

**Susan Gilfert** has always enjoyed live theater. Since she saw her first staged show as an elementary school student, she has been fascinated by the actors on stage, the words they say, the movement/dance the actors use, the sets, costumes, lights, and the energy of all the community people involved in the production. She has always seen amateur theater as a link within the community.

Susan graduated from Athens High School and earned a couple of degrees from Ohio University. She left Athens for Japan in 1983 and spent most of her working life overseas. She was involved in offstage work (box office, backstage, and direction) with amateur theater production companies when she was overseas, and noticed again how involved her local community was in the productions. She returned to Athens in 2014 as a caretaker for her mother, but otherwise unconnected to Athens. While she was looking for a way to reconnect with her community, she was invited to apply to be on the Board of Directors for OVST. Her application was accepted, and she has been proud to support the organization since that time.

Susan believes that OVST has grown to be an important part of local summers. Among other roles, OVST has cut a path for other local theater companies and helped the Athens community understand the vital role that theater can play in everyday lives. She is delighted to know that this small community supports several theater companies including OVST, ABC Players, Brick Monkey, Genesis Theater Project, Misfits Theater and summer arts programs in Nelsonville (Circle Round the Square) using theater as a principal medium for the participants. Hooray for local theater!