

Mississippi Theatre Association
Board of Directors Meeting
New Stage Theatre
Jackson, MS

May 15, 2009

Members Present: Allison Stafford, Deborah Craig, Judy Myers, Francine Reynolds, Limeul Eubanks, Barbara Smith, Jennifer Amos, Dex Edwards, Juniper Wallace, Ken McDade, Tom Hardy, Stephen Cunetto, Stacy Howell, Tom Booth, Rhona Justice Malloy, Kevin Malloy

The meeting began at 7 pm.

Howell welcomed everyone and thanked them for giving their weekend for MTA. She explained that the Board will meet Friday evening to discuss association business and on Saturday we will work with Holly Wagner on our long range/strategic plan.

Howell explained the role of the Board and the Officers and further explained the need for each division chair and vice chair to take ownership of their division. She noted that MTA has made great strides over the past several years and that is greatly due to the work of the Board. She reminded everyone to keep in mind that as Board members they have a responsibility to the organization and when they are in that leadership role they need to be thinking in terms of "what is best for the organization" as opposed to individual theatres. She reminded everyone that the Board can only move forward to further its mission if we all work together and that it is imperative to the organization to continue to foster new leaders and to foster a love of theatre throughout the state.

Stephen Cunetto and Tom Hardy presented the Treasurer's report. Cunetto explained that he prepares the report and Tom reviews the information for accountability purposes. He also noted that checks are typically signed by both Tom and Stephen and that the bank statement goes to Tom first for review and then forwarded to Stephen for reconciliation. This ensures that all funds are being handled appropriately. Cunetto noted that we had submitted our final reports for the MAC mini and operating grants and received the \$500 final payment for the mini grant but that we had not received final payment for the operating grant.

Old Business:

Howell reported on MTA's participation the MS Arts Commission's Day at the Capitol. She noted that we had a booth setup with a video, programs from MTA and member theatres, etc. Although this was our first time to formally participate MTA had several officers attended. They each greeted people in the rotunda and talked with their legislators. The group thought this was a positive move and should continue in the future.

Limeul Eubanks, Mississippi Department of Education, Visual and Performing Arts Specialist, talked with the group about the Mississippi Department of Education's role of working with the

theatre framework. Limeul noted that he would like for us to be a part of the framework re-write which will happen in 2010. We will be able to appoint someone from MTA to serve on this committee. Limeul talked at length about the need for lesson plans that integrate the arts into other curriculum as well as lesson plans for theatre.

Limeul also serves on the MAAE Board and encouraged membership in MAAE and encouraged the Board to nominate high school teachers for MAAE awards.

Limeul also provided a list of schools that offer any theatre course. This can be used to identify which schools or districts are not teaching theatre. This could be used by the secondary division as a means of targeting those schools to encourage them to start theatre courses or programs.

Grants: Stephen reported that there were two grants which have been submitted to the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC). We submitted a \$14,000 request through the Operating Grant program. We will not know how much we are awarded until July. He also mentioned that we can apply for the Arts Reinvestment Initiative Grant through the MAC. The deadline is July 10, 2009 and focuses on retaining jobs. The maximum we can request is \$7,500.

New Business

Stacy talked about the Long Range Planning that will take place on Saturday. She reminded everyone that we contracted with Holly Wagner 5 years ago to assist us with this process. We are fortunate to have her back to do this for us again. The Long Range Planning will assist us with our plans for the future and help us make plans for future growth.

Tom Booth, as SETC State Representative, reported on the discussion held with the community theatre division of SETC regarding the question as to whether 2 shows from each state would be sent forward from state festivals to SETC.

A report was given on the number of Town Hall Meetings which have been held throughout the state in the past year. The next Town Hall Meeting will be held in Picayune, MS.

Debbie Craig noted that she would contact Christopher Flynn who is the new director at SW MS Community College and encourage him to attend the Town Hall Meeting as well.

Stephen presented his annual report to the group and discussed some of the information found within the document. It was announced that the IRS form has been filed and mailed.

Tom Booth made a motion to add an option to allow people to opt-in to receiving the newsletter online rather than in print in order to reduce costs. Kenneth McDade seconded the motion. The motion passed.

It was announced that an invitation to host the 2010 MTA Festival has been extended to the Tupelo Community Theatre (TCT). The TCT Board will vote to accept or reject the invitation on Monday May 18th.

Discussion was held regarding appropriate Adjudicators for MTA festival. A list will be generated and presented by Suz/Tom at the July 18th meeting.

The MTA Playwriting competition was discussed. The call for new script submissions will be on the website soon.

For purposes of competitions "youth" is described as under 18 years of age, anyone over 18 is considered an adult.

Francine Reynolds of New Stage announced that New Stage would be hosting a Mississippi Theatre Night with discount tickets available to its upcoming production of SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ. She also discussed "Poetry Out Loud." Francine also discussed the feedback given by the professional theatre division of SETC regarding trends in the auditions held each year at SETC conference.

In a discussion from the College and University Division, it was noted that Alcorn, JSU, Valley have rarely, if ever, participated or associated with American College Theatre Festival. A pledge was made to reach out to these schools and encourage their involvement.

Allison Stafford discussed the process of running the state-wide SETC auditions, and specifically mentioned the process of selecting adjudicators for the Mississippi auditions.

Kenneth talked about the Community Theatre Division and noted that he was working on the Community Theatre Workshop and hoped to include some of the uses of Web 2.0 technologies to engage users and to talk about how they are being used in community theatres around the state.

Chris Wooten reported on the success of the Individual Events at the MTA Festival. Specific topics included: the change of ballot process, changed process of some events, the need for forms to be submitted on-time, the increase in the number of participants, and a discussion of the validity of I.E. for adults

Deborah Craig reported on the Theatre for Youth Festival. She introduced the idea of intermingling the Theatre for Youth Festival and the High School Festival as opposed to High School and Community Theatre. This was not acted upon.

Juniper reported on the Secondary Committee findings. She noted that it was hard to get participation in this round of discussions.

The Secondary Ad Hoc Committee made the following recommendations to the MTA board on May 15, 2009

1. Keep the existing north/south lines until the regions stay consistent at 17 for 2-3 years
2. Use a ratio system to determine # of advancing schools
3. Set ratio at 1:3 schools
4. Set minimum of advancing schools at 3
5. Request judges take the top schools based on the natural score break.
6. Instill a "drop fee" for schools that drop after the entry deadline. *Was suggested that schools are required to pay a minimum deposit with registration. Deposit will not be refunded if dropped after entry deadline.*

Tom Booth made motion to accept recommendations on Ad-Hoc Committee (get wording from Juniper) Allison Stafford seconded the motion. Discussion was held and the motion passed.

There was continued discussion of adding a third region in oxford (point made was that the northwest part of the state has had a population boom and this venue would make it easier for northwest schools to participate). This discussion can be brought to the committee.

Juniper noted that everyone seemed to like having most of the secondary plays on Friday. She acknowledged that it worked but it was difficult.

The group discussed possibly developing a list of tech do's and don'ts for host theatre. (Expectations)

USM and MSU have notified MTA that they have a cap of 17 schools participating. Understanding the need for the limitation and the fear of cutting off individuals, MTA will continue to monitor this situation.

There was a discussion of the "10 minute play" competition at the last MTA. The issue that arose was that students in 10 Minute Play should not participate in other competitive events at the Festival.

Submitted by Peppy Bidy, Secretary