

**MINUTES OF THE
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
Louisiana State Library
Baton Rouge, LA
Thursday, June 29, 2023
1 PM**

Folklife Commission members present: Ray Berthelot, Sharon Calcote, Conni Castille, Teresa Parker, Tommy Ike Hailey, Jim Hogg, Karen Leathem, Nicole Hobson Morris, Rachel Ornelas, Shane Rasmussen, Susan Roach, Mona Lisa Saloy, John Sharp.

Folklife Commission members absent: Brian Davis, Herman Fuselier, Susannah Johannsen, Miranda Restovic, John Silver, Maegen Smith, Kim Walden

Guests and Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present: Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts; Alora Thompson, Louisiana Division of the Arts; Meg Placke, State Library of Louisiana; Rachel Doherty, Center for Louisiana Studies, ULL; Lauren Holmes, Office of Tourism.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Maida Owens opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:14 pm because Parker was late. Owens announced two changes in commissioners. Nicole Hobson-Morris will replace Krystal Cox for the Division of Historic Preservation. The State Library will identify a new State Librarian to replace Rebecca Hamilton. Meg Placke is serving as Interim State Librarian. Parker arrived and led the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the meeting of January 6, 2023 was accepted. Sharon Calcote moved, and Ray Berthelot seconded.

III. REPORTS

A. LDOA Budget Report – Susannah Johannsen

Johannsen submitted a report that the LDOA budget will be similar to the past year and will remain around \$3 million. The State General fund will be \$91,638, a decrease of approximately \$60,000 from the last fiscal year. LDOA anticipates an Inter-Agency Transfer from the Office of Tourism of \$1,860,239. The National Endowment for the Arts funds will be \$996,900, an increase of \$114,500 from last fiscal year. In March, Alora Thompson was hired as the Folklife Archivist in a temporary position. Sharon Calcote noted that the Office of Tourism's funding has been reduced to 2019 levels.

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 for FY23 are complete. Since 2019, a total of \$85,370 in grants supported Passing It On Workshops. Alora Thompson shared about her work to create a Passing It On microsite to feature the tradition bearers. She is also preparing several projects to archive, including the New Populations Project and the Louisiana Folklife Festival in Monroe.

The Sense of Place—and Loss workshops continued to focus on helping local efforts in addition to addressing climate migration issues at national meetings. Owens' presentations include the Louisiana Folklore Society, Louisiana Preservation Conference, the American Society of Adaptation Professionals, and the Appalachian Funders Network. Concerning the state's population decline, Miranda Restovic

asked at the last commission meeting whether it is known why people are leaving and whether it is due to climate issues. Owens reported that this spring there have been reports that the increase in migration is due to climate issues and that the tendency of Louisiana people to move close by is shared by people across the country.

Owens noted that the American Folklife Center/Library of Congress has posted interviews that they funded through an Archie Green Occupational Folklore grant for the Baton Rouge Traditions Project. [AFC's Occupational Folklife Project Continues to Expand | Folklife Today \(loc.gov\)](#)

In Fall 2023, the Louisiana Division of the Arts will apply to the National Endowment for the Arts, which includes funding for the Folklife Program. Owens reported that she is exploring the possibility of creating traveling exhibits for libraries and other sites with sufficient security and humidity control that would tour selected artifacts representing highly endangered traditions. She has been approached by a collector who would like assistance in placing their folk art collection and this could be one possible use of their collection. Commissioners discussed several options including tying the exhibit to the Passing It On workshops, surveying libraries about their exhibit cases, a State Museum temporary exhibit featuring the Creole State Collection and additional pieces, and various strategies for traveling exhibits. Commissioners agreed that many traditional crafts are no longer practiced or we have not identified new craftspeople who are maintaining them. A traveling exhibit could be part of a strategy to identify new crafters, but fieldwork is also needed.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Folklife Month 2022, 2023 – Teresa Parker

Parker referred to the Folklife Month report in the Director's report for the 2023 events. She thanked Miranda Restovic for LEH's support, which includes an increase of the honoraria for tradition bearers and coverage in *64 Parishes*. Parker noted that Owens created a Google doc for commissioners to add ideas for future years and encouraged commissioners to add to the list. Shane Rasmussen asked whether younger tradition bearers can be recognized during Folklife Month in future years. Following a discussion, commissioners agreed that age was not a factor. Parker referred commissioners to the guidelines for selection tradition bearers (<https://www.louisianafolklife.org/LFP/folklifemonth.html>). Mona Lisa Saloy pointed out that she would like to change the tradition for Darryl Montana from "Mardi Gras Indian" to "Black Masking Indian," since that is the term that the community uses. Owens assured everyone that edits can still be made for the webpage and the press release, although the LEH article probably can't be edited at this point.

B. Louisiana Folklore Society / Bayou Culture Collaborative

Owens reported that the Bayou Culture Gatherings continue to be well attended. Four working groups remain active. Owens encouraged commissioners to participate and to see her report for details. Each month a Passing It On tradition bearer is spotlighted. BCC presented a panel at the State of the Coast conference in May 2023. And Owens was invited to serve on a panel on Expanding Approaches to Climate Adaptation. Both panels were well received. Owens noted that the State of the Coast conference included many more sessions addressing the human dimension than in previous years. John Sharp noted that researchers need to publish their work within the next year in order for it to be considered in the next Coastal Master Plan.

Owens reported that the BCC position statement now has 98 individuals and 25 organizations signed on. After determining that there is no conflict, Teresa Parker signed on for the Commission. Parker encouraged anyone who has not signed-on to consider doing so.

C. 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.

D. Set date for next Commission meeting – Teresa Parker

The next full meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 5, 2024 at 1 pm in person at the State Library unless the Special Meetings Committee makes other arrangements.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shane Rasmussen shared that the NSU/Natchitoches Folk Festival will be July 21. He shared program books for commissioners. The Louisiana Studies Conference theme is Louisiana Works, which will be September 23 in Natchitoches.

Susan Roach shared posters from the Louisiana Folklife Festival in Monroe.

Sharon Calcote shared that the Civil Rights Trail will unveil two new markers in Jonesboro and Lisbon. Another is planned for the Texas Pacific Railroad Depot in Natchitoches. She will be revamping the African American Trail and all sites will need to reapply due to changes in eligibility. Site must have a visitor experience and not only be a marker. And the Birding Trail will be released in August. Sharon clarified that the Music Trail is not an Office of Tourism project, but rather an initiative of the Office of Cultural Development.

John “Pudd” Sharp reminded commissioners to encourage sites for the Legends and Lore Markers Program. They now have seven sites and another is in progress about egg pocking.

Rachel Ornelas shared that Krewe de Mayahuel, a Mexican carnival walking group in New Orleans received a Passing It On workshop grant to teach *dansa Azteca* and they will perform at *dia de los muertos* (Day of the Dead) at St Roch cemetery in honor of the passing of Roberto Carrillo, the Krewe founder.

Mona Lisa Saloy shared that her book, *Black Creole Chronicles* is published.

Meg Placke shared that the Louisiana Book Festival is October 28 in Baton Rouge.

Rachel Doherty shared that the Center for Louisiana Studies will again be producing the Atelier Tent at Festivals Acadiens et Creoles. The festival theme is Clifton Chenier, so their programming will focus on zydeco and related music.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the Commission adjourned at 2:36 pm. John Sharp moved, and Karen Leathem seconded.

Folklife Commission Changes

- Nicole Hobson-Morris will replace Krystal Cox for the Division of Historic Preservation,
- The State Library will identify a new State Librarian to replace Rebecca Hamilton. Meg Placke is serving as Interim State Librarian

Because this was a legislative fiscal year, changes to the Folklife Commission legislation will be addressed next year.

Folklife Archivist

Alora Thompson started working as the Folklife Archivist in March. A graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University in history with a concentration in cultural resource management and preservation, she is assisting to prepare Folklife materials to be archived at LSU Library Special Collections and creating an online database of tradition bearers who have offered Passing It On workshop.

Folklife Month 2023: Six Folklife Ambassadors will participate in 2023.

- Tommy Ike Hailey will honor Ray Chauvin, singer/songwriter, Houma
- Mona Lisa Saloy will honor Darryl Montana, Mardi Gras Indian, New Orleans
- Conni Castille will honor Jan Collette Webre and Jill Collette Zimmerman, Crawfish Bisque Makers, Breaux Bridge
- Susan Roach will honor Laymon Godwin, Pedal Steel/Dobro musician, West Monroe
- Jonathan Foret will honor Brunella Luke, Cornshuck Crafts, Chauvin
- Shane Rasmussen will honor F.J. and Nicol Delphin, Creole Traditions, Cane River

Details are posted online at http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/FM2023.html

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities will feature Folklife Month by funding the artist honoraria and included it in *64 Parishes* in Fall 2023. Commissioners are encouraged to suggest traditions or tradition bearers to be recognized here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TCnE_U7XsT9yF1P-9wKKnFrplc8oLK2jI5pX24a4_hY/edit?usp=sharing

Bayou Culture Collaborative / Folklife Program

Passing It On Workshops grants have totaled \$85,370 since 2019. The following workshops were held January – June, 2023.

- January 31, *French Expressions and Idioms*, Kelly Blanchard, Frances Martin, Marlene Touns, Robin White, Nicholls State University Foundation, Thibodaux.
- February 18, *Waxed Flower Making*, Sabina Miller, Jean Lafitte National Park Wetlands Cultural Center, Thibodaux
- February 28, *French Songs and Rhyming Games*, Michele Braud. Camille France, Robin White, Nicholls State University Foundation, Thibodaux.
- March 2, 9, *Waxed Flower Making*, Sabina Miller, St John's Episcopal Church, Thibodaux
- March 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, *Palmetto Basket Weaving*, Rose Pierre, Maria Pierre, Dena Foret, Zoeanna Billiot Verret, Ann Luster Robichaux, and Janie Verret Luster, Louisiana Indian Education Assn, Dulac
- March 18, 25, Creole Storytelling, Mary V Jackson and Jonathan Mayers, New Roads
- April 16, 23, 30, May 7, *Dansa Azteca*, Patricia Corral, Krewe de Mayahuel, New Orleans
- April 20, May 6, 13, *Chair Caning*, Diana Donnell Mason, St. Martinville
- May 6, 13, 20, 27, *Adding Curved Roofs to Buildings*, Quang Huynh, Independence
- May 10, 17, *Carding and Spinning Acadian Brown Cotton*, Gerald Thibodeaux, St Luc Immersion School and Cultural Center, Arnaudville

- May 22-26, *Split Oak Basketmaking*, Geraldine Robertson with West Baton Rouge Museum, Port Allen
- June 24, *Drum Making*, Sherill Parfait Dardar, Houma

Project Support

- Exploring Tribal Arts of the Houma People, United Houma Nation

Speaking Engagements

Owens made the following presentations from January to June 2023.

- *Expanding Approaches to Climate Adaptation* panelist. State of the Coast Conference, June 2, 2023, New Orleans, LA
- *The BCC: Integrating Community Voices into the Human Dimension* panelist with Gary LaFleur, Lanor Curole, Theodore Hilton and Shana Walton, State of the Coast Conference, June 1, 2023, New Orleans, LA.
- American Society of Adaptation Professionals, with Traci Birch and Honora Buras. May 24, 2023. Via Zoom.
- *Creating Climate Resilience in Appalachian Communities*, May 16 and 23, 2023. Appalachian Funders Network, via Zoom
- *Bayou Culture Collaborative Responds to Louisiana's Environmental Changes*, April 20, 2023, Louisiana Preservation Conference, Lake Charles, LA
- *Climate Migration and Welcoming Newcomers*, April 19, 2023, Louisiana Preservation Conference, Lake Charles, LA
- *Climate Migration and Welcoming Newcomers*, March 24, 2023, Louisiana Folklore Society, New Orleans, LA
- *Louisiana and Climate Migration*, March 17, 2023, ULL Coast in Crisis Speaker Series, Lafayette, LA

Bayou Culture Collaborative / Louisiana Folklore Society

The monthly Bayou Culture Gatherings continued through June, 2023. Ninety eight individuals and 25 organizations have signed-on to the position statement. See the position statement at http://www.louisianafolklore.org/?page_id=1215. The BCC Management Team includes Jonathan Foret, Gary LaFleur, Rachel Doherty, and Maida Owens. Commissioners interested in participating are encouraged to join LFS and/or participate in the Bayou Culture Collaborative.

Four BCC working groups are active. See details, how to join, and upcoming meetings at 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.