**MINUTES OF THE**

**LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING**

**Louisiana State Library**

**Baton Rouge, LA**

**Friday, January 6, 2023**

**1 PM**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Ray Berthelot, Conni Castille, Brian Davis, Teresa Parker, Herman Fuselier, Susannah Johannsen, Karen Leathem, Rachel Ornelas, Shane Rasmussen, Miranda Restovic, Susan Roach, Mona Lisa Saloy, John Sharp.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Sharon Calcote, Krystal Cox, Rebecca Hamilton, Tommy Ike Hailey, Jim Hogg, John Silver, Maegen Smith, Kim Walden

**Guests and Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present:** Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts; Susan Rasmussen.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Teresa Parker opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:07 pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes for the meeting of June 7, 2022 was accepted. Brian Davis moved, and Susan Roach seconded.

**III. REPORTS**

1. **LDOA Budget Report – Susannah Johannsen**

Johannsen reported that the LDOA budget will be very similar to the past year. LDOA was able to give $50,000 to the Louisiana Folklore Society to support the Bayou Culture Collaborative in addition to $64,000 to support two years of Passing It On workshops and Sense of Place—and Loss workshops. A folklife archivist will be hired as a temporary position. Leea Russell was hired as the new Arts and Education and Arts Accessibility staff person

C**. Director’s Report – Maida Owens**

Owens directed commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda and noted that the Bayou Culture Collaborative’s Passing It On workshops continue to focus on cultural groups and coastal areas that have not previously been funded and on traditions that are more highly endangered. The Sense of Place—and Loss workshops will continue to focus on helping local efforts in addition to addressing climate migration issues at national meetings. She presented at the American Folklore Society and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in the fall. These workshops address changes happening in the population, including Louisiana’s, which is in decline. Miranda Restovic asked whether it is known why people are leaving the state and whether it may be due to climate issues. Owens said that weather and climate had historically not been factors, and although it could be changing, she is not aware of any studies seeking to determine what is prompting current population movement.

Owens noted that Main Street America has asked her to contribute to FEMA’s new community toolkit with resources she has identified for the Sense of Place—and Loss workshops.

Restovic commended Owens’ speaking engagements in the fall. Owens noted that she has received queries from several state arts agencies about speaking to their constituencies, but nothing is confirmed at this point.

**IV. BUSINESS**

1. **Folklife Month 2022, 2023 – Teresa Parker**

Parker referred to the Folklife Month report in the Director's report for the 2022 events. She thanked Miranda Restovic for LEH’s support, including honoraria for tradition bearers and coverage in *64 Parishes*. Parker invited 2022 Folklife Ambassadors to share their experiences. Shane Rasmussen, Mona Lisa Saloy, John Sharp, and Herman Fuselier reported successful events.

Parker asked who on the commission may want to serve as an ambassador in 2023. Conni Castille, John Sharp/Herman Fuselier, Shane Rasmussen, Brian Davis, Susan Roach, and Mona Lisa Saloy, and Rachel Ornelas would like to consider serving as ambassadors. Owens will ask commissioners not in attendance about their interest and then follow up with everyone. [Note: Tommy Ike Hailey would like to serve.] If fewer than six commissioners decide to participate, she will reach out to previous ambassadors as well as Louisiana Folklore Society board members toward having six honorees, as in past years. Miranda Restovic confirmed that the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities would again like to support Folklife Month by providing honoraria funds and coverage in *64 Parishes.*

Brian Davis requested that the commission keep a list of potential tradition bearers to be recognized. Owens said she would create a Google doc for commissioners to add ideas. Johannsen reminded commissioners that the website [Culturalyst](http://www.culturalyst.com/) (<https://www.culturalyst.com/>) is also available and that everyone should encourage tradition bearers, artists, administrators, and researchers to create profiles.

1. **Louisiana Folklore Society / Bayou Culture Collaborative**

Owens reported that the Bayou Culture Gatherings continue to be well attended. The December Gathering featured the poem *The Flow of Culture* by Chancelier “xero” Skidmore and a montage video of the 2022 Gatherings. Four working groups continue to be active. Owens encouraged commissioners to participate and to see her report for details. BCC is proposing a panel for the State of the Coast conference in May 2023 and responded to a UNESCO survey about intangible cultural heritage affected by climate change.

Owens reported that in November, the BCC adopted a position statement and she thanked the 42 individuals and 14 organizations that have signed on, some of whom were commissioners. Brian Davis moved and Susan Roach moved that the Commission sign on to the position statement. Commissioners agreed that it expressed the mission of the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, and hoped that each entity in DCRT would support it. Since some commissioners are state employees, however, there was concern whether such action would be considered a political statement. Susannah Johannsen said that since the Louisiana State Arts Council is also considering signing onto the statement, she had discussed it with Kristin Sanders and Carrie Broussard with the Office of Cultural Development. Neither determined it was political. In the interest of being cautious, the motion to sign on to the Bayou Culture Collaborative position statement was approved to unanimously pending approval by the Ethics Board. Teresa Parker was authorized to sign-on for the commission.

1. **Special Meetings Committee - Teresa Parker**

Parker reported that the Special Meeting Committee (Ray Berthelot, Brian Davis, and Teresa Parker) did not meet because there was no need.

1. **Set date for next Commission meeting – Teresa Parker**

The next full meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 2, 2022 at 1 pm in person at the State Library unless there is a governor-mandated return to zoom meetings and unless the Special Meetings Committee makes other arrangements.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Brian Davis reported that the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation’s Spring Ramble will be March 11 in Abbeville & Vermilion Parish. The Louisiana Preservation Conference will be in Lake Charles in late April with one educational track focused on flood mitigation and recovery at historic sites.  Nominations for LTHP's annual Preservation Awards and Louisiana's Most Endangered Places List are welcomed from the general public and due by March 5.  More info at LTHP.org. The Trust is also working with partners to begin planning for the centennial of the 1927 Flood. This would be a collection of sites, stories, photos, artifacts, and art (from both then and now), which speak to the enduring impact this natural disaster had on the Lower Mississippi Delta.

Miranda Restovic thanked Brian Davis for his *64 Parishes* article, “[Gone But Not Forgotten: Louisiana’s small cemeteries at risk in changing landscapes,](https://64parishes.org/gone-but-not-forgotten)” and Mona Lisa Saloy for serving as the 2021-2023 Poet Laureate. She encouraged commissioners to make nominations, due February 16, for her successor.

Mona Lisa Saloy shared that serving as Poet Laureate surpassed her expectations and provided many rich experiences, most notably that four publishers have approached her. She has a book coming out with UNO Press, *Black Creole Chronicles: Poems*, and will attend the 2023 Poetry Out Loud event in Opelousas, on March 4, 2023.

John Pudd Sharp reported that the Legends and Lore Marker Program by the University of Louisiana at Louisiana Center for Louisiana Studies has a new marker on Iry LeJeune in Church Point. The ceremony was well attended. He is working with Shane Rasmussen on another marker for a local ghost legend.

Shane Rasmussen reported that the theme for the Louisiana Studies Conference, taking place in September, will be Louisiana Works.

Mona Lisa Saloy commended John Sharp on the ULL Center for Louisiana Studies’ calendar.

Susan Roach reported that the Winnsboro Easter Rock Ensemble will perform in Thibodaux at the Jean Lafitte National Park on March 7 as part of a National Park Service/National Council for Traditional Arts Series.

Herman Fuselier reported that the Eunice Mardi Gras returned last year as a five-day festival and was a huge success. It has since changed its name to the Eunice Mardi Gras Festival.

Rachel Ornelas reported she is wrapping up plans for Jazz Fest’s Folklife Village and refining a theme of resilience. She invited recommendations for programming.

Maida Owens reported that Houma palmetto weaver Janie Luster has an exhibit at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans on view January 16-March 31, 2023.

**VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the Commission adjourned at 2:52 pm.

Brian Davis moved, and Mirana Restovic seconded.

**Folklife Program Director’s Report – January 6, 2022. Maida Owens**

**Folklife Commission Changes**

Rachel Ornelas is filling the vacant CRT nominee position on the commission.

**Folklife Month 2022:** Six Folklife Ambassadors participated in 2022.

* Tommy Ike Hailey honored Mary Alice Vanderwaters, Rapides Parish
* Shane Rasmussen honored Rhonda Gauthier, Natchitoches
* John Pudd Sharp and Herman Fuselier honored Alton Armstrong, Lafayette
* Jim Hogg honored Butch Cooksey, music promoter
* Mona Lisa Saloy honored Chef Andrew Miller, New Orleans
* Jonathan Foret honored Nelson Harris, African and African American drumming

Details are posted online at <http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/FM2022.html>

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities supported Folklife Month by funding the artist honoraria and included it in *64 Parishes* in Fall 2022. <https://64parishes.org/october-is-folklife-month-2>

**Bayou Culture Collaborative / Folklife Program**

**Passing It On workshops,** Summer and Fall, 2022.

* August 20 and 27, Filipino foodways, Philippine American Women’s Association29 (PAWAL)
* September 17, Sabina Miller, making crepe paper flowers

Owens spoke to these organizations about cultural issues and climate change. Summer and Fall, 2022

* September 14, Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Initiative, with Mike Saunders
* September 17, Louisiana Studies Conference
* September 21, Folk & Traditional Arts Managers, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies preconference.
* September 24, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies conference
* October 14, American Folklore Society with Shana Walton and Mike Saunders
* November 3 - Creative Placemaking Conference with Kelsea McCrary
* November 30, Goucher College class
* December 6, American Society of Adaptation Professionals Migration and Retreat group, with Traci Birch
* November 2, PastForward National Historic Preservation conference

LSU School of Landscape Architecture (Traci Burch) received LSU Sea Grant funds for food insecurity research. Owens assisted the South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center train youth to interview families about foodways.

**Bayou Culture Collaborative / Louisiana Folklore Society**

The monthly Bayou Culture Gatherings continued through December, 2022. They collaboratively wrote the position statement and commissioners are invited to sign-on. See the position statement at <http://www.louisianafolklore.org/?page_id=1215>. And the Louisiana Folklore Miscellany will include a report on BCC in 2022. The BCC Management Team includes Jonathan Foret, Gary LaFleur, Carolyn Ware, and Maida Owens. Commissioners interested in participating are encouraged to join LFS and/or participate in the Bayou Culture Collaborative.

Chancelier “xero” Skidmore was commissioned to write a spoken word poem in response to BCC Gatherings in 2022. His poem was presented at the December Gathering and is available on the BCC/LFS YouTube channel. David Rabalais created a montage of the 2022 Gatherings, which is also available online.

Four BCC working groups are active. See details, how to join, and upcoming meetings at [www.louisianafolklife.org](http://www.louisianafolklife.org).

* Louisiana French Curriculum and/or Preservation
* Culture and Coastal Planning
* Artists, Tradition Bearers, and Coastal Issues
* Preparing Receiving Communities

**Annual Ethics Training**

Commissioners are reminded that they must take the one-hour Louisiana ethics training each year by Dec 31. If you have not registered, start at this page: <https://eap.ethics.la.gov/SeminarRegistration/>

If you have registered previously, go to this page. <https://laethics.net/EthicsTraining/login.aspx>. Folklife Commissioners are not required to submit the financial disclosure form.

In addition, commissioners will need to take preventing sexual harassment and cyber security each year. She sent an email to non-state employees with instructions on submitting their certificates of completion each calendar year.