**Minutes of January ATCA Ex-Com Conference Call**

**January 5, 2017**

Bill Hirschman called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. EST. The following Ex-Com members were present: Susan Cohn, Charles Giuliano, Lou Harry, Brad Hathaway, Bill Hirschman, Ed Rubin, and Martha Steketee. Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary; Teddie Hathaway, ATCA treasurer; Robert Sokol, ATCA administrator; and Jay Handelman, ATCA Foundation president, were also present. Kerry Reid and Wendy Rosenfield were absent.

Barbara had distributed the minutes of the New York Ex-Com meeting by e-mail before the conference call. Ed Rubin made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Barbara has sent all the meeting minutes for the past year to Brad, and he is posting them in the Members Only area of the website so members can have access to them. Bill commended Brad and his team for their work on the website; they are doing a good job posting items and keeping the site active.

Bill reported that right now there is no one designated to handle publicity or circulate press releases on the website. If someone has a press release, send it to Brad for the time being, and he will make sure it gets distributed. Wendy has the master e-mail list for press releases; Bill will get a copy of it from her. Bill can also put the information in an e-blast. Robert said it’s easy to set up a MailChimp account to circulate press releases. Bill said he will send him the contact list, and Robert will set up an account.

Lou reported on the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award. The committee has 27 plays to consider; they are waiting for the last 3 or 4. Lou is posting them on a Google doc site, and that process is working well for the committee members. So far no one has asked for the $40 that was offered to reimburse anyone who wanted to print out hard copies of the plays. Lou is going to work out the logistics of voting for the winners.

Lou mentioned one problem: some playwrights claim that they have been “recommended” for the Steinberg/ATCA Award, and that hurts both the committee and the award. They have been asked not to say they have been recommended, and the theaters have been told not to publicize that plays have been submitted for the award. The language that should be used in “submitted for Steinberg/ATCA Award consideration.” Lou said he will be sure to use that wording consistently.

Barbara reported on the Primus Prize. There are 26 applicants for the 2016 award. The committee got behind on their reading but have now finished and selected seven finalists for the award. They are Mia Chung for her play “You for Me for You,” Cheryl Davis for her play “Maid’s Door,” Laura Jacqmin for her play “Look, we are breathing,” Martyna Majok for her play “Ironbound,” Melissa Ross for her play “Nice Girl,” Stephanie Walker for her play “The Art of Disappearing,” and Lauren Yee for her play “in a word.”

Barbara will draft a press release to circulate, and the committee will announce the winner within the next few weeks.

There was some discussion on what to do if the same play wins both the Primus Prize and the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award. This has never happened before, although often plays are under consideration for both awards. It’s unlikely this will ever occur, and if it does, we will have to discuss what to do about it.

Bill reported that at present ATCA has 230 members, 6 of whom are emeritus members. Bill also said the board needs to decide on a gift to honor Barry’s stellar work as administrator. People can make suggestions to Bill.

Bill reported on the San Francisco conference. Planning is under way, and the committee will soon have some updates. They have a tentative grid of the schedule. There will not be a single conference hotel; multiple hotels at different rates will be suggested. Jay was concerned about the logistics; the committee needs to let people know very definitely where they need to be and when, and they need to keep track of where people are staying to make sure everyone is included at all times. Robert said that conference attendees will all have maps and schedules. Also there are a large number of Bay Area ATCA members, and they are going to have a buddy system. Each Bay Area member will take responsibility for 6 to 8 visiting members. Also all the hotels are in the Union Square area, which is fairly compact, so they will be close together. The committee didn’t feel they should dictate to people where they had to stay because San Francisco is expensive.

Brad reported on the Professional Development Committee. Misha Berson is doing her critics seminar in Seattle in January. Nine or ten people have signed up. The seminar will involve hands-on mentoring. It intends to be a pilot program that can be replicated in other parts of the country. Foundation ATCA is underwriting the seminar. We are going to be working on more localized events in the future. Bill commended Misha and Brad on their work in organizing the seminar. Brad said he would get the list of attendees to give to Jay for the Foundation’s records.

Russell Warne attended a young critics’ seminar in Wroclaw, Poland, last October; he has written a report on his experience, and it is posted on the website.

Teddie made the treasurer’s report. We ended up with a slight deficit for the year. However, she still doesn’t have the final figures from the New York mini meeting, and that may make a difference. According to the report that Teddie submitted to the board, the loss for the year was $3,081.38. That figure is offset by conference profits of $1,444.72, which reduces the overall loss to $1,636.66. The board needs to review the figures for the 2017 budget.

There is presently no mini meeting scheduled for 2017. Sherry Eaker is willing to plan another meeting for New York, but she needs to have a committee to work with so she can get input from other people, especially now that Ira is no longer available to help her. The board also should have some input into planning the mini meeting.

The idea of regional conferences is interesting, but the logistics need to be worked out. J. W. Arnold has suggested a weekend during the fall in Miami or West Palm Beach. The hotel prices tend to be high at that time, but they are even higher in January or February, which is the other time we have often scheduled mini meetings. Susan Cohn suggested a mini meeting at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in October; that has the advantage of having a preset schedule, and Ashland is usually very happy to host us. Lou suggested a regional gathering at the Humana Festival in Louisville since a number of our members already attend; the weekend for industry and press this year is April 6–9. Again this would have the advantage of having a preset schedule, and we could just add a couple of extra meetings. Jay again mentioned the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; the problem is that the dates are very close to our conference in San Francisco, but a regional meeting might be a possibility for those in the area. Also the discriminatory and controversial HB2 amendment has not

been repealed.

Robert suggested that we should set up a template for a regional conference and let members know that ATCA is working to create an event in their area of the country.

Looking ahead to 2018, Anne Siegel and Jonathan Abarbanel are working to put together a conference at American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin.

Bill reported that the *New York Times* is cutting back on its arts coverage outside of New York City. The Dramatists Guild is very concerned and wants to draft a letter expressing its concerns about theater coverage by qualified critics. Doug Wright has asked ATCA to collaborate on a joint statement that applies to theaters across the country. First, we need to find out why the *Times* is reducing its coverage. Is theater advertising down? Charles said we should get the information on why this is happening and post it and any statement we make on our website and circulate them to other media outlets.

Many of our members don’t participate in the ATCA Facebook or Twitter accounts; perhaps they don’t know how to use these accounts. We need to circulate information on how to use Facebook or Twitter. We also need to check with Jonathan Mandell to find out how the system is working at this point. Can it be automated? Should we be retweeting members’ work? Do we need two Twitter accounts? These are all questions that need to be addressed.

Bill said that the expense of making videos of the panels at the Philadelphia conference and the New York mini meeting is what produced the deficit in the 2016 budget. Should we ask the Foundation for underwriting support to videotape the conference panels? Should these videos continue to be available only to members on the website, or should they be posted where everyone can have access to them? Jay clarified that the Foundation could offer support even if the videos are only posted in the members-only area.

Susan mentioned that the San Francisco panel discussions will be open to the public, so the public should have access to them. We have to be sure to get permission from the participants for the panels to be broadly viewed. We should also find a low-cost way to get the videotaping done.

Bill is very interested in the organization making a concerted effort to recruit new members. He has sent out questions to about 30 ATCA members to get their feedback on how to go about this. During the next conference call in February, we need to focus on how to go about attracting new members. Bill will also talk to Anne Siegel about a deadline for the Membership Services Committee to come up with suggestions for some new membership categories. Ed pointed out that there are no ATCA members in 14 states.

We are in the process of making the transition from Barry Gaines to Robert Sokol as ATCA administrator. Barry is sending all his records to Teddie, and she and Robert will sort through them and determine who will take responsibility for the various tasks.

The business being concluded, Ed Rubin made a motion, seconded by Brad Hathaway, to adjourn, and the meeting ended at 2:40 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary.

**Addendum**

The following motion was made and passed by e-mail:

On January 31, Ed Rubin made a motion, seconded by Lou Harry, that ATCA treasurer Teddie Hathaway, administrator Robert Sokol, and ATCA Chair William Hirschman be authorized to have signatory authority on ATCA’s checking account at Bank of America. The motion passed on February 1.