



KEN BALLENGER – Ken has been performing in the Seattle area for over 30 years. You may have seen him on stage, in commercials, and if you were alert at a few low budget movies, you may have spotted him. He is one of the founding members of The EDGE. In addition to performing he has taught workshops, practices karate, and, now retired, is enjoying life and carving things with a chain saw.



JOHN KENYON ELLIS – John believes in living the improvised life, and is tickled to be back for another season of The EDGE. “Thanks Bainbridge for supporting The EDGE for all these years.” Besides Improv, John has appeared on this stage in *Noises Off*, *Annie*, *Born Yesterday*, *Guys and Dolls*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*, *‘Art’* and *Sylvia*, most recently as Falstaff in *Merry Wives* at Bloedel.



TODD ERLER – Todd is very lucky. He had the good fortune of being trained in the art of improv in the early nineties by some of the Chicagoans who were pioneers in that field. Since then Todd has led two and a half improv groups, taught improv classes, worked with Unexpected Productions in Seattle and now gets to perform with The EDGE. Todd teaches in the amazing Odyssey program for the Bainbridge Island School District and plays Irish pub tunes locally as one half of the duo Rye and Barley. Sometimes Todd is cast in shows at BPA or with Island Theater's library plays. He even gets to direct a show every now and then. At one time Todd was the artistic director of the Jewel Box Theater in Poulsbo and wrote an improv blog called “Improvmantra,” but now he enjoys spending the bulk of his non-working time being Samantha's dad. He is also blessed with an amazing and supportive wife, Alice, whose support allows him to be able to do all these fun and creative things.



CYNTHIA LAIR – Cynthia has worked as an actress in commercials, film, radio, and stage in both New York and in Seattle. She has authored two cookbooks, *Feeding the Whole Family* (currently in its fourth edition) and *Feeding the Young Athlete*. She’s been a professor at Bastyr

University since *Forrest Gump* was released (look it up). Visit *Cookus Interruptus* www.cookus.tv where over 175 short videos feature super good food and improvised antics from her online “family,” Bhama Roget, Matt Smith, and Frank Buxton. All her selves merged to present the Tedx Rainier talk “How to Cut an Onion” which can be seen on YouTube. She claims, “Being in The EDGE balances real and imaginary life for me. With the real part being what happens on stage.”



SUSAN MACPHERSON – Susan started taking Improv classes in the early 1980's as a way to bypass the “Seattle Freeze” (the phenomenon where it is very hard to make friends when new to the city). She improvised her way right past that and went on to be one of the first founding women in Seattle TheatreSports as well as performing with *None of The Above*, *Seattle Improv*, and *Unexpected Productions* for many years before joining The EDGE. For money, she has managed retail stores, had her own line of jewelry for 10 years at Pike Market, been a breakfast chef at an all-treehouse resort owned by the Treehouse Master (Pete Nelson), and finally settled on work she absolutely loves for the last 18 years helping new families as a Postpartum Doula and Certified Baby Sleep Consultant. (Yes, she can get babies to sleep.) Susan is the proud mother of Geo- scientist, Carson, who is going for her Ph.D. in Geo-Hazard Mitigation. In Susan’s non-existent spare time, she can be seen camping in “Primrose”, her 1970-vintage, British caravan.



BHAMA ROGET – Bhama started doing Improv at age 16 when she joined the Improv Troupe at Booker T Washington School of the Arts in Dallas, TX. She moved to Seattle in 1997, and joined BPA’s own troupe, The EDGE in 1999. In addition to Improv, Bhama has been seen in many local and regional theatre productions, on the hit web shows *Cookus Interruptus* (along with fellow Edgers Cynthia Lair and Frank Buxton) and *WRECKED*, for which she received an Indie Series Award for Best Actress in a Comedy. In Los Angeles, Bhama has performed at the Hollywood Improv, MBar, and El Cid, as well as appearing in an episode of *Grey’s Anatomy*. Bhama now splits her time between Seattle and Los Angeles, where she can be seen around town doing Standup Comedy.



ANDREW SHIELDS – Andrew has been called “a musical genius,” “phenomenal,” “immensely talented,” and “an unending source of irritation.” During his Wonder Bread years Andrew was fortunate to study piano under someone who studied under someone who studied under Liszt who studied under Beethoven who studied under Mozart. Andrew has a BA in Music from Stanford, where he won the Undergraduate Prize in Composition. More recently, he wrote the music, lyrics, and script for the original *Reefer Madness: The Musical*, as well as music, lyrics, and (with fellow EDGE member John Ellis) script for the musical *Harry Tracy: A Bainbridge Bandit*. He has music-directed shows at BPA, ACT, Village Theater, Tacoma Actors’ Guild, the Bathhouse Theater, and Second Story Repertory, among others, and played Harold Hill in *The Music Man* and Tito Merelli in *Lend Me a Tenor* at BPA. In his spare time Andrew practices medicine and spends time with his phenomenal wife and two immensely talented daughters.



CHRIS SOLDEVILLA – Chris has done Improv in Boston, L.A. and now performs and teaches on Bainbridge at his acting/improv workshop The Studio (www.chrissoldevilla.com). He has appeared on screen in *Coyote Ugly*, *7th Heaven*, *The Wedding Pact*, *7 Minutes*, and in BPA’s productions of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *True West*, and *The Tempest*. He got acclaim for his roles in *Swinging Hammer’s American Buffalo* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Chris is a horrible procrastinator and when given the deadline to finish this bio, he...



MATTY WHITMAN – A Seattle native, Matty has been performing on stage and doing Improv for over 27 years. He had the pleasure of working with Dina Martina in many of her shows at the Re-Bar, and other shows there too, including *Pirates of Lesbos* and *Deflowered in the Attic*. He was also a core member of

Seattle’s Annex Theatre (*The Women*) and worked with Alice B Theatre (*The Holiday Survival Game Show*). He’s been with The EDGE since the year TWO, and offers up the most outlandish characters and situations to our proceedings, because he is ODD! Matty is also a voice-over talent and has done many character voices for video games. Matty recently began working at the Lake

Burien campus of Navos in early childhood development, and says, “so I get work with kids all day. I get to pick up Legos, print out coloring pages, and basically do improv all day long with the kiddo’s. Really!? It couldn’t be any better or fun. Me working with kids. Who knew?!” Matty would like to dedicate this show to his mom, Ann Whitman who is turning 91 this year. She is a true poet in her own writings, and taught Matty to always be creative. “Thanks Mom! Ok, let’s make up something weird!”



Founding member of The EDGE Improv, Frank Buxton passed peacefully on January 2. He was a steady source of laughter and inspiration at Bainbridge Performing Arts for nearly 25 years and will be sorely missed by BPA’s board, staff, patrons, and community of artisans. His spirit will continue to guide us with humor, humanity, and wisdom.

Frank spent all of his life in the entertainment business in one way or another and celebrated his 70th year (!) of gainful employment in show biz last year. His professional acting debut...by “professional” he means he got paid (\$75.00 a week)...was in summer stock with the legendary Buster Keaton. He produced, wrote, and directed many television series (*The Odd Couple*, *Happy Days*, *Mork and Mindy*) and performed in feature films, TV series and TV movies.

Here at BPA he appeared in *Noises Off*, *Our Town*, *Music Man*, *My Fair Lady*, *You Can’t Take It With You*, *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, *Inspecting Carol*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, and *Twelve Angry Men*.

Many friends have asked us how to make a gift in Frank’s honor. The family has asked us to point people to the organizations Frank cherished most: [Bainbridge Performing Arts](#), [Port Townsend Film Festival](#), [San Francisco Silent Film Festival](#), and [Bainbridge Island Museum of Art](#).

[The Hot Dog! Fund](#), founded by Frank Buxton and Cynthia Sears, is held at the Bainbridge Community Foundation and benefits the artistic and capital excellence of Bainbridge Performing Arts. For more information, visit [Bainbridge Community Foundation](#).