

**MINUTES OF THE
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
Capitol Park Welcome Center
Baton Rouge, LA
Friday, June 5, 2015**

Folklife Commission members present: Ray Berthelot, Winifred Byrd, Debra Credeur, Teresa Parker Farris, Cathy Hernandez, Nicole Hobson-Morris, Keagan LeJeune, Karen Leathem, Kevin McCaffrey, Charles McGimsey, Allison Peña, Shane Rasmussen, Susan Roach, Susan Spillman, Melissa Yarborough, Guiyuan Wang.

Folklife Commission members absent: Kevin Billiot, Rebecca Hamilton, Amanda LaFleur, Miranda Restovic, Liz Williams.

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

Guests present: none

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:00 pm at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the last meeting were approved. Winnie Byrd moved and Susan Roach seconded.

III. REPORTS

A. Chair Report – Teresa Parker Farris

Farris deferred her report to the Business section of the agenda.

B. LDOA Budget Report – Cathy Hernandez

Hernandez reported that LDOA's mid-year cuts were modest. She does not anticipate major changes in the budget or staff.

D. Director – Maida Owens

Owens directed commissioners to her written report that is attached to the minutes. She pointed out that the Baton Rouge Project is going well with another essay being posted this week. She thanked Keagan LeJeune for his introductory essay on the Neutral Strip. Since he cannot be paid for his work, LeJeune and Owens are developing other strategies to work in that region. Parker Farris reported that the New Populations exhibit was well received at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Owens said that the Folklife Program is considering future exhibits based on folklife genres. Owens noted that Susan Roach received the Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities award from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities for 2015.

Owens announced that Pam Breaux has accepted the position of CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in Washington DC and her last day in the Office of Cultural Development is June 11, 2015. Parker Farris encouraged commissioners to send Pam their farewells and stated that she would send a note.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Culture Connection 2015 – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris reported that the 2015 Culture Connection was Tuesday, April 14 and Wednesday, April 15. Both dates were well attended and the sessions on creative placemaking and disaster preparedness were good. Winnie Byrd reported that the Lt. Governor Forum on Wednesday afternoon was also well attended and informative. Parker Farris added that the topic suggestions that the commissioners submitted were considered but were not able to be included this year.

B. Folklife Heritage Award 2015 – Teresa Parker Farris

At the Louisiana Culture Awards, the Creole Wild West Mardi Gras Indian tribe received the 2015 Folklife Heritage Award with Big Chief Howard Miller accepting it. Parker Farris congratulated Winnie Byrd for receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award in Historic Preservation. Parker Farris reported that the Office of Cultural Development clarified the role of the commission in the award process. She reported that the commissioners' recommendations are taken into consideration, but the Assistant Secretary makes the selection taking into consideration the geographic diversity represented by all the award winners.

The following served on the selection committee: Ray Berthelot, Melissa Yarborough, Liz Williams, Karen Leathem, and Shane Rasmussen. Yarborough coordinated communication within the committee and reported on the selection process. Selection committee members had differing opinions about the nominations and consulted each other before submitting their votes. They considered who would benefit most from receiving the award, but didn't know whether the Assistant Secretary included this criterion. After a discussion, Yarborough moved that the commission convey to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cultural Development that the selection committee would like to submit their final selection collectively rather than submit their votes individually. In addition, they would like to share their selection criteria and comments. Susan Roach seconded. It passed unanimously.

C. Folklife Week 2015 – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris distributed a plan that had been developed with Kevin McCaffrey with input from Susan Roach and Maida Owens. After discussion, commissioners volunteered to present projects in their area during October. Owens will dedicate funds from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Partnership grant to support tradition bearers who are participating through a grant to the Louisiana Folklore Society. Projects that included partnerships with other organizations were encouraged. Six commissioners volunteered. Commissioners will send a synopsis to Parker Farris:

1. Delta Pieces website launch event in Monroe with the Downtown Art Crawl – Susan Roach
2. Garifuna discussion panel at Xavier University, New Orleans – Susan Spillman
3. Mexican Day of the Dead event in Baton Rouge – Melissa Yarborough
4. Cajun French storyteller Clifford LaGrange with CODOFIL, site to be determined – Debra Credeur
5. Memory painter and artist Juanita Leonard with Louisiana Folklife Center – Shane Rasmussen
6. TBD Tradition bearer with the Vernon Parish Tourism Commission – Keagan LeJeune

Commissioners will promote their events individually through their partners and together through the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Parker Farris will draft a proclamation for the Lt Governor. Owens will create a page on the Folklife in Louisiana website to document the events. Owens suggested that artists appropriate for the LDOA artist roster be invited to submit. The commission requested that a Folklife section be added and folk artists be cross listed in multiple sections if possible. Owens will research that possibility.

D. Delta Pieces reception/exhibit – Susan Roach

Roach reported that she is working with organizations in Monroe to have a reception and possible exhibit featuring the virtual book, *Delta Pieces: Northeast Louisiana Folklife*, as part of Art Crawl on Thursday, October 1, 2015. Commissioners will receive an invitation once plans are finalized.

E. Set date for next Commission meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 15, 2015 at 1 pm.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parker Farris reported that Liz Williams has opened the Southern Food and Beverage Museum (SOFAB) in its new space and is worth the trip.

Rasmussen reported that he is looking for tradition bearers with knowledge about plowing, soapmaking, and other agricultural techniques for the NSU/Natchitoches Folk Festival in July.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m. Susan Roach moved and Allison Pena seconded.

Folklife Program Director's Report – June 5, 2015, Maida Owens

NEA Funding: The Folklife Program received \$45,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the Baton Rouge Folklife Survey and the Neutral Strip Folklife Survey.

Neutral Strip Folklife Survey: Keagan LeJeune has written an introduction to the Neutral Strip for the Folklife in Louisiana website that is based on his prior research and he provided it at no expense. LeJeune requested a ruling from the Attorney General's office about being paid for work through contracts or grants. They ruled that as a Folklife Commissioner he cannot be paid for work through any means. As a result, we are exploring contracting with other contractors to move the project forward.

Western Louisiana's Neutral Strip: Its History, People, and Legends

Baton Rouge Folklife Survey: More projects are complete and seven essays (underlined) are posted online. Below are the contracted projects using funds from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Folklife Center's Archie Green Fellowship. <http://www.louisianafolklife.org/batonrouge/>

- Boudin, Teacakes, and Specialty Grocery Stores: Small Food Businesses in Baton Rouge - Maria Zeringue
- Folk and Traditional Arts in the Capitol Region: Sustaining Community Values Through Handcraft - Douglas Manger
- The Folk Artistry of Sac-a-lait Fisherman Glenn Davis - Douglas Manger
- Stitching Memories: Judith Braggs' Black Folk Art Quilts - Laura Marcus Green
- Fiber arts for a cause (quilting, sewing, knitting, crochet) - Laura Marcus Green
- Cakes and bakeries – Laura Marcus Green
- African American church hats and dress shops – Laura Marcus Green (LOC+NEA)
- Body Adornment (hairstylists, barbers, tattoo artist, nail salon) - Kelley Fisher
- African American Preaching Styles - Joyce Jackson
- Bluesman Larry Garner - Joyce Jackson
- Skilled workers in repair shops (furniture, watches, locksmith, etc.) - Jocelyn and Jon Donlon (LOC)
- Wirt Bellue: Welding Innovations for Food Production - Douglas Manger
- Generational Small Businesses in Baton Rouge: Creative Pragmatism at Work - Douglas Manger (LOC)
- Cakes and Bakeries – Laura Marcus Green (LOC+NEA)
- Mardi Gras costume makers - Jocelyn and Jon Donlon
- African American traditions photo essay - James Terry
- Real Doctors: Folk Traditions of LSU Vet School - Carolyn Ware
- Customs and oral traditions of pet rescue groups - Carolyn Ware
- Legends of the State Capitol – David Kunian
- Sacred music of Baton Rouge churches, temples, and mosques – Liz Williams
- Baton Rouge Blues – Joyce Jackson

Projects under consideration:

- yards/gardens
- secular music other than blues
- Additional cultural groups

Three papers by Joyce Jackson's Urban Ethnography class that focus on Baton Rouge will be published in the 2015 Miscellany. Two papers by Carolyn Ware's folklore class may be published.

New on Folklife in Louisiana: The 2014 Louisiana Folklore Miscellany has been posted online. Several authors added photos to their publications.

Deep Meanings in Small Places: Social and Community Values in the Oral Tradition of French Louisiana
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmdeep.html

Different “Jam” Venues, Contrasting Ways: A Comparison of Cajun Music Jams in and around Lafayette, Louisiana, http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmdifferent.html

The Dying Art of Speaking Ceazarnie
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmdying.html

Beyond Gastronomy: Locating the Vietnamese Population in New Orleans
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmbeyond.html

Songs of Spirit and Continuity of Consciousness: African American Gospel Music in Louisiana
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/songsspirit.html

D’Jalma Garnier is updating and expanding his essay on Creole music for the Folklife in Louisiana website: The Musical and Cultural Roots of Louisiana Black Creole and Zydeco Fiddle Tradition through Canray Fontenot.

Folklife Heritage Award – The Creole Wild West Mardi Gras Indian tribe received the 2015 Folklife Heritage Award. Big Chief Howard Miller accepted the award at the Louisiana Culture Awards on April 14, 2015. The following is from the awards program:

The oldest Mardi Gras Indian tribe in New Orleans, Creole Wild West promotes and preserves its tradition as a steward of the culture as only it can through public performances and education. The group, which has roots in the 19th century, has a particular dedication to arts, education and preservation of Louisiana tradition and continues to parade during Mardi Gras and at events like New Orleans Jazz Fest. The huge cultural footprint of Creole Wild West is evidenced by the important cultural entities featuring its regalia from the New Orleans Museum of Art to the Smithsonian to Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.

Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities Award – Susan Roach received the Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities Award from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities on April 23, 2015.

Delta Pieces: Northeast Louisiana Folklife: The reception announcing the publication in conjunction with Monroe’s Art Crawl will be Thursday, October 1. The educator’s guide to the online publication is being designed.

Folk Arts in Education: Creative Classroom: *Being a Louisiana Neighbor* will not be further developed due to lack of resources. It was to have lessons using theatre and visual arts and based on sense of place.

Uniquely Louisiana: This Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism education initiative funded by the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area is now being designed along with student activities based on the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area online resources. The web portal features 235 education resources provided by 11 CRT agencies.

Midwifery exhibit: The New Orleans Pharmacy Museum used research by Maida Owens in the 1980s and her article “Waiting for Babies: Lay Midwives in Louisiana” to produce the permanent exhibit “Beneath the Womb Veil” and podcast that opened May 4 on the history of midwifery in Louisiana.

Folklife Webinar: Resources and services of the Folklife Program will be the subject of one of the LDOA’s upcoming webinar series.