide Sunday meals. Because the campus cafeteria is not open on Sundays, it is the perfect day for the Guild to step in and provide nourishing meals. Volunteers may sign up to bring enough food to feed 20 people. Categories include main dish, side dish, salad, dessert, and bread.

We will keep everyone informed about allergies and other needs and will provide a *SignUpGenius* link as the time approaches. That will give you plenty of time to decide how you would like to help.

Opportunities run from mid-May through late July, so there will be many Sundays to choose from.

It truly takes a village to feed this wonderful group!

TSF Guild Board Members Making a Difference

by Sharon Noblit, President

The Texas Shakespeare Guild Board lost two of our beloved, devoted, and admired charter members since our fall newsletter. Melinda Johnson passed away in December, and Martha Rutherford passed away in January. They were BEST friends and my dear friends. For eight years, from September through July, I rode with the two of them to monthly Guild board meetings, Welcome Dinners, Strike Dinners, Monday Events, Design Presentations, Lunch Bunch Appreciations, and many plays. We will always see them sitting side by side at the Guild Table in the lobby of the Van Cliburn. These ladies made a huge difference in my life.

The families requested that donations be made in their memory to the TSF Foundation.

Calling All Volunteers

by D'Anna Yastrebov. VP House

Come join our TSF Guild House Volunteers this season! TSF has about 40 performances each season, and that requires about 200 volunteer shifts! We need your help!

You can choose between a couple of positions and may sign up for as many dates and times as you would like!

Greeters: arrive at the theatre 45 minutes before the scheduled performance begins.

- Check in at the Guild Table and receive their name tag and stickers to distribute.
- Stand near their assigned building entrance and greet each patron as they come in, offering a sticker as appropriate and answering any questions.

Ushers: dress in a white shirt or blouse and black pants.

- Arrive at the theatre 45 minutes before their scheduled performance begins.
- Check in at the Guild Table and receive their name tag.
- When the house doors open, stand in an assigned area of the theatre and direct patrons to their seats.

How to Sign Up

Look for a sign-up email in May! In that email will be a link to *SignUpGenius*. Click on that link; choose your day, time, and volunteer position; give your contact information, and that's it – you're registered as a volunteer! Before the week of your scheduled shifts, you will receive a reminder email.

Guild House Volunteer positions are fantastic opportunities to set the atmosphere for the afternoon and evening performances and spread excitement about all that TSF does in and for our East Texas community.

Come join us!

April 28, 2026

EastTexasGivingDay.org

Online Giving Opens April 6th

East Texas Giving Day will be happening on Tuesday April 28th. Our goal this year is to raise $10,000. Early giving begins on April 6th .

To donate to TSF, visit:
https://www.easttexasgivingday.org/organization/texasshakespeare-festival
or scan this QR code to go directly to the donation page for East Texas Giving Day.

Guild Member Tickets on Sale—May 1st

As in past seasons, tickets will go on sale one week earlier for the Guild than for the general public. You can purchase online beginning on May 1st using the Guild pre-sale code, which will be: **GUILD41** (all caps, no spaces)

Left: l to r: Sally Beane, TSF Foundation President, Christina Anderson, Meaghan Simpson, Dr. Brenda Kays
Upper: l to r: Dr. Brenda Kays, Sharon Noblit, Guild President

Members of the TSF Foundation Board, Artistic Staff, and Guild gathered on February 3 to honor Dr. Brenda Kays as she approaches her retirement from Kilgore College. During a brief presentation following the Foundation Board meeting, attendees expressed their gratitude for her years of leadership and steadfast support of the Texas Shakespeare Festival.

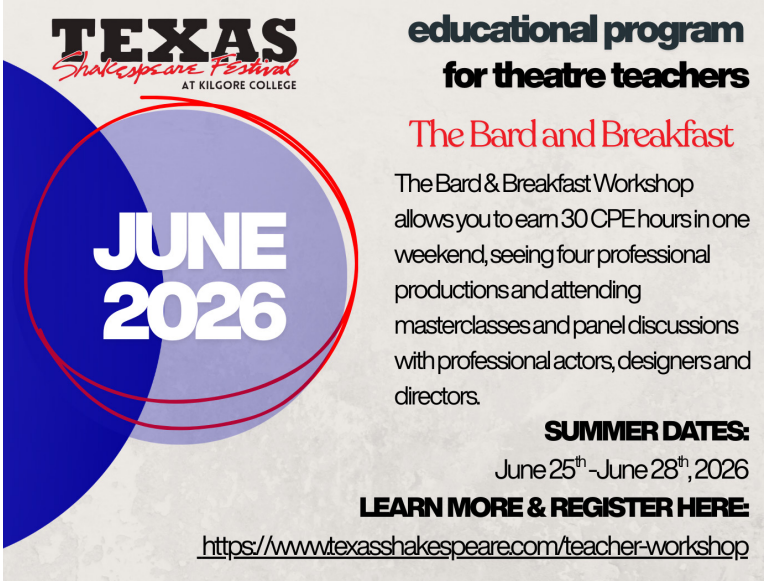
Before the Curtain Rises

Escape into the world of theatre for a continuing education course taking you behind the scenes of the Texas Shakespeare Festival's 2026 season. This 4-session class will take an in-depth look at each of the productions offered in the Festival's upcoming season and pull back the curtain on the inner workings of East Texas' only professional theatre.

Instructors Meaghan Simpson and Matthew Simpson lead classes held on Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. April 7th, 14th, 21st , and 28th. Classes will take place in the TSF Center, with a recorded option available for virtual attendees.

Registration is FREE; however, donations to the TSF Foundation or Raymond Caldwell Endowment Fund are welcome and appreciated. To enroll, visit

www.texasshakespeare.com/before-the-curtain-rises



Join the Green Group—for Three Reasons

If you have not yet joined the "Green Group" by signing up to receive *The Stratford Tribune* newsletter via email rather than through regular postal service, please consider doing it today for three reasons:

(1) it saves the Guild substantial cost in printing and postage;

(2) it allows you to receive a greatly enhanced version of the newsletter, including full-color pictures; and

(3) it includes you on the Festival's email list, which lets you receive more timely notifications of many TSF activities.

And there is a fourth reason, too: it saves trees!

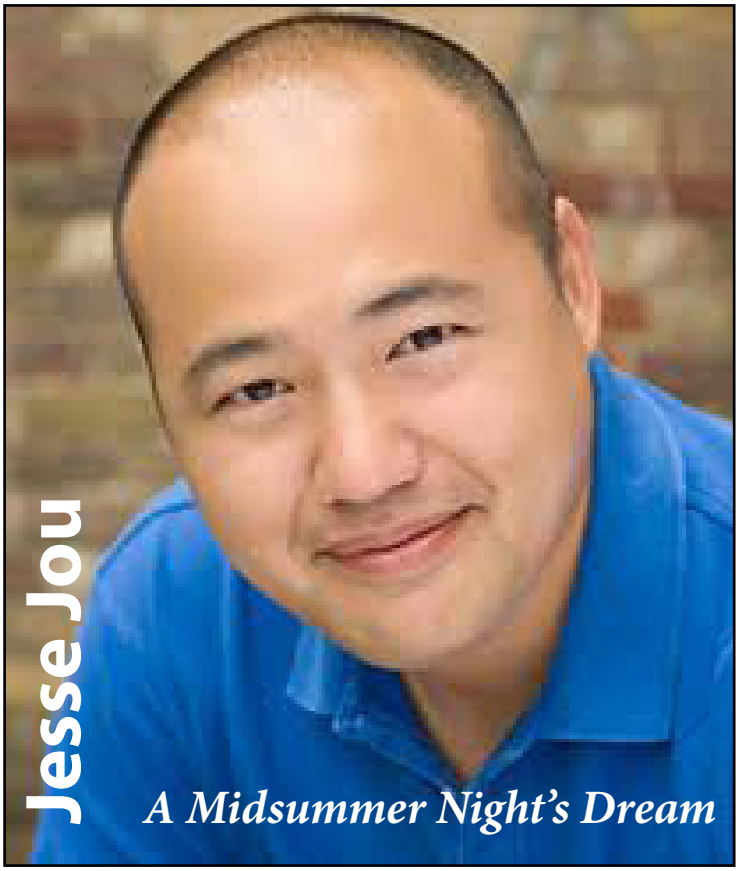
• **Green Group** —You will receive the TSF newsletters via email and occasional correspondence about Festival activities. Examples of these might be information about the Lunch Bunch, TSF Foundation, raffles, and special TSF events. These emails might be informative or request help with events, etc. and will not be excessive. ***We do not share your email address with other entities.***

To join the Green Group, send an email to LEKnouse2020@outlook.com. Please be sure to include your name. Sometimes it is difficult to identify you by your email address.

2026—2027 Executive Board

President	*Sharon Noblit*
President—Elect	*Martha Dalby*
Recording Secretary	*Lana Higginbotham*
Membership Secretary	*Lois Knouse*
Treasurer	*Louise Cochran*
Past President	*Linda Crabtree*
Co–VPs—Events	*Eileen Kosnik*
	Claudia Morgan-Gray
VP—House	*D'Anna Yastrebov*
Co-VPs—Communications	*Kate Wells*
	Michelle Wilder
	Lynn Wells, Graphic Design
TSF Artistic Director	*Meaghan Simpson*
TSF Managing Director	*John Dodd*
TSF Associate Artistic Director/ Director of Development	*Matthew Simpson*

Directors



Directors

Matthew Simpson
Hamlet

Sasha Hildebrand
1776

Jason Richards
The Reluctant Dragon

JUNE 25-JULY 26, 2026
EAST TEXAS' ONLY PROFESSIONAL THEATRE
2026
SEASON 41
Texas Shakespeare Festival
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
EMMA
HAMLET
1776
The Reluctant DRAGON
Dear Jack, Dear Louise
TO LEARN MORE, SCAN THE CODE OR VISIT
WWW.TEXASSHAKESPEARE.COM