

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOUISIANA FOLK LIFE COMMISSION MEETING  
Capitol Park Museum  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Friday, January 15, 2016**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Ray Berthelot, Debra Credeur, Teresa Parker Farris, Nicole Hobson-Morris, Amanda LaFleur, Keagan LeJeune, Kevin McCaffrey, Charles McGimsey, Allison Peña, Shane Rasmussen, Susan Roach, Melissa Yarborough.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Kevin Billiot, Winifred Byrd, Rebecca Hamilton, Karen Leatham, Miranda Restovic, Susan Spillman, Guiyuan Wang, 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 7:11pm at the Capitol Park Museum in Baton Rouge.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes for the last meeting were approved. Ray Berthelot moved and Susan Roach seconded.

**III. REPORTS**

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

Parker Farris deferred her report to the Business Section of the agenda. She noted that Maida Owens had received the Benjamin Botkin Prize for lifetime achievement in public folklore from the American Folklore Society. She also reported Cathy Hernandez's recent departure as LDOA Director and expressed gratitude for her support of folklife. She added that all commissioners need to complete their ethics training by April.

**B. LDOA Budget Report – Maida Owens**

Owens reported that the executive budget has the Arts at a continuation budget for FY17. The first round of mid-year budget cuts for FY16 did not affect the Arts significantly, but there will be additional cuts this year.

**D. Director – Maida Owens**

Owens directed commissioners to her written report attached to the minutes from the June commission meeting. She pointed out that the Baton Rouge Project is going well with another essay being posted this week. Owens noted that she is talking with the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge about presenting the fieldwork results to the public.

**IV. BUSINESS**

**A. Folklife Month 2015 and 2016 – Teresa Parker Farris**

Parker Farris reported about Folklife Month 2015, noting that folklorists across the country were impressed and pleased with the initiative. Ambassadors in attendance reported about their experiences, detailed in a report that Parker Farris offered to share with any interested commissioners. Parker Farris also reported on a meeting that she, Kevin McCaffrey, and Maida Owens held with the Louisiana Folklore Society's Mona Lisa Saloy and John Sharp to review Folklife Month 2015 and explore possibilities for 2016. She thanked Kevin McCaffrey and Maida Owens for their roles in planning and implementation. Following discussion, McCaffrey proposed having Folklife Month 2016 and to have a proclamation declaring October as Folklife Month. Melissa Yarborough seconded. The motion passed.

The Commission discussed expanding their collaboration with the Louisiana Folklore Society and strategies for selecting ambassadors. The following will serve on the ambassador selection committee: Kevin

McCaffrey, Ray Berthelot, John Sharp, and Mona Lisa Saloy. Parker Farris proposed utilizing criteria—drawn from language on the Folklife Program website—for identifying and, in turn, selecting tradition bearers. Commissioners noted, however, that some individuals who received recognition in 2015 would not be eligible according to the definition since they were either academically trained or idiosyncratic artists. Parker Farris will work with the committee to refine the definition and prepare the call for ambassador/tradition bearer pairs that will be sent to Folklife Commissioners and Folklore Society members. The date of the Society meeting on April 8 and 9, 2016 was noted. Parker Farris and McCaffrey will contact Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser about Folklife Month and the proclamation.

#### **B. Culture Connection and Folklife Heritage Award 2016 – Teresa Parker Farris**

Owens reported that the 2016 Culture Connection will be Tuesday, April 26 and Wednesday, April 27. The focus will be on strategic planning for the Office of Cultural Development and not professional development or affinity meetings as last year. The Lt. Governor will speak on Tuesday morning and the awards ceremony will take place that night.

Parker Farris encouraged commissioners to submit Culture Award nominations. The following volunteered to serve on the Folklife Heritage Award Selection Committee: Melissa Yarborough, Gwen Wang, Amanda LaFleur, Nicole Hobson-Morris, and Ray Berthelot. Debra Credeur will arrange the conference call with Yarborough who volunteered to serve as committee chair. Commissioners requested the selection process be clarified with Phil Boggan.

#### **C. Folklife Commission Appointments/Administration transition - Maida Owens**

Owens asked all commissioners to let her know whether they would like to continue serving with the new administration. It is unknown when the appointments will be made. The department is investigating having the appointments be made by the Lt. Governor rather than the Governor.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 10, 2016 at 1 p.m.

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

Parker Farris announced that Allison Pena has retired from Jean Lafitte National Park and congratulated her on her 25 years of service.

Shane Rasmussen distributed materials about the Cane River National Heritage Area conference, *Resistance. Escape. Community: Opposition to Enslavement in North Louisiana*, which will be held February 19-20 in Natchitoches.

Nicole Hobson-Morris announced that 2016 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. As part of the celebration, persons are encouraged to visit a historic resource in their community or statewide, take a selfie, and post it on social media using any of the following hashtags: #LaSHPO, #LaBuildingSelfie, or #LaArchSelfie (Archaeological Sites). Photos will be used in a poster, but not all photos will be chosen. Deadline for photos to be considered for inclusion is April 29, 2016.

Louisiana Folklore Society's deadline for proposals is January 15, and the annual meeting is April 8-9 in Lake Charles.

### **VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:33 p.m. Susan Roach moved and Allison Pena seconded.

## Folklife Program Director's Report – January 15, 2016, Maida Owens

**Transition Changes:** Billy Nungesser took office as Lt Governor on Monday, January 11, 2016. He has asked Phil Boggan to continue as Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cultural Development. Friday, January 8, was Cathy Hernandez's last day with the Office of Cultural Development/Division of Arts. We wish her well and support her future endeavors.

**Arts Budget:** The Executive Budget has the Arts at a continuation budget for FY17. The first round of mid-year budget cuts for FY16 did not affect the Arts significantly, but there will be additional cuts this year.

**Folklife Fieldwork Grants:** LDOA will offer Folklife fieldwork grants in 2016-17. Once approved, the guidelines will be announced, hopefully in Spring 2016.

**Archiving Photographs:** Owens is preparing the Folklife Program's print, slide, and negative photo collection for archiving.

**Neutral Strip Folklife Survey:** Two contractors are providing research for the Neutral Strip Folklife Survey. Rolonda Teal is providing two essays based on her prior work in the region. One will be on trail rides and the second will be on night fishing. She will attend two events in order to provide photos. Jon and Jocelyn Donlon will provide an essay based on 24 interviews, but the topic has not been determined.

**Baton Rouge Folklife Survey:** More projects are complete and 10 essays (underlined) are posted online and a Baton Rouge Traditions logo has been added to 11 essays from prior projects. The table of contents is online at [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/br.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/br.html). Below are the contracted projects using funds from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Folklife Center's Archie Green Fellowship. Underlined titles are online. Owens is preparing the materials for archiving and adding interviewees to the Folklife Database of tradition bearers.



\*Indicates that a field report is available upon request.

### Introduction

- Baton Rouge: A Cultural Microcosm of Louisiana - Maida Owens
- Traditions in Baton Rouge: A Photo Essay - Maida Owens

### Baton Rouge Gives

- \*Fiber Arts and Community Service - Laura Marcus Green
- In Noah's Footsteps: Traditions of Animal Rescue Groups in Baton Rouge - Carolyn Ware

### Baton Rouge Makes

- Stitching Memories: Judith Bragg's Black Folk Art Quilts - Laura Marcus Green
- Folk and Traditional Arts in the Capital Region: Sustaining Community Values Through Handcraft - Douglas Manger
- Fabricating Fun: Mardi Gras Costumes in The Capital City (In Development) - Jocelyn and Jon Donlon

### Baton Rouge Plays

- It's a Very Pink Day in My Neighborhood - the Spanish Town Mardi Gras - Joceyln Hazelwood Donlon
- The Folk Artistry of Sac-a-lait Fisherman Glenn Davis - Douglas Manger
- Balance of Grace and Strength: Chinese Folk Dancing in South Louisiana - Guiyuan Wang
- The Blue Blues: Larry Garner Doing His Own Thing - Joyce Jackson
- \*Baton Rouge Blues - Joyce Jackson
- \*secular music - Ben Sandmel
- My Way To Show Baton Rouge I'm Here: Latino Music and Dance in Baton Rouge - Dominic Bordelon

#### Baton Rouge Worship

- \*Church choirs - Liz Williams
- \*Sacred music - Maureen Loughran
- African American Preaching Styles - Joyce Jackson
- The Gospel Train: The Zion Travelers Spiritual Singers - Joyce Marie Jackson
- \*African American Church Dress - Laura Marcus Green
- Dancing in the Light: The Nine-Day Festival of Navaratri in South Louisiana - Daria Woodside
- Satyanarayana Puja: A Hindu Prayer Service in South Louisiana - Daria Woodside
- Preserving Vietnamese Culture and Language in Southern Louisiana: Altars as Symbols of Identity - Emma Tomingas-Hatch

#### Baton Rouge Works

- Satisfying Work in Skilled Repair: Traditional Occupations in Baton Rouge, Louisiana - Jon and Jocelyn Donlon
- \*Cakes and Bakeries - Laura Marcus Green
- \* Boudin, Peacakes, and Specialty Grocery Stores: Small Food Businesses in Baton Rouge - Maria Zeringue
- Real Doctors: Folk Traditions of LSU Vet School - Carolyn Ware
- A Master's Touch: Wirt Bellue's Inventions and Reinventions in the Workplace - Douglas Manger
- \* Creative Pragmatism at Work: Generational Small Businesses in Baton Rouge - Douglas Manger
- \*Body Adornment Occupations - Kelley Fisher
- \*African American Businesses - Maida Owens and James Terry
- \*Stories from the State Capitol Workers - David Kunian

#### Baton Rouge Diversifies

- \* Moon Cakes, Knotting, and Feng Shui: A Peek of Chinese Culture in Baton Rouge, Louisiana - Jun Zou
- \* Places Called Home: Folk Traditions among Muslim Immigrants in Baton Rouge, Louisiana - Jocelyn Hazelwood Donlon
- \* The Difference Between a House and a Home: Latino Experiences in Baton Rouge - Dominic Bordelon
- \* The Moon Festival and Other Vietnamese Traditions in Baton Rouge, Louisiana - Cecilia Vo

**Uniquely Louisiana:** This Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Education Initiative funded by the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area is complete and online. The department is now planning its launch. The web address will be [www.UniquelyLouisiana.org](http://www.UniquelyLouisiana.org). The web portal features 235 education resources provided by 11 CRT agencies.

**Botkin Prize:** In October, Maida Owens received the 2015 Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for lifetime achievement in public folklore from the American Folklore Society.