

## **Awards to Promote Community Theater Group <name tbd> Meeting 4/18/99**

### **Reston Community Players' rehearsal hall**

Eight groups represented:

The Arlington Players	John Monnett
Elden Street Players	Todd Huse
Little Theatre of Alexandria	Al Edick
	Roland Gomez
Montgomery Players	Joy Wyne
Port City Playhouse	Jennifer Lyman
	John Downing
Prince William Little Theatre	Don Wilson
Reston Community Players	Sue Pinkman
Springfield Community Theatre	Carl Eisen
Tapestry Theatre Company	Eleanore Tapscott

Al welcomed the groups that were attending for the first time (MP, PCP, SCT, and TTC) and gave a summary of how this group came about and what was discussed at the prior two meetings (February and March). The mission statement approved at the March meeting was distributed to all present.

John presented his outline for the administrative structure of the new group and a suggested outline for the bylaws (handout attached). Simply, the organization would be headed by a board with each member theater represented. All decisions would be approved by this body so that each theater has a vote. The other administrative positions/committees would report to this board. Certain parts of this structure would need to be created first, while others could be phased in as the group matures. First up would be the Awards (with subcommittees on criteria, rules, and judging) and Event committees. Certain administrative duties (bookkeeping, public relations, development) could be handled by the board initially.

Al presented his and Angie's report on the judging process itself. They compared the methods used by Helen Hayes, Ruby Griffith, ACT and LTA's internal awards (see handout). First, they recommend that the judging period be the calendar year (like HH) to avoid discrepancies in each member theater's start/finish of a season. All productions would be judged (like ACT). Judges would be randomly assigned to see productions and would only be required to judge a certain number each year (like RG). The scores would be mailed in to an outside source for tabulation (like LTA). Each production would be scored by five judges (average of three after high and low scores were removed). Judges would not judge any production produced by their home theater, nor would they judge any production in which they participate at another member theater. Which shows a judges scores would be determined randomly (preferable electronically) by matrix (judge 1 sees theater A, show 3). Provisions would exist so that judges could swap shows in which they are participating to avoid conflict of interest.

The number of judges appointed by each member theater will be determined by the number of theaters participating (a formula will be created based on the number of judges to see each production). As an example: if 16 theaters participate and each theater provides two judges, each judge would have to see about 10 productions. Discussion about limiting the geographic distance judges would have to travel, but it was decided that with the random assignment of shows, each judge should only have to make a limited number trips to distant theaters.

In order to maintain objective scoring it was agreed that accurate criteria be established for each judged element. It was suggested that criteria be solicited from "experts" in each category (i.e. lighting designers establish the criteria for the lighting award, etc.). A survey of what should be considered in each category could be developed so that each theater could solicit input from many "experts". This information would be collated by a criteria committee in order to establish the judging criteria. It was further suggested that the judges attend an orientation session prior to the beginning of the year where an "expert" in each category would explain the criteria and answer any questions.

Don presented his report on the award categories and his thoughts on the general structure of the judging (handouts attached). At this time the general criteria for membership was discussed (based on Al's initial criteria when calling groups to see if there was interest in an awards program). The following guidelines were agreed to (for the moment):

- That member theaters produce a minimum of three full length productions each season
- That member theaters present in traditional theatrical manner (non-dinner theater) and have no restrictions on age (no children's theaters)

- The member theaters fall within the boundaries of the general metropolitan Washington area
- The member theaters have met the other criteria for two complete seasons

Discussion of a name for the group ensued with Todd suggesting the Washington Area Theater Community Honors (WATCH, as a catchy acronym). Variations considered substitute Metropolitan Area (MATCH) or Potomac Area (PATCH). Other suggestions can be forwarded to Al via email, who will collate the suggestions, send them out for a vote, and tabulate the results. It was felt that this needed to happen before the next meeting so that the name could be used when soliciting other theaters.

Al will recontact the theaters that have expressed interest in the group but have not yet attended a meeting and will seek out additional Maryland and DC theater groups that may not have been contacted (Joy will assist by providing names of potential MD groups). It was agreed that 9/1/99 be the cutoff date for groups wishing to participate in the inaugural season. Those theaters who contribute man-hours towards the planning and creation of the administrative structure would be granted the status "charter members" to distinguish them from groups who may wish to participate in the inaugural season, but who do not contribute towards the creation of the group. These charter members must have participated in the planning meetings held prior to 7/1/99.

Financing the group was discussed. It was decided that membership dues should cover operating costs (either a flat fee or a tiered rate based on each theaters operating budget or number of productions). The costs of the awards themselves could be recouped by individual sponsors. It is hoped that the presentation event could be underwritten by a corporate sponsor and subsidized by ticket sales to the event. This will all be worked out in the future.

The following subcommittees will begin working on the next phase developing the structure of the group with reports at the next meeting:

bylaws/administrative structure	John & Todd
judging process	Al, Angie & Don
judging criteria	Eleanore, Sue, Carl
costs (admin/event/awards)	Jennifer

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 13, 1999 at the RCP rehearsal hall.