**Minutes of ATCA Ex-Com Meeting in New York**

**October 27, 2016**

Bill Hirschman called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. EST. The following Ex-Com members were present: Lou Harry, Bill Hirschman, Kerry Reid, Ed Rubin, and Martha Steketee. Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary, and Jay Handelman, ATCA Foundation president, were also present. Susan Cohn and Wendy Rosenfield joined the meeting by phone. Jack Lyons sat in on the meeting. Charles Giuliano and Brad Hathaway were absent.

The minutes from the June teleconference call had never been approved, so Kerry Reid made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to approve those minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill made a report on membership. We presently have 255 members; we have gained 30 new members but lost about 15. Thanks to Susan Cohn, who has been responsible for recruiting several new members. Six people are not renewing their memberships because of professional changes.

Robert Sokol is hard at work on organizing the San Francisco conference. He is meeting regularly with Susan Cohn and Brad Hathaway to plan the conference. They are not planning on having a conference hotel; instead, there will be a list of hotels to choose from.

The Professional Development Committee is working on several projects. Misha Berson has scheduled a critics seminar in Seattle for the weekend of January 20. It will be a daylong seminar. She is received some funding from the ATCA Foundation to underwrite the seminar.

There was no formal report from the International Committee, but Bill mentioned that Russell Warne, Marie Kilker, and Jeffrey Jenkins have all attended international conferences in recent months.

Lou reported on the New Plays Committee. He has vetted 18 recommendations for the Steinberg/ATCA Award from members. He has also notified members of his committee that no hard copies of scripts will be provided this year. The electronic copies of the plays will be stored in one place on a Google drive for easy access. Four are already ready to be read. ATCA will reimburse $40 to members who wish to make hard copies of the scripts. The committee has decided that rolling world premieres will be considered in the final year of their productions.

Barbara reported on the Primus Prize. Currently the committee is reading the submitted plays. There are 26 applicants. The committee hopes to have a winner announced by the end of the year.

Brad Hathaway has agreed to be the chair of the Communications Committee. Chris Rawson will help him post items on the website; Brad will be the gatekeeper. Jose Solis is taking care of Facebook, and Jonathan Mandell will handle Twitter. Leslie will continue to make technical changes when they are needed. There is a definite interest in making the website more active. We should find a fourth person to handle publicity and outreach. Also we need to figure out how to coordinate postings because some items need to be listed in more than one place.

Bill gave a treasurer’s report. We have $49,500 in the bank. He distributed budget sheets. The estimated income for 2016 without conference income is $16,138.04\* The projected expenses are $17,365.50. However, the Philadelphia conference netted $2,693.08, which means that we will not have to compensate for a deficit budget this year. The overall balance is projected to be $1,465.62.\*

Bill reported on the search for an administrator since Barry Gaines is stepping down. Five people originally expressed interest. One did not have the requisite skills; another got too busy and is a music critic. Tim Dodson, who is currently the administrator for the ATCA Foundation, is the third, and we cannot really afford him. Two possibilities remain; they are Robert Sokol and Lisa Lyons.

There was discussion about how much the administrator should be paid. The job entails about 50 hours of work per month according to Barry with some months peaking at 80 hours. Right now the administrator gets $300 per month, which is certainly not enough. We will probably have to pay the new administrator at least $500 per month and more realistically $750 to $1,000. It was suggested that we should start with a one-year contract so that both sides can assess that the administrator and the board are a good fit. The board should appoint a search committee and conduct telephone interviews with the two applicants. Bill suggested he, Brad, Lou, and Martha could comprise the committee. (The search committee eventually consisted of Bill, Kerry, and Martha.)

There was discussion about upcoming conferences. Anne Siegel and Jonathan Abarbanel have proposed a 2018 conference at the American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin. It would be a summer conference. The theater focuses on productions of the classics and runs during June, July, and the beginning of August. They have brought some materials on the theater to distribute at this meeting.

Jay has suggested doing something in conjunction with the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Caroline. This would probably be a mini meeting or perhaps a small regional meeting. The problem is that it is only scheduled every other year, and the 2017 dates from July 31 to August 5 are very close to the San Francisco conference. We could certainly think about it for 2019, however.

Then we still have the Alabama Shakespeare Festival on the back burner, probably also for a shorter-duration meeting, although it could possibly be expanded to a full-length conference.

Jay Arnold is interested in having a conference in Miami. It would include West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. The problem is that the South Florida region is a big area—about 90 miles—so transportation would be an issue. It would definitely not be a summer conference because the best theater is not available then.

We should also ask Chris Rawson about the possibility of a mini meeting in Pittsburgh. There is a lot of theater, and we could tap into his knowledge of August Wilson and do a tour of sites.

There was discussion about the possibility of some regional meetings, instead of mini meetings. They might be a good way to increase visibility for the organization.

Membership issues were next on the agenda. What do we do about members who don’t pay their dues or are consistently late paying them? We should have a cutoff date of September 1 and let them know about it so they can make timelier payments. We can think about an increase in dues but will put that off for now. We also need to think about possible new membership categories. The Membership Services Committee is supposed to be working on this. We need to give them a deadline to come up with possible new categories of membership. February 1 was suggested as the deadline date.

There were several suggestions about ways to recruit new members. Some of those were the following:

* Get membership lists from other organizations
* Use a personal approach to people we know who would make good members
* Contact past students at the National Critics Institute at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center
* Offer a discount to members for magazine subscriptions and books

Sylvie Drake has proposed that ATCA honor the Pasadena Playhouse in a special way on its 100th anniversary. She thinks we might even suggest an honorary Tony Award. It was decided that ATCA offering special recognition might set a precedent that we don’t want to follow. The best thing is for Sylvie to recommend the playhouse for the Regional Tony Award and let it go through our usual process of members voting.

There was a question about electronic voting: can it apply to issues as well as electing candidates to the Ex-Com?

The final thing discussed was rewriting the code of conduct, which is still up in the air. We still have two basic questions to address about the code:

* Should it be a specific, prescriptive code or provide general guidelines?
* Should it apply just to ATCA or be intended for the entire journalism profession?

One thing that would be very helpful would be to have a presentation or panel on ethics at our conferences; it could include a roundhouse discussion to various issues and questions. It was decided that the board should form a subcommittee to address rewriting the present code of conduct. We can use what was proposed earlier and modify it as needed. Then we can submit the rewritten version to the Ethics Committee for its approval. Barbara said she would send all the board members a copy of the current proposal, including Jonathan’s wording on another amendment advocating inclusiveness, as a basis to work from.

Jay made a report on the ATCA Foundation. The Foundation will underwrite Misha’s seminar in Seattle for up to $2,000. It is intended as a pilot workshop for 10 or 12 people. There was discussion about the Foundation picking up the conference fee for new members attending their first conference. Jay is wondering how many people that will involve. It didn’t seem to be that many for Philadelphia because all the new members did not attend. We need to make clear that the fee is only covered for the first conference after the new member joins ATCA; the privilege cannot be used for a subsequent conference. Jay is planning on passing the hat for donations as usual at this mini meeting.

Jay also reported that he investigated the possibility of using some of the Helbing fund to underwrite an anthology of critical LGBT articles and was told by publishers that the anthology would probably not sell well enough to justify the expense.

The business being concluded, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary

ADDENDA

Three motions were voted on electronically during October and December:

1. Bill Hirschman drafted a description of the duties of the ATCA administrator as formulated by Barry Gaines to use in hiring a new administrator. He also spelled out the duties of several other ATCA offices and committees. The board unanimously accepted the document on October 1.
2. Sherry Eaker requested permission to have the panels at the New York mini meeting taped so they could be put on ATCA’s website. The taping will cost about $750. The board voted on October 18 to go with the videotaping this time but look for less expensive ways to do this at future conferences and meetings. The majority was in favor with one opposed and one abstention.
3. On December 10, Martha Steketee made a motion, seconded by Lou Harry, to hire Robert Sokol and his company as the new ATCA administrator for one year at $750 per month starting on January 1. Any budget shortfall for the administrator’s salary will be covered by surplus funds in the ATCA account. The motion passed unanimously

\*There are problems with these figures. The budget sheet shows the actual income as of September 30 as $17,009.84 so how can the projected total for the year be $16,138.04, which is $871.80 less? Also Bill announced the resulting balance with the conference overage included as $1,808.31, which is $342.69 too much according to the figures on the sheet we received.