

MINUTES OF NEW ENGLAND DRAMA COUNCIL

Meeting on April 19, 2009 E. O. Smith High School, Storrs, CT

Present: Gail Frappier, President; William Vinton (VP); Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane, Historian; Joan Grant, Immediate Past President; Pat Souney, Secretary/Treasurer; Sarah Bunkley (NH); Sherry Cox (CT); Bob DiMartino (RI); John Lincoln (RI); Robin Lisherness, (ME); Ania Miller (CT) Richard Mullen (ME); Scott Piddington (NH); Pete Tarsi (MA); Dave Wesley and Tracy Wesley (VT); (N.B. Lenore Grunko, 2nd VP had other duties so was in and out of the meetings; Sarah had a show in the festival)

The meeting was called to order by President Gail Frappier at 10:10 AM

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Minutes of the previous meeting, Oct. 4, 2008, were accepted.

Financial Report: April 19, 2008 Distributed, accepted and attached to the official minutes on file with Secretary/Treasurer

Pat thanked Scott for helping set up a paperless, no-fee account with Citizens Bank.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT

Joyce has all files on spreadsheets that are temporarily in an older computer. She will share these files with Scott and they will be on the new website. Joyce is still looking for photos of shows that have been in the New England Festival.

STATE FESTIVAL REPORTS

Connecticut – Sherry Cox reported 11 schools participated in one State Festival at Ridgefield

Maine – Dick Mullen & Robin Lisherness reported that 84 schools participated in two Divisions Division A (more than 600 students) was held in Bangor and Division B (less than 600) was held in Rockland.. One school from each division advances to the New England Festival. The rubric used in Maine is on the Maine Drama Council website.

Massachusetts – Pete Tarsi reported that 110 schools participated at 14 preliminary sites. After Semi-finals (7 sites), 14 schools performed at the State Finals. There is also a Middle School Festival.

New Hampshire – Scott Piddington reported that 26 schools participated at the regional level. There were 12 schools at the State Finals. Plymouth hosted the finals.

Rhode Island - Bob DiMartino and John Lincoln reported that 11 schools participated in the Festival, which was held in South Kingston.

Vermont – Tracey and Dave Wesley reported that 32 schools participated at 5 Regional Sites. 10 advanced to the finals. Vermont has “associate” productions that only participate in Regionals.

OLD BUSINESS

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT: The following slate, nominated in October:

Gail Frappier for President and **Bill Vinton for Vice President,**
were UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED to Two-Year Terms.

Nonprofit Status Scott reported that he has been in contact with a Volunteer Lawyer through Franklin Pierce Law Center. He is being assisted by a Graduate Student Intern, Denise Amoateng and her professor, Ashlyn Lembree. We were originally incorporated in the State of New Hampshire in Articles of Agreement under the name “New England High School Drama Festival Council.” Our current bylaws refer to us as New England Drama Council, so the first thing we need to do is change our name in our Articles of Agreement to “New England Drama Council.” This will make it easier to proceed with the filing of IRS form 1023. Scott will proceed with this once the “trademark” search for NEDC/New England Drama Council is complete.

OLD BUSSINESS Nonprofit Status *Continued ...*

ACTION ITEM: Moved, seconded and **approved unanimously** that Article 1 of the Articles of Agreement be amended as follows: The “New England High School Drama Festival Council” shall be renamed the “NEW ENGLAND DRAMA COUNCIL.”

ACTION ITEM: Moved, seconded and **approved unanimously** that **Scott Piddington be appointed Treasurer Pro-Tem for the purpose of witnessing this change.**

Constitution And Bylaw Revision Committee – This Committee is still working so report is tabled until the October meeting.

Policy Regarding Multiple Drama Organizations Within A Single State - This topic will be discussed by the Bylaw Committee with recommendations included in their October report.

NEW BUSINESS

Web Site On April 3, Scott asked Council members to review a prototype of a website at the following address: <http://www.spiddington.com/nedc/2010.html>. Scott has investigated domain names and made some suggestions. We will be able set this up through BLUEHOST.COM and the cost is \$10.00 per name.

ACTION ITEM: A motion was made and seconded that **we buy a domain name from BLUEHOST.COM and establish a web sate. PASSED UNSANIMOUSLY**

Discussion about names ensued.

ACTION ITEM: Motion was made and seconded that we **purchase two domain names: nedrama.org and nedrama.com PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Discussion followed about what should be included on the web site. Agreed by consensus to include our Constitution and Bylaws, official minutes, and names of council members with links to email.

Nominating Committee for Secretary/Treasurer – Joan Grant and Joyce Hindle-Koutsogiane were appointed to nominate a candidate for Secretary & Treasurer for the two-year term beginning April 2010.

THE MEETING WAS RECESSED AT 11:25 AM UNTIL 8 AM ON SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2009.

THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED AT 8:07 AM ON SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2009

Festival Directors were present

IMPRESSIONS OF FESTIVAL 2009 – From Council Members & Directors

- Please do not start plays earlier than printed start times – schools were locked out of the performances (CT does not have a check-in process)
- Quality of participating plays was high!
- Host should double-check the accuracy of technical information, plots and specs before sending out to schools.
- A ground plot of the surrounding areas would be helpful - schools would like to know what is beyond the doors back stage and at the load-in areas
- Communication and speed of response is necessary
- BACK STAGE: Consider having an ASM in each wing to help guest school
- Student Hosts need to coordinate school tours with technical staffs

IMPRESSIONS OF FESTIVAL 2009 – From Council Members & Directors *Continued*

- STUDENT FORUMS: Discussion ensued about large Single Forum vs small breakout groups – small group format has possibility of uneven training of leaders so not same experience for all; small schools may not have students from show at all forums; single student from show may feel overwhelmed;
- Some asked if there were clear guidelines for host schools. It was noted that there are and they are given to all hosts and will be available through our new web site.
- Due to time constraints, Pat requested that Directors send additional comments to her via email. Jennifer Bourassa, Presque Isle Maine wrote and her comments are attached to these minutes.

REPORT ON FESTIVAL 2010 - MAINE

Dede Waite reported that the 2010 Festival would be held at Falmouth High School in Falmouth, ME
Tentative dates are: April 15, 16 & 17

Nothing was distributed, but Dede gave an oral report as follows:

- Technical Director: Brad Knowles
- Auditorium seats 430
- She is thinking about repeating the combined 2 and 3 block performance sessions
- Hoping to include “cultural excursions” into Freeport and Portland that will include workshops at theatres and studios
- There will be a closed feed video set up
- Possibly rotate assigned seating
- Stage has a 42’ proscenium and is 30’ deep with an apron
- There is a shop behind the stage with a garage door for load-in
- Wing space is very limited but there is a full fly loft
- Executive Committee Walk Through TBA in June
- **Fall meeting at Falmouth High School will be October 3, 2009**

Election of 2nd Vice President:

Dede Waite was nominated and unanimously elected to the position of 2nd Vice President for 2009 - 2010.

Maine Life Members: Robin Lisherness and Richard Mullen were nominated and unanimously approved to receive NEDC Life Membership at the 2010 Festival in Maine

Report from Student Congress reported by Rachael, Tess, Rachael & Saa, students from Falmouth ME

- WORKSHOPS were fun and worked well: favorites were Playwrighting & Careers in Theatre
Some felt the workshops were challenging, others felt they were too basic; signing up was confusing; workshop leaders should have been introduced; more technical workshops needed
- FORUMS Some liked smaller forums, others wanted large forum in theatre as per Rutland
Nice to get feedback
Forum Leaders not always prepared –
- FOOD – many liked that campus dining afforded choices, others missed everyone eating in same space
- BANQUET was noisy; some would have liked clarification of dress requirements

Report from Student Congress *Continued ...*

- BEFORE THE FESTIVAL - Need quick response to questions
Need accurate technical plots in advance
- Stage extension was noisy but some like challenge of adapting to new space
- HOSTS – bright color shirts worked well
Hosts need to know details of school and how to get on and off stage
- Need specific people assigned to backstage to assist with techs & load-in & load-out
- Adults should encourage audience to be quiet and serious, not rile them up
- Too much noise in audience at start of shows
- Hosts doing intro should not touch sets
- Introductions set the tone of the festival
- Casts should not have to walk through lobby in costume to go back stage
- Seats should be reserved or assigned for actors so casts entering after performance can find seats
- Some liked open seating because they could meet new people; others missed assigned seating and checkers
- Need a greenroom space adjacent to backstage
- Felt like director was showcasing students, not students showcasing their work
- Activities:
 - Would like more opportunities to meet people but also need time with own school
 - Would like a balance between structured and free time activities
 - Re: Dance: more info ahead of time about what was expected
- NOTES FOR THE FUTURE
 - MORE “DOWN TIME”
 - NEED SIGNS & MAPS
 - NEED MORE TIME IN SCHEDULE FOR CASTS TO LOAD OUT SETS AND GET BACK IN TO SEE NEXT SHOW
 - GREENROOM AND WARM-UP SPACE NEAR THE STAGE
 - ABILITY TO LOAD-IN AND STORE

Richard reported that the techs for Maine went very well.

Options for Executive Committee Summer meeting were discussed. Either June 9,10, 16 or 17. Dede will advise and Pat will notify the entire Council in the event that other state reps would like to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM

Respectfully submitted by
Patricia A. Souney
Executive Secretary/Treasurer

ADDENDUM TO NEDC MINUTES – April 19 & 20, 2009

From: Jennifer Bourassa
To: PAT SOUNEY
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2009
Subject: Ideas for the next festival

Pat,

Thank you so much for all the work you did for the workshops. My kids REALLY enjoyed them, and we especially enjoyed the tech workshops. This is my weakest area so my kids learned so much! They are excited to try some new lighting ideas and scene painting tips.

This was the first NE Festival I have attended, so I cannot help much on comparing festivals, but can give some feedback on this festival:

1. My kids loved the workshops. I know this is not easy to do, but I wonder if in tech workshops if you could have a Basic and Advanced? My school is stronger with acting but weak on tech, so we could use help with the basics. Some of the other schools obviously know what they are doing with tech!! Especially workshops on inexpensive ways to develop the tech part of the shows. We don't have thousands of dollars to spend, but we work hard and could benefit from tricks of the trade.
2. Please have the host tech directors take a few minutes to run the stage managers through the basic format for the one hour tech. (where to load, what time to be there, set storage, etc...) It would help us to know ahead of time what the tech expectations are before we need to be there. Just a quick overview early on the first day would be great.
3. Robin and Dick are wonderful NEDC reps and we are lucky to have them in Maine, but I think that because both of them are old hands at festivals, it didn't occur to them that I had little to no clue of what to expect or where to go or what to do. For example, I was so focused on making sure my kids got where they needed to be, that I honestly had no idea I was supposed to be in a directors' forum at the end of each session. In retrospect, I should have figured that out on my own, but I didn't. For directors who have never been to a festival, I think they need a bit more support in understanding what they are supposed to do. I didn't even know what questions to ask!! The NEDF is so different from what I am accustomed to in our regionals, that I could have used more basic information. Maybe a packet or email document from the NEDC for brand new directors? Just something to help us know what is expected of us.
4. There just wasn't much down time, and I know that there are many reasons for that, but my kids could have used a bit of quiet time here and there. Maybe even just 15 minutes here and there? I don't know, but they just were run ragged and were overwhelmed by the all the great people and the experience. At one point, they kind of looked shellshocked.
5. The banquet seemed a bit rowdy. At one point, my students begged me to allow them to leave so they could go somewhere less stressful. ?Maybe having a clear expectation for dress and behavior at the banquet? I know some of this is an issue with lack of supervision and those individual students, but I wonder if making them dress up would make them less likely to act up.

I appreciate all that you did to make our experience so wonderful. We appreciated it!!

Jennifer Bourassa
English Department
Presque Isle High School