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

**February 13, 2017**

Bill Hirschman called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. EST. All of the Ex-Com members were present: Susan Cohn, Charles Giuliano, Lou Harry, Brad Hathaway, Bill Hirschman, Kerry Reid, Wendy Rosenfield, Ed Rubin, and Martha Steketee. Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary; Teddie Hathaway, ATCA treasurer; and Robert Sokol, ATCA administrator, were also present. Jay Handelman, the ATCA Foundation president, joined the meeting briefly toward the end.

Barbara had distributed the minutes of the January Ex-Com teleconference call by e-mail before this meeting. Charles Giuliano made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Lou made a report on the New Plays Committee. The committee has selected the winners of this year’s Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award. The committee was very efficient and shaved two and a half weeks off last year’s schedule. The extra time will help guarantee that all the winners can attend the Humana Festival to claim their awards. The winner of the Osborn Award is still being determined; when that person has been selected, Lou will let the committee members know who all the winners are. Twenty-seven plays were considered this year, and there were 17 people on the committee. Lou said the new system of circulating plays electronically worked very well. Nobody on the committee requested the $40 supplement for printing out copies of the plays, so perhaps that stipend can be removed from next year’s budget. Lou feels the new system is much more effective. He will notify Jim Steinberg about

the winners.

Barbara made a report on the Primus Prize. She had a wonderful committee this year and a very interesting group of plays to consider for the prize. There were 26 applicants, and a couple of the plays prompted some heated discussion. The committee has finally reached a decision, and Lauren Yee is the winner of the 2016 Primus Prize for her play *in a word.* Since she is a San Francisco playwright, we are hoping that she can come to the upcoming conference to receive her award. Robert and the conference organizers would also like to have her participate in a panel with local theater people. (Unfortunately, we found out after the meeting that Lauren has a commitment during the time of the conference and will not be able to attend.)

Brad reported on the Communications Committee. Jonathan Mandell has taken over from Wendy in retweeting members’ tweets. Since he began on January 24, more than 50 tweets from more than 20 members have been retweeted to ATCA’s twitter feed @ATCA\_Member. The twitter feed address is <https://twitter.com/ATCA_Member>. Jonathan also tweets newsworthy items on theater criticism or ATCA on the twitter feed @Theatre-Critics. That address is <https://twitter.com/Theatre_Critics>. Jose Solis is now posting items to ATCA’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanTheatreCriticsAssociation>. He has created a draft Google-doc form that is being finalized for members to use to request coverage. Chris Rawson is maintaining the website front page and most of the other public pages. He would like to implement a new column called Members’ Milestones, recording transitions, achievements, major publications, and memorials. Bill commented that all of these improvements put us closer to where we want to be with social media. He said he will send an e-blast to members telling them how to access and use the digital filing system on the website.

Teddie made a treasurer’s report. She has assembled the budget proposal for 2017. Within the next few days, the board can have an online discussion and vote on accepting the budget. If it needs to be tweaked, Teddie and Bill can revise it and run it by the board again. The income in the budget is based on 260 members at $100 dues apiece, so we will need to raise dues to meet that figure. Presently we have 241 members with 2 pending. Susan Cohn and Ed Rubin have been working hard to recruit new members.

There was discussion about the two CDs that ATCA has. They are not generating any significant income. One is maturing on February 24 and the other in three months. Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to pull the CDs out and put the money in the checking account temporarily until we can figure out where to invest more advantageously. That will also give us access to funds if we need it. The motion passed unanimously.

Robert reported on the upcoming San Francisco conference. He has been investigating possible hotels; the committee originally decided to offer a menu of different-priced hotels instead of a single conference hotel. However, thanks to Susan Cohn’s contacts, it looks as if the Hilton hotel in downtown San Francisco can come up with an acceptable rate. It would be $179 a night, $40 less than anywhere else the committee has checked, and $50 less than the hotel’s usual rate. Robert said the committee will also make information on other hotels available to those coming to the conference. One of the prospective panels, called “The Play’s the Thing,” will feature local San Francisco playwrights discussing developing new work and the critics’ role in that process. Robert intends to get some information on the conference out to members within a week or so. The committee is working on getting a speaker for the annual Perspectives in Criticism presentation. They are considering local options, but Charles Isherwood was also mentioned. Other features at the conference include a backstage lunch hosted by the San Francisco Theatre Critics Circle, which has 12 members from ATCA on it; and a moderated interview with Lilly Janiak, the incoming critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle,* and Robert Hurwitt, her longtime predecessor.

Brad also reported on the Professional Development Committee. The critics’ seminar that Misha Berson hosted in Seattle was a great success. Misha will submit a report on the seminar, which can probably be duplicated elsewhere. Karen D’Souza and Charles McNulty also helped with the seminar. J. W. Arnold and Mark Lowry are heading an ad hoc committee to develop ways to recruit new members. They are brainstorming programs that may attract new members and retain older ones. Kerry said she would be glad to help with this.

Bill reported on the International Committee. The IATC Ex-Com is meeting in May in Sweden; we need to send someone. Jeffrey Jenkins is going to be unable to attend because of his academic commitments and suggested that Brad can go in his place. The meeting will be held from May 24 to 28, and the airfare is not that expensive. Ed Rubin made a motion, seconded by Kerry Reid, that ATCA should send Brad Hathaway as its representative to the IATC Ex-Com meeting in Sweden in May. The motion passed unanimously.

Although it will work out for Brad to attend the meeting this time, we should put together a list of members who are interested in attending IATC meetings in the future.

Bill talked to Leslie Torvik; she has a new work opportunity and would like to retire from being ATCA’s webmistress. She plans to be finished with her ATCA work in early March. She has been training Brad to take over what she does on the website and will be available to help out if we need her. She wanted Bill to tell the board that she has enjoyed her association with ATCA. Robert Sokol said that he can certainly help out with work on the website.

Bill said that we still do not have someone delegated to send out press releases and help with publicity. Bill is circulating press releases temporarily, but we need to find someone who can take over that responsibility.

Jose Solis says that he needs a high-definition or medium-definition ATCA logo to use on the website for Facebook. We need to create one if we don’t have it. There was discussion of what exactly ATCA’s logo is; the Daumier illustration is an icon, not a traditional logo. It is very difficult to replicate it. We need a simpler logo that is more flexible and easy to use. The top of every page on the website has a stylized ATCA that we can use if we set it up correctly. Robert volunteered to take care of that.

Bill said it is still unclear what caused Charles Isherwood’s departure from the *New York Times.* He will update the board when he knows more and also share the information with the Dramatists Guild.

There was a discussion about raising the dues. It appears that we cannot balance next year’s budget without raising dues; we have discussed this previously and now have to make a decision about it. It seems logical to raise the dues before renewal time, which is May 31. Jay Handelman joined the meeting at this point. We do have reserves in the bank to cover any budget shortfalls, but it isn’t a good idea to depend on them unless it’s absolutely necessary. The present membership of 241 at $75 apiece will only generate $18,075 of income. The amount of income proposed in the 2017 budget is $27,500. Raising the dues to $100 will generate $6,025 more, which will still leave us a little short, but it’s much closer to the amount we need. Charles Giuliano made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, to raise ATCA’s membership dues to $100. The motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion about the impact of raising the dues. If belonging to ATCA is going to cost more, we have to make sure that members get something for their money. One possible new addition that may help is regional meetings, which would make it easier for members to become more involved with the organization.

Jay mentioned that we may want to think about a student membership, which would be less, but we will have to amend the bylaws to do that.

There was discussion about having a monthly newsletter for the membership.

Bill said he planned to conduct more business by e-mails instead of just depending on conference calls to get things done.

There was a brief discussion of the election for the ATCA board. Wendy is cycling off the board this year; Lou’s term is also up, but he can run again and will probably do so. That means there will be at least one seat available on the Ex-Com. Bill said he will discuss the dates of the election process with Russell Warne, who is going to be supervising the election. The actual election will take place online after the annual conference so that people have an opportunity to meet the candidates at the conference.

The business being concluded, the meeting ended at 3:30 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary.

**Addendum**

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

On February 28, Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to adopt the revised 2017 ATCA budget. The motion passed unanimously on March 1.