

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING  
Capitol Park Welcome Center  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Friday, January 6, 2012**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Ray Berthelot, Doug Bourgeois, Chris Broussard, Teresa Parker Farris, Marcia Gaudet, Rebecca Hamilton, Jonn Ethan Hankins, Dána La Fonta, Amanda LaFleur, Karen Leathem, Charles McGimsey, Nicole Hobson-Morris, Allison Peña, Susan Roach.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Lisa Abney, Kevin Billiot, Winifred Byrd, Rebecca Hamilton, Michael Robinson, Michael Sartisky, Dean Sinclair, Susan Spillman, Liz Williams.

**Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) staff present:** Maida Owens.

**Guest(s) attending:** Charlene Bonnette, State Library; Dayna Lee, HDR Inc.; Liz Williams, National Park Service; Conni Castille, Louisiana Folklore Society.

**I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 11:12 am at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

Teresa Parker Farris introduced the guests: Charlene Bonnette, State Library; Dayna Lee, HDR Inc.; Liz Williams, National Park Service; Conni Castille, Louisiana Folklore Society.

Teresa Parker Farris requested that the agenda be amended to include a report on a meeting of some commissioners about making the Folklife Program's work more visible. Ray Berthelot moved and Chris Broussard seconded. The motion passed.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chip McGimsey moved to accept the minutes and Allison Pena seconded. The minutes were accepted as presented.

**III. REPORTS**

**A. Enhancing the Folklife Program – Teresa Parker Farris**

Teresa Parker Farris reported on a discussion by Jonn Ethan Hankins, Liz Williams, and herself about the need to reinstate funding of the Folklife Program. They proposed meeting with the Lt. Governor about the Folklife Program having national significance and it being an important asset for the state. Commissioners discussed strategies to raise awareness of the Folklife Program's resources and to raise awareness of Louisiana's traditional culture more broadly. Allison Pena moved to create an ad hoc committee to explore enhancing the Folklife Program and increase its visibility. Ray Berthelot seconded. The motion passed. Committee volunteers are: Commissioners: Teresa Parker Farris, Chris

Broussard, Marcia Gaudet, Susan Roach Jonn Ethan Hankins, Amanda LaFleur, Nicole Hobson-Morris, Allison Pena, and non-commissioner Dayna Lee.

**B. LDOA Budget Report and Strategic Plan Report – Dána La Fonta**

LaFonta reported that at the beginning of the fiscal year, the Division of the Arts lost positions and some funds. The Decentralized Arts Fund was reduced to \$1.5 million. The State Arts Grants increased from \$589,000 to \$959,000. The Office of Cultural Development received some midyear cuts, but LDOA did not have to cut any current programs, grants or staff.. Stabilization grants were funded and Artist Career Advancement is being funded through a special initiative with Tourism funds this spring. The Division lost two positions: Sparkle Hurst’s administrative assistant and Vanessa Ledbetter, grants assistant. Their responsibilities are being assumed by other in the Office of Cultural Development. Also, two positions were moved within the Office of Cultural Development Danny Belanger was moved to the Office of Cultural Development as Communications Director. Gaye Hamilton and the Cultural Districts Program was moved to the Division of the Arts.

The LDOA’s strategic plan is on track. It is scheduled to be approved by the State Arts Council in January. Once it is approved, we will develop the implementation plan.

**C. Director – Maida Owens**

Owens provided a written report that is attached to the minutes.

**IV. BUSINESS**

**A. Folklife Implementation plan for LDOA Strategic Plan – Maida Owens**

Owens reported that she will be asking for volunteers to serve on a folklife implementation committee.

**B. American Folklore Society meeting in New Orleans – Susan Roach/Marcia Gaudet**

The American Folklore Society will be meeting in New Orleans October 25-27, 2012. The local arrangements committee consists of Barry Ancelet, Ray Brassieur, Frank de Caro, Marcia Gaudet, Joyce Jackson, Rosan Jordan, Keagan LeJeune, Solimar Otero, Maida Owens, Susan Roach, Nick Spitzer, and Carolyn Ware. The theme is “The Continuity and Creativity of Culture” and the committee is sponsoring sessions, speakers, and pre-conference tours about Louisiana.

**C. Louisiana Folklore Society (LFS) -- Conni Castille**

Conni Castille, the LFS president, shared that following LFS’ visioning process, they have revised their bylaws to align with new priorities and are now focusing on increasing awareness of the society. They have created a website and will have a membership drive. They continue to publish the *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* and partner with the Folklife Program to post the articles online. The annual meeting will be March 16-17, 2012 in Lake Charles and the theme is “Tradition and Innovation in Louisiana Cultures.” She shared the Call for Presentations and invited commissioners to participate.

**D. Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill MC 252 Incident and Response: Traditional Cultural Properties Inventory and Research –Dr. Dayna Lee, HDR Inc and Liz Williams, National Park Service**

Dayna Lee reported that the fieldwork phase is completed using Rapid Assessment. They will be producing community overviews and ethnohistories. They focused on areas affected by the oil spill or where the oil spill affected the culture. Each community will receive a copy of the research.

**E. Set date for next Commission meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 1, 2012 at 11:00 a.m.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Allison Pena reported that the 197<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans will be commemorated on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The Jena Choctaw will participate for the first time.

Teresa Parker Farris reported that she and Nick Spitzer organized a fundraiser in October 2011 for woodcarver Charles Gillam's Folk Art Zone and Blues Museum in Algiers to help him replace the roof.

Winnie Byrd sent information about the Friends of Magnolia Mound Plantation forum on American Folk Paintings on Wednesday, January 25 at the Old State Capitol. The topic will be American folk painting by Barbara Ross Luck, curator of paintings, drawings, and sculpture, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

**VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss Chip McGimsey motioned to adjourn and Ray Berthelot seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

## **Folklife Program Director's Report – January 6, 2012**

**Maida Owens**

After the **LDOA Strategic Plan** is approved, we will form a folklife working group to inform the implementation plan.

The **website advisory committee**, Teresa Parker-Farris, Liz Williams, and Kevin McCaffrey, reviewed the folklife websites and provided recommendations.

**NEA Folk Arts Partnership funds** will support 1) capacity building grants for the 9 immigrant organizations in the Open Doors Mentoring Program, 2) reconnecting with folk artists and tradition bearers and invite them to participate in an online registry, and 3) enhance the Folklife in Louisiana website. Bethany Garfield, an LSU anthropology PhD student, will be working this spring and summer and will focus on the folk artist database. Nalini Raghavan, a former folklife program assistant who is now a graphic designer, is doing the webwork.

**Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative funds will support 1) creating a virtual book on Northeast Louisiana's Delta**, 2) website enhancements, and 3) archiving of Folklife Program research and project materials at LSU library. I am working with Susan Roach, Pete Gregory, Dayna Lee, Joyce Jackson, and possibly other writers on presenting the Delta research online.

**New Populations – Open Doors Mentoring Program:** 9 immigrant organizations are participating in the Open Doors Mentoring Program. They are receiving a \$1000 capacity building grant this year after having participated in four Open Doors workshops on Arts Resources, Building Organizational Capacity, Marketing, and Fundraising.

### **2011 Participating Organizations**

Baton Rouge Bengali Association (BRBLA)  
Baton Rouge Chinese Culture Club (BRCCC)  
Indian Arts Circle of New Orleans (IACNO)  
Wat Thammarattanam (Laotian), Broussard  
Vietnamese American Young Leaders of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO)  
Akashleena Literary Cultural Organization (ACLO) (Bengali), Prairieville

### **2010 Participating Organizations**

Adelante, Inc. (Nicaraguan), New Orleans  
Asociación Cultural Latino-Acadiana (ACLA)  
Yang Guang Chinese Dance Troupe, BR

**New Populations Fieldwork:** Laura Marcus Green has completed her fieldwork of immigrants in the Shreveport area and will be turning in her report in a few weeks. Laura Westbrook, Susan Roach, and Sheila Richmond completed projects on New Population communities.

### **Website additions and work in process**

Laura Westbrook, Japanese Culture and Dance in Southeast Louisiana  
Sheila Richmond, Luck, Peace, and Prosperity: Celebrating Chinese New Year in Shreveport  
Susan Roach, Ritual Traditions of Maria Lopez: From Mexico to Louisiana

Ten articles in the 2009 and 2010 **Louisiana Folklore Miscellany** editions have been posted and 5 articles from **Southern Folklore** are in process.

9 articles and their introductions from **Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State** are posted and we are in the process of adding photos.

Sara Ann Harris is reworking her **Post-Katrina Isles** research into an online article. Susan Roach is adding photos to the online version of her book, **Gifts from the Hills**

We are adding essays from Louisiana Folk Roots and Cultural Crossroad publications.

### **Advising**

I continue to serve on the **Cultural Heritage Technical Advisory Committee** for CPRA 2012 Master Plan, Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration along with Don Davis and Carl Brasseaux. The final plan will be presented at three public meetings Jan 24-26 in New Orleans, Houma, and Lake Charles. The plan is online at [www.coastalmasterplan.la.gov](http://www.coastalmasterplan.la.gov).

I am representing the **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** on the Advisory Committee for the oral history project for the B.W. Cooper Housing Project. This is one of four HUD housing projects demolished after Hurricane Katrina. I advised on the St. Bernard Housing Project's documentation which is completed. The Lafitte and C.J. Peete projects remain. These are being coordinated by the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO).

I am advising the **State Museum** on a music oral history program on along with Susan Tucker and George Ingmire using the State Museum's new recording facility at The Mint.

**The Library of Congress** recommended the Masaii tribe in Kenya to use the Louisiana Voices Educator's Guide in developing their folklife program.