

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING  
Capitol Park Welcome Center  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Friday, June 1, 2012**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Winifred Byrd, Teresa Parker Farris, Dána La Fonta, Amanda LaFleur, Susan Roach, Michael Robinson, Liz Williams.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Lisa Abney, Ray Berthelot, Kevin Billiot, Doug Bourgeois, Chris Broussard, Marcia Gaudet, Jonn Ethan Hankins, Rebecca Hamilton, Nicole Hobson-Morris, Karen Leathem, Charles McGimsey, Allison Peña, Michael Sartisky, Dean Sinclair, Susan Spillman.

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

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

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 11:15 am at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approving the minutes was deferred until the next meeting due to the lack of quorum.

**III. REPORTS**

**A. Chair Report – Teresa Parker Farris**

Farris reported that since the last commission meeting, she met with Pam Breaux for an informational discussion about the Folklife Program and Louisiana Division of the Arts. Breaux recommended that the Commission participate in the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA)/Louisiana Citizens for the Arts (LCA). In order to observe some of the present activities of the Folklife Program director, she also attended a presentation that Owens made for the Louisiana Byways Program. Owens and Farris worked in March/April on a small exhibit for the Folklife Village area of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival that would have consisted of three text panels with two being informational and the third offering an interactive component. They decided to table this project until the Folklife Implementation Plan is complete. Farris attended Culture Connection on Wednesday, May 16 and reported that the Lt. Governor included folklife in his presentation and acknowledged Farris as chair of the Folklife Commission. Farris will follow up with Christie Weeks, the LPA chair, with whom she had an initial conversation at the May event.

Commissioners discussed Culture Connection and Arts Advocacy Day, and possible involvement with the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts and Louisiana Citizens for the Arts. They recommended that the Folklife Commission be more involved next year and possibly have a

Commission meeting as part of Culture Connection in 2013. The date for next year's Culture Connection has not been set yet.

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

La Fonta reported that the Legislature ends on Monday, June 4, 2012, and it is still uncertain whether the \$500,000 cut from the Decentralized Arts Funds will be restored. The Governor's FY13 budget proposed a standstill budget for LDOA operations and State Arts Grants (\$959,466) and a cut to the Decentralized Arts Fund from \$1.5 million to \$1 million. The Lt. Governor's budget request included \$2 million for the State Arts Grants and \$2 million for the Decentralized Arts Grants programs.

Funding from the National Endowment for the Arts has been reduced by 8-10% from the current award. The Folklife Partnership funds from the National Endowment for the Arts have been reduced from \$45,000 to \$25,000.

**C. Director – Maida Owens**

Owens provided a written report that is attached to the minutes. The Office of Cultural Development staff presented an overview of OCD programs to the Lt. Governor and his staff. Folklife was one of the areas covered at the February 13 presentation.

**IV. BUSINESS**

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

Owens reported that the LDOA Strategic Plan is almost ready for publication and dissemination. Staff is now working on the Implementation Plan. Due to the reduction in funds for the Folklife Program, she requested guidance on programs and services to be offered. The visioning was done when there were significantly more resources, and it did not adequately prioritize services.

The Commission discussed several programs and services and concluded that folk artists and tradition bearers remain a priority. They suggested that one or more RFPs (Request for Proposals) could be made to secure individual field workers for identifying folk artists and tradition bearers to augment the program's previous documentation efforts. Folk artists and tradition bearers could then be invited to apply for inclusion in the planned LDOA Artist Registry. Increasing the usefulness and visibility of the Folklife in Louisiana website remains important.

Commissioners considered a project to connect the relevancy of the folklife materials online to student learning and to the identification of tradition bearers. Teachers (K-12, community college, and university) could be provided a classroom activity for students to document a tradition bearer and prepare the necessary materials for their submission to the LDOA Artist Registry. They would then be assessed regarding the activity's relevancy to student learning, such as ease of use, increased interest in subject, motivation to learn more, increased understanding of Louisiana folk cultures. They could also be provided an activity using the

planned folklife resources database where students use the database to research a subject. This would increase the visibility of the website, identify tradition bearers, and help student learning.

Commissioners discussed the merits of creating an exhibit. Options include a temporary exhibit at JazzFest Folklife Village or Grandstand, a traveling exhibit for the State Museum's program, and adding a suitcase exhibit to the traveling exhibit.

Commissioners discussed the merits of offering apprenticeships. Considering the financial uncertainty, they suggested offering 2 or 3 apprenticeships a year totaling up to \$10,000.

LDOA will take these under consideration and must balance staff and financial resources.

Susan Roach asked about the long-term sustainability of the folklife websites and whether they are archived. Owens responded that the State Library considers them publications and archives them, but she was not sure about their accessibility. Owens said that she would ask someone from the State Library to clarify this and will report at the next commission meeting.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 4, 2012 at 11:00 a.m.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Liz Williams reported that the Southern Food and Beverage Museum is moving to a new location at 1504 Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard in the old Dryades Market in March 2014. It will feature a demonstration kitchen, and a Culinary Branch of the New Orleans Public Library. They are looking for chefs' personal papers for the library archive. On September 13-16, 2012 SOFAB will host Hungry in the South weekend with a food film festival; a continuing legal education session on food, drink and the law; a symposium on how technology affects food and drink; a cookbook fair, and a gala.

**VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

## **Folklife Program Director's Report – June 1, 2012, Maida Owens**

The **LDOA Strategic Plan** has been approved and is being prepared for distribution. We will then convene the folklife working group to help set priorities for the Folklife Program. **LDOA** received \$25,000 from the **NEA Folk Arts Partnership funds** to 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. Since we requested \$50,000, this plan will be amended.

Contractors, a student worker, and an intern have been working with the Folklife Program. Bethany Garfield, an LSU anthropology PhD student worker, has been focusing on the folklife database, including updating information. Audri Hubbard, an LSU anthropology graduate student intern, has focused on adding images to the website and updating the Folklife bibliography. Nalini Raghavan, a former folklife program assistant who is now a graphic designer, is redesigning the website.

### **Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative funds are supporting three efforts.**

1) creating a virtual book on Northeast Louisiana's Delta. Susan Roach, Pete Gregory, and Dayna Lee are working on the Delta materials. 2) website enhancements detailed above and below. 3) archiving of Folklife Program research and project materials at LSU library. With this submission, the primary Folklife Program resource that has not been archived is photos. The entire photo collection is in the Folklife Program office. Some have been digitized, but not all

The Louisiana Folklife Program Collection at LSU Library is participating in the **National Folklore Archives Initiative of the American Folklore Society**. The collection will be included in a national database of archival folklore materials.

**New Populations – Open Doors Mentoring Program:** 9 immigrant organizations have participated in the Open Doors Mentoring Program. Currently the 6 2011 organizations are in various stages of completing their capacity building project with a \$1000 grant.

Resources added to the **Folklife in Louisiana website** include, the 2011 **Louisiana Folklore Miscellany** articles, 7 articles from **Louisiana Folklife Journal** about the Northeast Louisiana Delta, articles from **Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State**, and essays from Louisiana Folk Roots publications and other sources.

Work in progress includes Sara Ann Harris's **Post-Katrina Islenos** research, adding photos to the online version of **Gifts from the Hills, Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State** and other online resources, Shreveport immigrant research by Laura Marcus Green, Laura Marcus Green reworking technical assistance resources, Daria Woodside abstracting essays for an online, searchable database, Audri Hubbard abstracting audio/video clips for the online database, Paddy Bowman reviewing Louisiana Voices Educators Guide, New Populations introduction by Maida Owens & Laura Marcus Green.

Paddy Bowman, director of Local Learning: National Network for Folk Arts in Education and a key writer of Louisiana Voices Educator's Guide, participates in the **ICI (Imagination, Creativity and Innovation) Summer Institute** for educators and teaching artists on June 22-24 that is focusing on music. In 2013, Paddy will have a larger role.

**Maida Owens has advised on two efforts.** 1) 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). 2) One of the exhibits in **Knock Knock Children's Museum** will be a changing exhibit space that will feature the immigrant cultures of Baton Rouge. They are starting with Indian culture and Sharing Shores is participating in the planning.