

**MINUTES OF THE
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
Capitol Park Welcome Center
Baton Rouge, LA
Friday, February 10, 2017**

Folklife Commission members present: Ray Berthelot, Debra Credeur, Teresa Parker Farris, Karen Leathem, Keagan LeJeune, Kevin McCaffrey, Shane Rasmussen, Jessica Richardson, Melissa Yarborough.

Folklife Commission members absent: Kevin Billiot, Rebecca Hamilton, Erik Kreusch, Amanda LaFleur, Charles McGimsey, Miranda Restovic, Susan Roach, Susan Spillman.

Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present: Maida Owens; Phil Boggan, Office of Cultural Development; and Cheryl Castille, Division of the Arts.

Guests present:

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:03 pm at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the last two meetings were deferred due to lack of quorum.

III. REPORTS

A. Chair Report – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris announced that this will be the last meeting of the currently appointed commissioners. She thanked commissioners for their efforts. She welcomed guest Phil Boggan, assistant secretary of the Office of Cultural Development and announced that two commissioners have been appointed: Jessica Richardson will represent Historic Preservation and Erik Kreusch will represent Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Jessica Richardson introduced herself.

Parker Farris reported that she attended Culture 20/20, which was a productive gathering with brainstorming about possibilities for the Office of Culture Development. The takeaway was that there is a need for a cohesive message and a support group to advocate for the Office of Cultural Development.

Parker Farris also reported that on November 3, 2016 the Office of Cultural Development had recognized Maida Owens for her 30 years of employment.

B. LDOA Budget Report – Cheryl Castille/Phil Boggan

Cheryl Castille and Phil Boggan reported that the state arts appropriation was cut, but the Lt Governor will continue to use Office of Tourism funds to support the arts resulting in a continuation budget for FY17. There was a mid-year cut, but the agency, anticipating this, had reserved funds. With the staff vacancies, no additional cuts will be made this fiscal year. Phil Boggan shared plans for the Louisiana Citizens for the Arts, a 501c4, to change its name and bylaws to address other constituencies of the Office of Cultural Development such as archaeology, historic preservation, and others. He reminded Folklife Commissioners that while the Louisiana Folklife Commission can't advocate as a group, they can participate as individuals in other efforts. Individuals are encouraged to fax letters to their congressmen before Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC on March 21. He asked Maida Owens to send details to commissioners. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Boggan's and others advocacy efforts.

Cheryl Castille reported on pending changes to the Decentralized Arts Funding Program. While there are good projects supported through this program, the overall reduction in funding has unintentionally led to some parishes having little money. LDOA staff are exploring several changes to address the problems: funding by region rather than parish, the level of funding, and annual funding priorities with applicants addressing the priority getting extra points. These proposed changes need to be studied and would not be implemented for another year. Also, a new online application system will be implemented in a year.

D. Director – Maida Owens

Owens directed commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda. She noted that the Baton Rouge Project has one outstanding contract: Daniel Atkinson, a folklorist based in Washington state, who will be doing fieldwork in March. Ben Sandmel's essay on roots music is complete and Joyce Jackson is wrapping up details on her blues project. The musical instruments project is getting started with Holly Hobbs and Joseph Vidrine inventorying musical instruments builders and repairers. The next NEA Folk Arts Partnership grant will support the fieldwork. Owens reported that she proposed the project Elders' Wisdom to the Lt Governor, which includes a symposium on the cultures of the Louisiana's coast, but the Lt Governor has not announced which projects he will support. She directed commissioners to the three-year plan which is now required by the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Partnership grant application. She clarified that the NEA does allow for some flexibility with amendments to this plan.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Folklife Month 2016 and 2017 – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris referred to Owens' summary of Folklife Month 2016 found in her director's report. After commissioners Rasmussen and Parker Farris, both of whom served as Folklife Ambassadors for this year's initiative, shared details of their respective events, the commission discussed plans for 2017. The commission will continue to partner with the Louisiana Folklore Society regarding the honoraria for tradition bearers, but Owens will administer the program.

The following commissioners are considering serving as a Folklife Ambassador in 2017: Shane Rasmussen, Ray Berthelot, Keagan LeJeune, Melissa Yarborough, and Debra Credeur. Additionally Susan Roach had previously expressed an interest. Owens said that if anyone changes their mind, she will identify others to serve as an ambassador.

B. Folklife Heritage Award 2016 – Teresa Parker Farris

The Office of Cultural Development will host Culture Connection on April 25, 2017, but the focus will be on advocacy with a reception by the Office of Cultural Development constituency for representatives. No culture awards, including the Folklife Heritage Award, will be given this year due to staffing and budgetary limitations.

C. Folklife Commission Appointments/Administration transition - Maida Owens

Owens reported that the Governor's office has started the process to appoint new folklife commissioners. The Department of Culture, Recreations, and Tourism (CRT) has submitted recommendations to fill those vacancies and is waiting to hear from the Governor's Office about new appointments. They will be made by the next Folklife Commission meeting, so as reported earlier, the current meeting will be the last for some commissioners.

D. Set date for next Commission meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, **June 2, 2017** at 1 pm.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Debra Credeur announced that the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area website, www.atchafalaya.org, features five videos of people of the Atchafalaya. Commissioners said that they were exceptional and congratulated her.

Karen Leathem reported that the State Museum is producing an exhibit on women's carnival krewes. They also would like to have a photo exhibit about the Baton Rouge flood and are looking for photographers other than the photojournalists who documented the flood.

Cheryl Castille reported that the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism is developing a music trail and encouraged commissioners to let her know about resources.

Kevin McCaffrey reported that he is wrapping up his film, *Finding Common Ground*, which addresses coastal issues and highlights fishermen's "traditional ecological knowledge" (TEK).

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the commissioners agreed to adjourn at 2:45 p.m.

Folklife Program Director's Report – February 10, 2017, Maida Owens

Folklife Month 2016: Six Folklife Ambassadors from the Folklife Commission and the Folklore Society recognized tradition bearers in October 2016. Carolyn Ware recognized Tereza Tesvich, a Croatian-American from Plaquemines Parish known for her needlework and cooking skills; Susan Roach recognized Fred Beavers, award-winning old-timer fiddler, from Lincoln Parish; John Sharp recognized Walter Mouton, accordionist and "King of the Cajun Dance Hall," from Lafayette Parish; Teresa Parker Farris recognized Jeff Porée, a "Master of Plaster," from New Orleans Parish; Share Rasmussen recognized Ed Huey, native of Caddo Parish and retired music educator and documenter of Mississippi bluesmen; and Maida Owens recognized Baton Rouge quilter Judith Braggs. More details are available online: http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/FM2016.html.

Archiving Photographs: Librarian Laura Acosta is contracted to provide an archival plan and to start implementing the plan during Summer 2017.

Elders Wisdom Project: We submitted a proposal to the Lt Governor for the Elder's Wisdom Project. He is reviewing proposals from throughout CRT.

Baton Rouge Folklife Survey: Dan Atkinson is contracted to document African American tradition bearers in the greater Baton Rouge area during Spring 2017. Ben Sandmel's his essay is complete and online. Joyce Jackson is working on her essays which are due January 31, 2017. The table of contents is online at <http://www.louisianafolklife.org/batonrouge>. For an overview of the project, see my essay, *Baton Rouge: A Cultural Microcosm of Louisiana*, http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/brintro.html. I am preparing the materials for archiving and adding interviewees to the Folklife Database of tradition bearers. I am also working with the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge on strategies to present some of the project results at Ebb and Flow, their new festival on April 1.

Musical Instrument Project: This year, two contractors will inventory musical instrument makers and repairers throughout the state. Holly Hobbs will inventory southeast and north Louisiana. Joseph Vidrine will inventory the greater Baton Rouge area and southeast Louisiana. I will then produce an online map of

those who want to be featured. From their work, we will identify individuals to be more fully documented next year. We are also determining language abilities and will share those with French abilities to CODOFIL for their French-Friendly project.

Bayou Teche Folklife Project: Planning has begun for the next folklife survey which will focus on the communities along Bayou Teche from Port Barre to Berwick in four parishes. I am developing strategies in collaboration with The T.E.C.H.E Project and the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to identify traditions that could be documented after the Musical Instrument Project is completed.

Three-Year Plan for National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Partnership Application: The NEA required a three year plan and description of all Folklife Program activities in the application submitted in September 2016. Below is what was submitted in consultation with Teresa Parker Farris.

Folklife Planning: The Folklife Program in collaboration with the Folklife Commission and the Louisiana Division of the Arts has developed a three-year plan for folklife activities. Several activities are ongoing. All tasks are handled by Maida Owens unless otherwise noted.

Folklife Commission: Continue to work with the Commission on implementing the 2010 Visioning for Folklife Program activities. Commissioners select the Folklife Heritage Award winner that is presented at the annual Louisiana Culture Awards. They also participate in the Office of Cultural Development's Culture Connections events.

Folklife Website: Post online new articles produced from fieldwork. Continue to post online articles from the annual *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* by the Louisiana Folklore Society.

Folklife Month: Honor tradition bearers selected by folklorists serving as Folklife Ambassadors. Provide honoraria for tradition bearers recognized.

Communications: Disseminate news through the Program's email list. Provide articles for agency Facebook pages and the *Culture Communique* e-newsletter. Disseminate news through the Louisiana Folklore Society Facebook page and newsletter. Provide artist vignettes to the agency to use online. Submit essays to the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities *Cultural Vistas*. Submit educational materials to Uniquely Louisiana education portal.

Uniquely Louisiana (www.uniquelylouisiana.org): We created a portal to the Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism educational resources, which includes the Folklife Program's *Louisiana Voices Educator's Guide*, www.louisianavoices.org, and Folklife Fun Facts.

Musical Instruments Project

Current Year 2016-17: Contractors contact 125 makers/repairers to confirm information, identify others, and determine which makers/repairers want to be included in the interactive map or participate in gatherings. Determine which makers/repairers/shops will be fully documented through fieldwork. Add essays online. Add tradition bearers to the Folklife Database.

Year 1 2017-18: Continue the instrument makers/repairers fieldwork. Design and produce the interactive map. Offer panel discussions at festivals and museums. Produce a gathering of makers/repairers in New Orleans. Have designer create a logo and e-postcard, and webpage template for the virtual book and interactive map. Add essays online. Investigate creating an instruments trail with the Office of Tourism.

Year 2 2018-19: Complete remaining documentation of instrument makers. Produce a gathering of makers/repairers in Baton Rouge. Produce a gathering of instrument makers/ repairers in Shreveport. Add to interactive map.

Year 3 2019-20: Produce a gathering of instrument makers/repairers in Lafayette in conjunction with an exhibit produced by Acadiana Center for the Arts. New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation offers Catapult Fund to makers/repairers to build their businesses.

Baton Rouge Traditions Project

Current Year 2016-17: Work with the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge to announce the project and initiate conversations with city leadership (tourism, mayor's office, chamber of commerce, parks) about Baton Rouge identity. We provided a report on the 269 tradition bearers documented or identified in order to include them in their programs, (arts festival, teaching artists, publications, concerts, weekly radio program, art market). We collaborated with the Louisiana Folklore Society on an Archie Green Fellowship from the American Folklife Center.

Archiving Photo Collection

Current Year 2016-17: Consultant provides a multi-year plan and starts implementing it. Folklife staff starts providing item level data.

Year 1 2017-18: librarian consultant and student worker reorganize images using the ethnographic thesaurus. Continue providing item level data. Identify images to be digitized.

Year 2 2018-19: Have images digitized. Consultant prepares finding aid. Deposit photo collection at LSU. Reference copies remain at the Folklife Program office.

Bayou Teche Folklife Project

Current Year 2016-17: Work with NuNu Arts & Culture Collective and The T.E.C.H.E. Project to develop a plan to document the 4 parishes and 15 towns on Bayou Teche, a National Water Trail. Start gathering existing documentation. Develop list of traditions to document.

Year 1 2017-18: Further develop plan to document the Bayou Teche region. Identify fieldwork priorities. Identify key ways that the research would be used, such as for tourism promotion, small business development, education. Start contractors doing fieldwork on Bayou Teche if the instrument research is completed.

Year 2 2018-19: Continue Teche fieldwork. Post essays online as they are completed. Work with The Teche Project to develop strategies to present the results to the public.

Year 3 2019-20: Continue Teche fieldwork.

Apprenticeships

Year 1 2017-18: Investigate strategies to reintroduce apprenticeship grants.