

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING  
Capitol Park Welcome Center  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Friday, January 11, 2019**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Ray Berthelot, Cynthia Bryant, Cheryl Castille, Brian Davis, Teresa Parker Farris, Steven Fullen, Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Tommy Ike Hailey, Rebecca Hamilton, Rodneya Hart, Jim Hogg, Karen Leathem, Miranda Restovic, Susan Roach, Melissa Yarborough.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Herman Fuselier, Erik Kreusch, Charles McGimsey, Ray Scriber, John Sharp, John Silver, Kimberly Walden.

**Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present:** Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts.

**I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER**

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:07 pm at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes for the meetings of June 2018 were accepted. Rebecca Hamilton moved, and Cheryl Castille seconded.

**III. REPORTS**

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

Parker Farris announced that Ray Scriber will replace Jessica Richardson as the Division of Historic Preservation representative and John Silver will represent the Intertribal Council of Louisiana. She reported that she met with Richard Hartley, the CRT Deputy Secretary, about the Folklife Commission being a resource to the department and that he was enthusiastic about folklife.

**B. LDOA Budget Report – Cheryl Castille**

Castille reported that we are in the middle of budget season. She noted that LDOA is affected by the Federal government shutdown as payments on already awarded grants have been halted. This situation does not affect the state-funded Decentralized Arts Fund (DAF). In consultation with the Community Development Coordinators (CDCs) at the Regional Arts Councils, the office is redesigning DAF as mentioned at the last Commission meeting. There will be fewer yet larger grants with a regional approach to funding rather than one based on parishes. This will hopefully encourage more partnerships.

Castille announced several staff changes: April Baham is the new Percent for Art project manager. Kelsea McCrary is the new Cultural Districts program director. Paula While resigned as the Grants Officer. It is expected that the position will be filled soon.

**C. Director's Report – Maida Owens**

Owens directed Commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda and highlighted the website policy changes, the new essays posted online, and the Bayou Culture Collaborative.

#### **IV. BUSINESS**

##### **A. Folklife Month 2018 / 2019 – Teresa Parker Farris**

Parker Farris reported that six Folklife Ambassadors participated in 2018 and LEH supported Folklife Month 2018 by funding the artist honoraria. Details are in the Director's report below. Following a discussion about each recognition event, the ambassadors in attendance agreed that having a strong community partner is critical to program outcome. Parker Farris shared select images from several of the events and also showed part of the video created by Shana Walton and Jonathan Foret about their tradition bearer. Steven Fullen offered to post images and information about the various Folklife Month events through social media.

Commissioners discussed different strategies for future Folklife Month initiatives. Hart inquired about moving the program from October to the spring in order to avoid scheduling conflicts with CRT's other October promotions. Restovic posed the idea of having folklife events throughout the year rather than limiting them to one month. The Commission concluded that for the immediate future Folklife Month will remain in October.

The following Commissioners expressed interest in being a folklife ambassador in 2019: Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Steven Fullen, Rebecca Hamilton, Tommy Ike Hailey, Susan Roach, and Cynthia Bryant. Owens said that they would need to decide whether they wanted to be an ambassador by April 1 and provide all details in early July for inclusion in the fall issue of the LEH's *64 Parishes* publication. The Lt Governor's office needs details by early August for distribution of its press release during the last week of September. Owens will send the details to those considering being an ambassador.

##### **B. Folklife Videos– Teresa Parker Farris**

To explore the possible creation of a new folklife video, an idea introduced at the June 2018 Commission meeting, Parker Farris shared the short video recently produced by Louisiana Public Broadcasting for the Folklife Program. The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area video was not shown as planned with Steven Fullen reporting that the office is reviewing all of their promotional materials and may do a new video in the coming months. Commissioners determined that the existing folklife video offers a sufficiently good overview of the program and its resources. Therefore, another video is not needed at this time. In response to commissioners' inquiries regarding the video's planned distribution, Owens explained that it will be used for staff presentations and in the Office of Tourism's welcome centers. Fullen offered to share it in a blog post. Commissioners also expressed the need for other, more targeted videos for initiatives such as Folklife Month. Brian Davis offered to create short videos for individual tradition bearers for 2019.

##### **C. Set date for next Commission meeting**

Parker Farris reported on the short survey she had emailed to Commissioners prior to the meeting, noting that responses demonstrated support for three, rather than two, meetings annually. After discussion, they decided that a third meeting would be a dedicated committee meeting on a special topic. They also discussed moving the meeting around the state and including activities in the communities, such as visiting exhibits or other cultural resources. The following volunteered for a Special Meetings Committee: Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Ray Berthelot, Steven Fullen, Brian Davis, and Teresa Parker Farris.

The next full meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 14, 2019 at 1 pm at Capitol Park Welcome Center unless the Special Meetings Committee makes other arrangements.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rodneya Hart invited everyone to see the exhibit, *Soul of the South: Selections from the Gitter-Yelen Collection*. Joyce Miller, the museum historian, will be giving a tour immediately following the meeting. Hart also announced the film screening of *I Am MLK, Jr.* to coincide with the museum's presentation of the 1966 Cadillac hearse that transported MLK's body after his 1968 assassination in Memphis.

Tommy Ike Hailey shared that Jim Oertling, who he honored in 2017 Folklife Month, was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. Upcoming songwriting events include: Songs on the Bayou Songwriters Festival, Morgan City – March 25-31, 2019; Third Street Songwriters Festival, Baton Rouge – April 5-7, 2019; and Ozone Songwriters Festival, Mandeville - October 19-20, 2019. The Ozone Music Education Foundation's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Ozone Songwriter Festival in Mandeville, LA, Oct 20-21, 2018 – 105 local, regional and national songwriters - raised \$12,500 for music education.

Steven Fullen announced several upcoming Black History events. In Baton Rouge, BREC will present on the Jena 6. The River Road African American Museum will present Jessica Harris and her work on African American foodways.

Fullen shared about the No Man's Land Bicentennial celebration in February at Fort Jessup and that the Lt Governor will mention folklife in his speeches.

Jennifer Ritter Guidry announced that the Center for Louisiana Studies is working with the UL Lafayette History Department to host a two-day conference, "Representing Slavery in Public: Louisiana's Past in the Present," which includes a tour of Whitney Plantation and panel discussions on slave uprisings and reenactments, engaging the history of slavery in the present, and legacies of enslavement. The conference will be March 14-16 in Lafayette at the Clifton Chenier Center.

Susan Roach shared copies of *On My Way: The Arts of Sarah Albritton*.

Brian Davis announced that the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation's Spring Ramble tour will be in St. Joseph/Tensas Parish on March 23. The 40th Annual Louisiana Preservation Conference will meet May 2-3 at the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge. Nominations are now being accepted through March 1 for the Louisiana's Most Endangered Places List. More info at LTHP.org.

## **VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the Commissioners agreed to adjourn at 2:57 p.m. Brian Davis moved, Ray Berthelot seconded.

## **Folklife Program Director's Report – January 11, 2019, Maida Owens**

**Folklife Commissioners:** Ray Scriber will represent the Division of Historic Preservation since Jessica Richardson is no longer with the agency.

**Dunbar Award:** I will receive a Dunbar Award from the Louisiana Civil Service League on January 18. It recognizes classified local, state, and municipal civil service employees for their service to the state.

**NEA Funding:** NEA approved changing the use of the NEA Folk Arts Partnership funds to the Bayou Culture Collaborative. Some funds may support a program using the musical instruments research.

**Folklife Month 2018:** Six Folklife Ambassadors participated in 2018: Shane Rasmussen (Natchitoches), Tommy Ike Hailey (Covington), Barry Ancelet (Lafayette), Teresa Parker Farris (New Orleans), Shana Walton and Jonathan Foret (Houma), and Joyce Jackson (Baton Rouge). LEH supported Folklife Month 2018 by funding the artist honoraria.

**Baton Rouge Folklife Survey:** The Baton Rouge Traditions traveling exhibit was displayed at three locations: Arts Summit in July, Capital Park Museum November 2-5, and the Arts Council of Greater BR for Dec 10-31. Upcoming exhibits include the Giving Quilt for Feb 19-26, Calcasieu Parish Library Feb 28-March 29, Pointe Coupee Parish Historical Society April 1-15, and EBR Library-Goodwood September 2019.

**Folklife Video:** LPB made 9 promotional videos for the Office of Cultural Development, which can be seen here: <https://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/>. The 2:50 minute Folklife Program video is also posted on the new CRT Folklife page. It will be used on the CRT website, the folklife website, and the OCD Facebook page.

**Folklife Website:** In order to integrate folklife programming into the CRT website and facilitate future maintenance, a Folklife Program page is on the CRT website: <https://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/arts/folklife/index>. New folklife projects, such as the Bayou Culture Collaborative, will be featured here rather than on Folklife in Louisiana ([www.louisianafolklife.org](http://www.louisianafolklife.org)). The CRT website uses a web content management program that is much easier to master than writing in html on the Folklife in Louisiana website. The Folklife in Louisiana will continue to feature new research, such as the new essays listed below. Problems with two online databases have been corrected. The Creole State exhibit and the Quilt Documentation project are now working as intended.

Teresa Parker Farris submitted **The Elders Speak: West Feliciana Parish African American Oral History Project**, [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/westfeliciana1.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/westfeliciana1.html).

Barry Jean Ancelet gave permission to post **Exporting Mardi Gras**, [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/anceletmg.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/anceletmg.html).

Hobbs completed her fieldwork contract for the musical instruments project and provided the essay, **Innovation, Tradition, and Change in Louisiana Musical Instrument Making and Repair**, [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/instruments1.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/instruments1.html).

Marc Savoy gave permission to combine two existing essays as **Reminiscences of a Cajun Accordion Builder**, [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/lfmsavoymusic.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmsavoymusic.html).

Laura Marcus Green expanded her essay, **Living in Style: The Language of Hats**, that she did for the Baton Rouge project, [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/brLivingInStyle1.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/brLivingInStyle1.html)

**Bayou Culture Collaborative:** This project developed out of the Bayou Culture Conversations project in the spring. The goal is to help sustain the traditional cultures of coastal Louisiana and has become the primary focus for the Folklife Program. In collaboration with the Louisiana Folklore Society and other organizations, the Folklife Program is offering activities to help to sustain the traditional knowledge of coastal communities affected by land loss in Lafourche, St Mary, Terrebonne, and lower Jefferson Parishes. We are especially interested in supporting traditions that are endangered due to land loss. The activities will be at a variety of locations throughout the area, and will vary from workshops, classes, and presentations about local traditions or how to sustain them.

It is a collaboration between Louisiana Folklore Society, the Louisiana Division of the Arts Folklife Program, the South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center, Nicholls State University Center for Bayou Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette Center for Louisiana Studies, and Bayou Regional Arts Council. Information about the project is online: <https://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/arts/folklife/bayou-culture-collaborative/>.

In the fall, I have been working with about 30 groups and individuals to plan workshops and classes to take place in the spring and summer. The organizations include Finding Our Roots African American Museum, Houma; Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP), Thibodaux; Center for Traditional Boat Building in Lockport; South Lafourche Folklife and Heritage Museum; Jean Lafitte National Park, Thibodaux; Main Street Houma; Main Street Thibodaux; Black Student Union, Nicholls, Thibodaux; Bayou Regional Arts Council; South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center, Pointe Aux Chene Indian Tribe, United Houma Nation, and Cajun Music Preservation Society. Several Nicholls faculty will also offer classes and workshops.

It is supported by NEA Folk Arts Partnership funds, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, and Division of the Arts state funds.

The project will be featured at the Louisiana Folklore Society meeting in Houma on Saturday, March 23.