

Mississippi Theatre Association  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Columbus Area Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Columbus, MS  
July 7, 2012

Attendance: Stephen Cunetto, Suz Allmon, Tom Hardy, Myra Byrnes, Carol Byrnes, Thomas La Foe, Ian Tubman, Joe Frost, Janice Weaver, MJ Etua, William Rester, Shane Cole

Nancy Carpenter, Executive Director of the Columbus Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, welcomed MTA to Columbus. She brought to our attention several interesting facts concerning this “distinctive destination.”

Tom made a motion to accept the minutes as amended and dispense with the reading. The motion was seconded by Bill. Motion passed.

#### Treasurer’s Report

- Cunetto reported that the General Checking account has \$13,641.98.
- CREATE Fund has \$7,447 but need \$25,000  
Match every \$2 we raise give \$1
- We have received Operating Grant from MAC for FY 2013. We got \$8,600 which is less than last year. Funding decreasing each year.
- Need to look at fund-raisers or raising fees. Nancy Carpenter working on Columbus hotels. Could get monetary donation from Visitors Bureau.

#### Old Business

- Scholarship Committee – In the past the committee included Tom Hardy, Janice Weaver and Lee Dempsey. Tom gave report. Those wanting scholarship should put in online application, go to Thursday night audition. Tech scholarship comes from entering Tech IE. Committee makes list of ranking. Scholarship given at banquet. \$250/semester for 4 years or 8 semesters. Language may need to be changed. Tom H. is drafting a procedures document for the committee. Treasurer needs to oversee committee. Myra will take Tom’s place on committee, ask current members if they want to stay on the committee and seek additional members. Encourage people to donate for Silent Auction.
  - Motion made by Suz that if a school has someone auditioning for the scholarship, they should bring an item for the Silent Auction.
  - Carol Byrnes seconded
  - Motion passed
- Handbook Review
  - Individual Events – Group Musical – (see attachment) Suz stated those participating must bring their own CD player. Also, if schools were allowed more entries in IEs, could

raise more money. Schools will have to provide judges if they have 3 or 4 entries in an IE.

- Bill made motion that a student can only be in 2 IEs but a school can have as many as 4 registered per IE event. This increases the number of students that can enter each category for each school from 2 to 4.
- Shane seconded the motion.
- Motion passed.
- Shane made a motion that we have one judge per eight entries in each IE.
  - Tom seconded the motion.
  - Motion passed.
- Shane made a motion that scripts for original scene performance in IE must be emailed before MTA when registering for the event. This will assist in ensuring that the scenes are original.
  - Thomas seconded.
  - Motion passed.
- 10-Minute Festival – Carol suggested all participants meet earlier Friday afternoon; then writers start by 5 p.m. to ensure earlier finish of writing. She also suggested as schools register to participate, that they register a chaperone from their school to supervise their students.
- Carol made a motion to change point two under ‘Duties of Writers’ that states “writers will choose first if they will write a comedy or a drama,” to “the Chair will provide the writers a theme each year.”
  - Bill seconded.
  - Motion passed.
  - Re: Props and Costumes. Carol suggested schools should bring these items to the first Friday meeting and drop them off at a central location for use in this Festival.
- Secondary –MJ - To clarify definition of ‘Non-school groups’ MJ submitted

“Non-school groups will include all community based programs with students in grades 9-12 or the equivalent. They may include home school students as well as students enrolled in a traditional high school, charter, or magnet school. Non-school Student Groups will be eligible for all awards EXCEPT Distinguished Play Award and are not eligible to advance to MTA State Festival. A student can only compete in one school show.”

- Playwriting – Janice asked for the monetary awards to be clarified.
- Community - Thomas believes the Division Chairs who have a show in competition should not be assigned to adjudicators. Once the festival starts, the Division Chair that is not competing is in charge of getting adjudicators back and forth. They can be present in the room during the initial discussion about rules and during the deliberation of awards as long as they do not have a vested interest in a production. Due to their schedules, they will not to eat meals with them.

- Ian made a motion that the Community Division All-Star Cast should include a minimum of one award per show participant.
  - Thomas seconded.
  - Motion passed.
  
- South Festival Report
 

Tom reported that the South Festival will be held at William Carey Dec. 7 & 8. It will be co-hosted by USM and William Carey. Andrea Palmer will handle registration at Thomas Hall. USM will be responsible for any financial shortfalls. William Carey Staff will combine with USM Staff for support.
  
- Suz reported that a dinner was given by Tom Hardy for David Stellhorn who has resigned from USM to assume a position in NY. David has been the technical director for the High School Drama Festival and has been incredible to work with over the years. He was presented a plaque to honor his commitment to the South Festival.
  
- Theatre Workshop
 

MJ and Thomas La Foe supplied a printout of a tentative schedule for the MTA Workshop to be held October 5-6.
  
- 2014 Festival
 

Stephen announced Ian is working with officials in Vicksburg to be able to hold the 2014 Festival in Vicksburg. Ian described some of the sites that would be available for use.

## New Business

## Division Reports

- Playwriting Committee – Janice is actively promoting playwriting. Will recommend opening statements for youth, introducing one a week to stimulate creativity. Beth will give Playwriting Workshop at MTA. They want to bring the staged reading back to a Reader’s Theatre instead of blocking and staging.
- College/Univ. – Tim and Ryan were absent
- SETC State Audition – Joe had nothing new to report.
- Community – Thomas is working on Workshop. Updating list to get good contacts with all community theatres.
- Professional Div. – Chris was absent
- Individual Events – Already covered
- Theatre for Youth – Daisha was absent
- Secondary – MJ and Janice – Discussion was held about number of schools allowed to advance to MTA from each festival. Janice made a motion that in the Secondary Division, the minimum

of three schools advancing to MTA should be changed to a minimum of four schools and a maximum of five schools, depending on ratio.

- Suz seconded.
- Motion passed
- Thomas and MJ discussed the possibility of creating a new division that would accommodate groups that don't fall into either division. Those in this division could compete but not advance. Suggestion was made to have a preliminary interest workshop at the October workshop to discover how this division should be created.
- Tour of MTA 2013 Site led by Bronwyn Teague. Group toured Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau, Cromwell Theatre, Whitfield Auditorium, Cochran Hall, the Cafeteria, and Starke Rec Center Gym.

At the conclusion of the tour and discussion, the meeting was adjourned.