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

**November 12, 2015**

Bill Hirschman called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. EST. The following Ex-Com members were present: Charles Giuliano, Lou Harry, Brad Hathaway, Bill Hirschman, Wendy Rosenfield, Ed Rubin, and Martha Steketee. Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary, and Barry Gaines, ATCA administrator, were also present. Chris Rawson joined the end of the meeting. Jonathan Abarbanel and Erin Keane were absent.

Bill said he is hopeful this meeting will bring real progress in setting up the protocol for electronic voting and establishing guidelines for changes in the bylaws. The Membership Services Committee has submitted a proposal for membership criteria; the full membership will have to sign off on that because it will result in a bylaw change.

Barbara had distributed the minutes of the last conference call by e-mail before the meeting. She read the addendum to the minutes to make sure that everyone had received it. Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill had e-mailed a number of reports to ATCA Ex-Com members in advance of the meeting. The first one was Chair Anne Siegel’s report on the Membership Services Committee. The new printed directory is in progress. Robert Sokol is laying it out and has all the copy. He and Anne and Barry are hoping to mail the directory out by the end of the year; we will change the title to 2016–2017. A PDF of the directory will also be posted on the Members Only section of the website and will be updated as changes occur. The printed directory will have a note that it is only a snapshot in time and that the updated version can be accessed on the website.

Next the Ex-Com reviewed Mark Lowry’s treasurer’s report. Mark will make a formal report in Philadelphia with a spreadsheet tracking income and expenses. Mark said he does not feel comfortable being the treasurer and will step down in Philadelphia; he feels the job requires more financial expertise. We should be thinking about appointing or electing someone to replace him.

Lou Harry made a report on the New Plays Committee. So far the committee has received 16 nominations for the Steinberg/ATCA Award from 12 ATCA members. Lou has requested eight scripts and has received three. He will send them out to the committee members. So far only one of the 16 nominated plays is ineligible because it has had a New York production. Three of the nominated plays are musicals. There are currently 23 people on the committee, which is open to anyone who is interested. Lou feels that a large committee gives more people a chance to be involved; there may be a top number for logistical reasons, and he can monitor that. Lou said the committee has determined that if a play is having several rolling world premieres from the National New Play Network, it is the last play in the series that will be considered for the award. However, the play can be recommended earlier and considered in the following year.

Barbara made a report on the Primus Prize committee. The committee has selected six finalists for the award and will be choosing the winner from among them within the next few weeks. There were 39 applicants for the award this year, and there were many good plays, so the deliberations have taken longer than usual. Barbara will post a press release with the names of the finalists on the website within the next week. The winner and the theater where the play was produced always receive a plaque, and Ed Rubin suggested that all the finalists should receive certificates.

Bill made a report on the International Committee. The next IATC world congress is in Serbia; we can send three representatives, one of whom will be Jeffrey Jenkins, chair of the committee, and Bill will not be able to attend, so we need to find someone else to replace him. We can publicize it on the website, and Bill will send out an e-blast informing members that they can apply to attend the congress. We need to formulate some criteria, and it would be good to pick someone who is not on the Ex-Com.

There is also a spring meeting in Craiova, Romania, connected with the International Shakespeare Festival there. Barry seems like a logical choice to send to that meeting, but we should also publicize it on the website to include all ATCA members in the pool. We can pay $1,000 toward the person’s traveling expenses. Glenda Frank attended the recent IATC meeting and seminar at Novi Sad, Serbia, and presented a paper. Barbara said she would ask Glenda to make a report at the Sunday morning meeting on her trip to Novi Sad.

Brad Hathaway made a report on the Professional Services Committee. The committee is trying to put together information on educational resources available to critics around the country. Martha Steketee said she was one of the founders of a program at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago; Kerry Reid is still involved with it. Misha Berson is assembling a workbook from the two seminars she was part of in Seattle and Salt Lake City. Brad asked everyone to send him any information they had about seminars or other resources for professional development.

Bill reported that the ATCA Foundation will not meet in New York; the annual meeting will take place in Philadelphia. The foundation will send out its year-end annual contribution letter soon.

Bill reported on conferences. Philadelphia is the next conference in April 2016. Brad said that a conference in San Francisco is in the planning stages. Robert Sokol will host, and a committee will be formed. Miami is a possibility sometime in the future, but transportation will be a major issue because the theaters are so spread out.

Bill reported on the upcoming Philadelphia conference. Howard Shapiro has submitted a schedule for the conference. Some members will have already seen some of the shows on the schedule, but Wendy said there will be at least one alternative show. She also reported that the conference is planning a seminar on transgender theater. There is a lot of interest in the subject currently. The seminar will discuss correct terminology in referring to transgender people and theater.

Bill mentioned that the dates of the Philadelphia conference—April 6 through April 10—may be problematic for some New York critics because that’s during the last few weeks of eligibility for the Drama Desk and Tony Awards. Also it’s industry week at the Humana Festival in Louisville. Bill told everyone to look over the Philadelphia agenda and give him feedback on potential problems. We need to find a Perspectives in Criticism speaker well in advance of the conference; there was a discussion of some possibilities. Also someone has to make the Steinberg/ATCA Award presentation at the Humana Festival on Saturday night. Lou is the logical choice to do that since he heads the New Plays Committee. ATCA can send him; he can attend the beginning of the Philadelphia conference and then go on to Louisville. Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, that ATCA will pay the transportation cost to send Lou to Humana from Philadelphia as well as his hotel bill while he’s there. ATCA will also cover his registration fee for the conference. The motion passed with Lou abstaining from the vote.

A professional videographer is taping all the panels on Friday and Sunday at the New York mini meeting. He will also do all the postproduction work, and the videos will be posted on the Members Only section of the ATCA website. We need to make sure the sound quality is good. These videos are a membership perk. We can see how this process goes and then decide what we want to do for the Philadelphia conference.

There was some discussion about whether we want to start archiving our materials and which of them can be used for membership perks or in marketing strategies to attract new members. We could possibly use the videos on the website to get educational grants for ATCA. We need to set up an ad hoc committee to discuss these issues. Charles said he would spearhead the committee, and Martha agreed to help. Bill also mentioned that we need to formulate a proactive recruiting plan for new members.

The next issue discussed was electronic voting. We need to evolve a separate process for elections and dealing with bylaw and other changes. Leslie Torvik says she can create a discussion area on the website. We should deal with the elections process first, and that will create a work in progress for the rest of the issues. First we need an elections committee or preferably an elections manager. Bill said he will send out an e-blast asking who is interested in serving as the elections manager. The manager will work closely with the ExCom chair and the ATCA administrator. Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, to authorize the Ex-Com chair to appoint an elections manager who will serve with that chair and report to the executive committee. The motion passed unanimously.

The board went through the proposed electronic-voting-process description and made changes in the wording of various sections. The final version is attached to these minutes.

The new electronic voting process will require bylaws changes. These will have to be voted on in Philadelphia to take effect. Brad has formulated some wording changes for the present bylaws, which Bill read. They all pertain to Article III of the present bylaws:

1. In Section 2, strike “present and voting at the annual meeting.”
2. In Section 7, strike “until the next annual meeting” and replace it with “by appointment from the general membership by the Chair until the next election, when a member will be chosen to fill the rest of the unexpired term.”
3. In Section 8, strike “annual meeting” and substitute “election.”

Martha Steketee made a motion, seconded by Brad Hathaway, to submit these amendments to the bylaws to the general membership for approval in Philadelphia. The motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion about a quorum for elections with the new process. It was decided that it would be difficult to determine a quorum, so Lou Harry made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, that there would be no quorum required for online elections of Ex-Com members.

There was discussion of new possible categories of membership in ATCA:

 Young and beginning critics

 Theater writers who are not critics

 Academics who study and write about theater

 Arts editors

Any change will also require a bylaws modification. The following rewording of Section 2 of Article VI, which defines eligibility, was proposed:

“Membership is open to any writer who regularly publishes substantive pieces reviewing or otherwise critically covering the American theater.”

Young or beginning writers and arts writers are now included in this new definition. The board decided to eliminate consideration of arts editors. Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Martha Steketee, to put this modification before the membership at the Philadelphia meeting for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Wendy suggested that we should create a specific emerging or young critics category of membership that includes people writing for collegiate publications and give them a discounted membership rate to encourage more young people to join ATCA. The board will discuss membership categories further during the next conference call.

Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Wendy Rosenfield, to give complimentary ATCA membership to Lorraine Trainor for her contributions to ATCA as well as regional theater criticism in the Washington, DC, area. The motion passed unanimously.

Doug Wright, who is helping set up the Friday panels at this meeting, is writing the book for a new musical on Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden. It will premiere at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.

Discussion turned to the code of ethics. Should it be just a code of conduct for ATCA members or a stand-alone, disconnected code of ethics for the entire profession of theater critics, or try to combine both? Should language sensitivity be part of either code? Barbara reviewed the history of the current proposed code of conduct. The Ethics Committee formulated a code and sent it to the Ex-Com, which considered it too detailed and pejorative and returned it to the committee for revision. The committee submitted a revised version, which the Ex-Com modified again to make it more general and less pejorative, and this version was presented at the New Orleans conference and tabled because there was insufficient time to discuss it. Charles Giuliano made a motion, seconded by Ed Rubin, that ATCA should create a code of ethics for the entire theater-critics profession. The motion was soundly defeated.

Bill read through the present proposed code of conduct and also reviewed Jonathan Abarbanel’s suggested language proposal. He asked the board members to review them after the meeting and suggest any changes or things that need to be discussed at the next conference call. If possible, e-mail Bill before the meeting with proposals or suggestions.

The business being concluded, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Bannon, ATCA secretary

Addendum:

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

On Wednesday, December 16, Brad Hathaway made a motion, seconded by Erin Keane, to designate Barry Gaines as ATCA’s delegate to the IATC seminar in Craiova, Romania, connected with the International Shakespeare Festival in April 2016. The motion passed unanimously.