

**Minutes of the
LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
Holiday Inn Downtown
Shreveport, Louisiana
Monday, January 22, 1996
8:30 a.m.**

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

Penne Mobley, chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members were present:

Elizabeth Chubbuck-Meche	Marilyn Cox
Virginia Riley	Gloria Callais
Penne Mobley	Sara Herrington
Beverly Wilson	Jean Hurley

Council members absent, but naming a proxy for the meeting were:

Beth Kaplan	Proxy-Penne Mobley
Mary Ann Netterville	Proxy-Sara Herrington
Suzanne Arceneaux	Proxy-Elizabeth Chubbuck-Meche
Cynthia Ardoin	Proxy-Penne Mobley
Anthony Rollo	Proxy-Penne Mobley

Council members absent from the meeting included:

Freda Lupin	Raelene Pell
Katie Planche Friedrichs	
Johnnie Kocurek	
Deborah Reese	

(Marie Wright was also absent. She later informed the chair that she had submitted her resignation to the Governor in December.)

Staff members of the Louisiana Division of the Arts in attendance were: **James Borders**

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made to adopt the minutes with the corrections that Jean Hurley was in attendance at the meeting and that her name and Beverly Wilson's name should have been added to the Special Events Sub-Committee list. Seconded by Elizabeth Chubbuck-Meche and carried unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There was no Chairman's report.

GRANTEE REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Michael Sartisky, president/executive director of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), appeared before the Council to provide a status report on a Special Initiative grant the Division made to the LEH in the spring of 1995.

Before launching into that report, however, Dr. Sartisky offered to alert the Council to some late-breaking developments in Washington, DC that might have bearing on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) budget and, in turn, on the budgets of arts organizations in Louisiana.

The federal government, Dr. Sartisky explained, has been operating under a series of Continuing Resolutions for the fiscal year which began October 1, 1995. It appears that the current Continuing Resolution is only in effect until January 26, 1996. After that point, a new Continuing Resolution, at the very least, must be passed in order to keep the federal government functioning. This process is unprecedented in the history of the republic. There have been Continuing Resolutions in past years but never like this and never with the degree of brinkmanship that is currently at play. As a consequence, we are suddenly hearing about provisions in the budgetary process that has never been deployed before. The House of Representatives leadership is in the process of designating certain agencies as low priority, which means that they will be eliminated from the federal budget as of January 26. The National Endowment for the Arts is on that list. It is not clear whether or not the National Endowment for the Humanities is on that list.

He advised the Council to contact Congressman Robert Livingston, who is chair of the House Appropriations Committee, and urge him to support continued funding for the National Endowment for the Arts—if only for the direct economic impact it has on organizations in Louisiana. Dr. Sartisky also stressed the importance of Council members notifying their own congressman. It was also suggested that the Louisiana State Arts Council send a list of their members and what area they represent to Congressman Livingston. There was a recommendation that the Arts Council ask the Governor and Lt. Governor for their support. There will be a follow up on this situation at a later date.

Dr. Sartisky then began his grantee's report. He reported that the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities has been publishing the *Cultural Vistas* Magazine for six years. The magazine is at a point where it is paying for its printing and distribution costs through a combination of advertising, contracts, grants and subscriptions. The Division of the Arts helped with a grant last year of \$15,000 to underwrite the production cost of the magazine for two issues which developed an opportunity to work with Mr. Borders and his staff. In the last two issues a separate four-page department was created in the magazine featuring the Louisiana Division of the Arts. *Cultural Vistas* would like to expand its relationship with the Division of the Arts as part of its broader efforts to make the magazine a self-sustaining enterprise.

Dr. Sartisky asked the Louisiana State Arts Council to make a commitment of three years at \$50,000 a year in a co-publishing venture with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to increase the press run and the distribution of the *Cultural Vistas* Magazine.

This increased circulation would allow the magazine to garner more paid advertising, which would in turn help the publication reduce its reliance on subsidies to the point where it is truly self-supporting. Dr. Sartisky shared a written proposal for the Council to study in greater detail.

Penne Mobley explained that the Council could make no commitments to the proposal until after the Legislative session in June.

The Council thanked Dr. Sartisky for his report and proposal. He then exited from the meeting.

James Borders then called the Council's attention to a written grantee report from Gumbo Music, Inc. They received a \$10,000 media grant last year (with the St. Tammany Art Association acting as their fiscal agent) to help support production of a radio series entitled *South To Louisiana*, which highlights the music and culture of the state. They have sent to the Division tapes of thirteen one-hour episodes and were writing to tell us that the program is now being broadcast on 90 radio stations in 25 states and Puerto Rico. They were recently awarded a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and have total committed production support of \$115,700, including \$68,000 in cash. They have also compiled a database of over 1,000 people from around the country who are interested in Louisiana music. They have offered to share the list with the Division.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Borders announced that Jack Warner Jr. had joined the Division staff as the new Grants Office Assistant and presented a brief biographical statement about Mr. Warner's education and previous experience.

Mr. Borders then presented the final report and recommendations of the Crafts Marketing Program Assessment undertaken by our project consultant, Donna Service. The 10-month statewide assessment identified a number of needs in the areas of marketing support for Louisiana craftspeople, in addition to technical assistance, education and resource information needs. The study recommends that a diverse task force be assembled to develop a plan to address these needs. A public forum will be held in Baton Rouge on Saturday, July 13 to begin identifying potential members of the task force. Council members are invited and encouraged to attend.

For the next order of business, Mr. Borders provided the Council with a contact sheet for Lt. Governor Blanco's staff and the new leaders in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT)—including the new secretary for CRT, Phillip J. Jones.

Mr. Borders then reported to the Council early projections of the DOA budget for 1997. The DOA will be losing money from National Endowment for the Arts next year—from \$599,000 currently to a projected \$421,000 next year, based on information supplied to the DOA by NEA staffers. Even though DOA is getting less money from the National Endowment for the Arts, we will try to hold support for the Decentralized (\$2,310,000) and Statewide grants program (\$1,535,000) at their current level, assuming we get at least the same \$4.2 million from the state next year. But there will be less money to put into Special Initiatives—down from almost \$330,000 this year to a projected \$146,000 next year.

Mr. Borders also presented a budget scenario that projected the state's support for the Division next year at \$5.2 million. This is the approximate figure the Council and the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA) have agreed to try and secure from the legislature. If that \$1 million increase is granted, half the funds would then be put into the Decentralized grants program with the other half being divided by the Statewide grants program and Special Initiatives funds.

All these projections are tentative until the end of June when we find out what the exact legislative appropriation will be for the year beginning July 1, 1996 and ending June 30, 1997.

A discussion of some of the details of the budget projections then ensued. When the conversation touched upon the Division's financial obligations to the Southern Arts Federation (SAF), Ms. Mobley and Sara Herrington reported that there was dissatisfaction among several Louisiana arts organizations about the effectiveness of the SAF in serving our constituents and that some people were calling on us to withdraw our membership.

There were recommendations that the Division staff harness the specific complaints that the field has about SAF as our NEA-designated Regional Arts Organization and that those complaints/concerns be brought to the Council so that it may understand the issues more fully and to the attention of the SAF board and staff at SAF's February board meeting. Ms. Mobley and Mr. Borders are both on the SAF board along with two other Louisianians, Alvin Batiste and Mary Jane Lupberger.

As to the matter of possibly withdrawing Louisiana's membership in the agency, Mr. Borders explained that the NEA mandates that there be a two-year advance notice of a state's intention to withdraw its membership from a Regional Arts Organization like SAF.

A recommendation was made to put the Southern Arts Federation on notice or give them a time line to improve their services to our constituents. Mr. Borders stated that he and Ms. Mobley will report to the Council in March on the status of this issue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no formal reports since none of the Council committees had met since the last meeting.

There was, however, some discussion about plans for the 1996 Governor's Arts Awards. Ms. Mobley stated that it is best to have an elected official to present the Governor's Arts awards. She stated that maybe the Governor or the Lt. Governor could be the presenter. It was also suggested during the discussion that Governor Foster's wife be appointed to the Louisiana State Arts Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Borders provided the Council with a list of members from the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts who will be liaisons to the Council committees.

He also reported that the chair had approved the January round of Technical Assistance grants to Dog and Pony Theatre Company for \$2,000 and to the North Central Louisiana Arts Council for \$600.

Mr. Borders also promised to send Council members dates for the spring 1996 grants review panels and encouraged them to come and observe the process. He also asked Council members to continue forwarding any corrections or additions they might have for the Panelist master list.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the chair called for a motion to adjourn. Such a motion was made, seconded and adopted. The meeting ended at 10:20 a.m.