

## **C4 PUBLICITY**

### **OVERVIEW OF FESTIVAL COMMITTEE CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

MAIN GOAL:

**GET INFORMATION ABOUT FESTIVALS INTO NEWSPAPERS AND ON TV**

#### **Pre-Festival:**

1. Write news release; send it out 2 to 3 weeks before event. **(See Sample News Release, pages C4–2 thru C4–3; a briefer sample is on page C4–4.)**
  - a. Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Contact Person (you or DTASC President) and Phone number
  - b. Have a lead-in to article (something to catch the reader’s attention)
  - c. Proof read for errors and misinformation
2. Call local papers after you are sure they have received release; ask if they would like to come out and cover Festival.
3. Send news release to TV stations c/o news dept.; follow up with phone call right before event.
4. IF REJECTED:
  - a. Be warm and friendly (often, they might not have room or time to cover event)
  - b. Try again next time

#### **Festival day:**

1. Coordinate with anyone covering the festival.

#### **Post-Festival:**

1. Get cuttings to DTASC historian.
2. Thank those who covered the event. **(See Sample Thank You to Media, page C4–5.)**

**NOTE: A history of DTASC for use in Press Releases is on page C4–6.**

**Sample News Releases, sample Thank You, and DTASC history are available as Word docs on the DTASC CD, in a folder called Publicity.**

**The Word docs may also be downloaded from the DTASC web site. They are in the Handbook section as a file labeled PublicityDocs.zip.**

News Release  
(for immediate release)

What: Drama Teacher Association of Southern California's  
ANNUAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

When: MARCH 6<sup>TH</sup> VARSITY FESTIVAL      MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup> MIDDLE SCHOOL  
FESTIVAL

Where: Birmingham High School      Hale Middle School  
1700 Haynes Street      23830 Califa Street  
Van Nuys, CA      Woodland Hills, CA 91367  
(818) 881-1580      (818) 346-1851

Contact Person:

Senior High—Name and contact information  
Middle School—Name and contact information  
Festival Hosts for DTASC

Background Information:

The Drama Teachers' Association of Southern California began in 1920 and has been holding area-wide festivals since their inception. Each year, students from all over the Southern California area gather to compete. The participants come from 10 counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Kern, San Diego, Imperial, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura.

This year the Shakespeare Festival has a format with three classifications: Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade), Junior Varsity (8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> graders), and Varsity (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders). Approximately 80 schools and about 2000 students will be entered.

POSSIBLE STORY LINES

1. Capture the mood with pictures of the costume competition. Students must research and create authentic costumes.
2. Much has been said about the child "caught in the Middle" in Junior High School/Middle School. Picture the excitement of the students from Hale Middle School (from Woodland Hills) or Stevenson (East L.A.) competing at the Festival. Show that **STUDENTS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE ARE TURNED ON BY THEATRE EDUCATION.**
3. Interview **TEACHERS WHO ATTENDED THE FESTIVAL THEMSELVES.** Jacqueline Young, drama teacher at Hale Middle School, lost at the festival but raised three children who went on to be winners.
4. Many top name **MOVIE OR TV STARS** were trained through festival participation — Shailene Woodley, America Ferrera, Jason Bateman, J.J. Abrams, Sally Fields, Richard

*continued*

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE, PAGE 2**

Dreyfuss, Mare Winningham, Kevin Spacey, and Cuba Gooding Jr. are notable examples. Talk to Roger Graziani, former DTASC President, for a list of celebrities who have participated or judged.

5. Interview individual students and ask them what the drama festival means to them.

6. Or feature winners from your area. First place winners act on the stage at the Festival. A good follow up story is to visit the Salute to the Winners.

**BETTER YET — MAKE YOUR OWN STORY — SEND A CELEBRITY TO JUDGE OR HAND OUT TROPHIES.**

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE**

**Memo**

**To:** MEDIA

**From:** CJ FOSS, PERFORMING ARTS  
818-881-1589 ex 208 messages ext.3208

**cc:** ADMINISTRATION

**Date:** 2/30/97

**Subject:** DTASC SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Birmingham High School will host the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California's **Shakespeare Festival** on March 7, 1998, 8:00 am-7:30 p.m. Participating Valley high schools are Birmingham, Cleveland, Canoga Park, El Camino Real, Granada Hills, Grant, Monroe, Notre Dame Academy, Van Nuys, and Louisville. Over 1200 students from all over Southern California will compete in the all day festival. We would appreciate your assistance in publicizing the success of the event.

Students compete against one another in eight categories: Costumes, Monologues from Hamlet and Taming of the Shrew, Breeches (all female cast), X-Files (scenes with magical elements), Straight Shakespeare (scenes performed in style of Renaissance theatre), scenes from Hamlet and Taming of the Shrew.

Some famous winners from past DTASC festivals include: Val Kilmer, Sally Field, Cuba Gooding Jr., Mare Winningham, Kevin Spacey and Nicholas Cage.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

**SAMPLE THANK YOU TO MEDIA**

March 10, 1998

Dear Daily News Staff,

Thank you for writing such a terrific article on the DTASC Shakespeare Festival, held March 9 at Birmingham High School. The students were so delighted to see their competition get the kind of media attention normally reserved for sports teams. It truly validated their choice to participate in the ARTS!

Thanks!

**C.J. Foss & Amanda Swann**

Co-hosts of the festival at Birmingham High School

## DTASC HISTORY

In 1920, a small group of teachers from area high schools and colleges in Southern California decided to present a Shakespeare Festival. In the years that followed, that small but determined group of educators became a larger and even more determined group. This was the humble beginnings of what is now known as the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC); an organization of over one hundred middle school and high school theatre teachers from as far south as San Diego to as far north as San Luis Obispo and Bakersfield.

If you're unfamiliar with DTASC, then you're unfamiliar with one of the most prestigious educational theatre organizations in the country. Their mission statement says it best: "It is our mission to create a network where theatre educators and students can effectively communicate ideas, share resources, workshop, and showcase their skills. We believe in creating an environment that fosters the best in educational theatre through performance opportunities, diversity and professional adjudication. We support and reward hard work and commitment to the discipline of theatre and education."

The organization, run solely by volunteers, seems to be holding true to that lofty ideal. You be the judge, as here is a brief glimpse at some of DTASC's annual endeavors: The organization: hosts 4 festivals a year, giving some two thousand students from grades 6 through 12 the opportunity to perform before judges hailing from top universities to the professional theatre; hosts workshops for both students and teachers; makes available profit and non-profit opportunities for both students and teachers; delivers to its members Arts in Education Updates; frequently and exuberantly recognizes years of service from dedicated educators as well as dedicated community supporters; offers scholarships to worthy students from within the organization as well as scholarships and grants from outside supporters.

The organization also boasts an impressive list of alumni including Nicholas Cage, Sally Field, Mare Winningham, Kevin Spacey, , Richard Dreyfuss, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Jason Bateman, America Ferrera, Shailene Woodley, and J.J. Abrams.

From 1920 to the Twenty-first century, one has to wonder what that small yet determined group of educators would think some ninety years later. We think they'd be proud.

For more information about the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California, check out their website- [www.dtasc.org](http://www.dtasc.org) or contact the current DTASC president (provide name and contact information).