

**Minutes of the Washington Area Theatre Community Honors
W.A.T.C.H.**

Board Meeting September 30, 2001

Reston Community Players Scene Shop
Reston, VA

Attending: Charles Salas, GFP (other reps Emily Besuden/Tracey Robinson not present)
C. Evans Kirk, LTA
Judy Mayer, MP
Kay Martin, TTC (other reps Lee McKenna & Peggy Jones not present)
John Monnett, TAP, Treasurer
Suzanne Fehl, PTP (also representing HBP this meeting)
Sue Pinkman, RCP, Chair
Mary-Anne Sullivan, CRT, Secretary
Leta Hall, SSS
Seth Ghitelman, RLT

Absent: Bob Bartlett, HBP, Todd Huse, ESP (webmaster), Chris Tully, SMP, Don Wilson, PWLT

The Meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Leta Hall motioned to approve the minutes of 15 July 2001 with two corrections cited by the secretary. Charles Salas seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (John Monnett): No money has been spent since the last meeting that showed a balance of \$1,189,990 in the WATCH account. The 2000 Taxes have been done and John will begin work on the 2001 Taxes. John and Bob will do a transition of the account.

OLD BUSINESS

2001 Season

a) Adjudication Update: Sue Pinkman, Chair, gave Don Wilson's comments on status of adjudication process. Don has had positive feedback from Margaret Binning who reports that while a few ballots are open, there are no major issues of concern. There are currently no productions entered with less than 8 total ballots. Don urged the Watch Reps to keep contact with their adjudicators and alternates to ensure the process is moving. The Board gave praises and thanks to Don for his extensive and pro-active work on announcing upcoming shows and following up on ballots.

b) Awards Program & Nominations Event: Todd Huse, forwarded Sue and John and Email with his report to deliver to the Board. Birchmere contact Rick Newton erroneously put Watch down for Saturday, 2 March 2002 vice the requested Sunday, 3 March date to host the Awards Event. Todd was offered alternate dates of 24 Feb or 7 April. Birchmere also offered to hold the Nomination Event at that location on either January 12 or Sunday January 13 (6-6:30 pm), but those dates have not been finalized and depend upon Birchmere's booking schedule for the MLK weekend. Birchmere will assign a server for cleanup at a \$50 minimum for the nomination event. The board felt the February date was better for all groups concerned. Suzanne cautioned that a Saturday (12 Jan) Nomination Event would conflict with the MD one-act festival that same day. John commented the date of the nomination event may not be up to Watch, given the Birchmere's scheduling.

Judy Mayer motioned to accept the 24 February 2002 date for the Awards Ceremony. John Monnett seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The consensus of the Board was to hold the Nomination Event on 13 January 2002. John Monnett will advise Todd Huse who will in turn advise Birchmere of our preference.

c) Independent Audit of Watch Ballots: Sue reiterated the board's desire to have a disinterested party spot check the final tabulation process conducted by Ms. Binning. **Seth Ghitelman from RLT volunteered to audit for 2001.** John Monnett suggested since he devised the formulas and spreadsheets and that Todd would have to be given the final nominations and names for the Trophies, they would help Margaret in her final tabulations. Seth, as a new non-competing member, would be on hand to oversee this

process as the auditor. Seth would in turn, assist in tabulations the following awards year while another disinterested party audited. **The board agreed to this proposal.**

By-Laws Update On Web: Mary-Anne would appreciate Todd updating bylaws on the web to incorporate the amendments from 15 July and this meeting since Todd has the document on disk and board members can print from the web.

Corporate Sponsors: Todd reported via email that he is working on the sponsorship of the ceremony, although he feels we now have an even higher hill to climb in the wake of 9/11/01.

NEW BUSINESS

2002 Season

a) Membership Drive/Applications: Bob Bartlett was absent and sent no report.

Todd Huse sent an email report. He addressed the receipt of petitions from American Music Stage (AMS) and Rockville Musical Theater (RMT). AMS performs at Nova. There was a question as to whether AMS paid their actors and if this would make them ineligible for Watch. Discussion ensued to determine if this payment was in keeping with the intent of Watch. Mary-Anne reiterated the by-laws state under eligibility criteria that member theaters must "be volunteer in nature and mission, excluding dinner theatres and children's theaters." John suggested we should better define our concept of community theatre and perhaps broaden our definition. Leta Hall mentioned she was familiar with AMS.

Sue discussed the board's previous proposal that RLT and RMT join as a consortium since Watch requires 3 shows per year to permit RMT's joining Watch. Seth confirmed RMT only does 2 shows per year and that RMT & RLT share a season brochure package but both are entities unto themselves as community theaters with very little cross-over. Sue opined that Watch stick one more year with the current ground rules. Seth suggested the three-show requirement may be at odds with longevity criteria if an organization like RMT has been around for many years but only does two shows a season. Leta mentioned that SSS does 7 or 8 shows per year. If RMT joined, their adjudicators would be viewing many more shows and only have two adjudicated. John responded that other groups with only three shows in a season fulfill all requirements. He opined RMT would boost the musical participants in Watch. Mary-Anne suggested the by-laws be reviewed to consider the entry of groups that have established longevity but perform less than three shows. Seth suggested Watch look at the eligibility criteria after the New Year. John mentioned that RMT had declined joining at Al Edick's first invitation and may not be actually petitioning but querying. Mary-Anne opined if the group had "petitioned" as stated in Todd's email, then the board would have to vote on acceptance.

The board agreed to table the petition requests of AMS and RMT for one week until

- a) Leta and Todd reported back on AMS and
- b) Sue double checks with Todd as to whether RMT actually petitioned to join or queried again as to their eligibility.

All parties are to report findings within a week (7 October). The Board will vote as appropriate via email since no further board meetings are scheduled prior to fixing the new matrix.

The board agreed to review eligibility criteria after the New Year.

Adjudicator/Orientation Dates/Locations:

a) Training Dates: Leta will email the board a date by mid-October for SSS to host MD adjudicator training between 4 and 11 November.

Sue reported that RCP Rehearsal Hall would host the VA adjudicator training session on Monday, 5 November at 7:30 pm.

Chris Tully was absent to report, but if St. Mark's (DC Location) is not available, Sue asked Chris Kirk to check with LTA for a Sunday or Monday as a back up to St. Mark's. Sue will check with Chris Tully. Chris Kirk will report possible dates to Sue. LTA would be acceptable to MD groups coming up from the south.

b) Training Sessions: The board decided to require all adjudicators to attend a training session this year. If conflicts arise, the individual Rep can provide separate training. The board agreed that in future, returning adjudicators be required to attend training bi-annually to be apprised of new policies and changes and to generally re-educate themselves on the intent of the awards program.

c) Training Packets: Mary-Anne will update and publish the Watch 2002 pamphlet for the training sessions. Sue will provide the member info sheets. Suzanne Fehl (with Don's help) will be responsible for the guidelines. John will bring the matrices. John will be in attendance to explain the matrix this year. Suzanne asked that Don at least conduct the first session so she can learn the process.

ALL Reps are asked to furnish copies of any company literature (i.e. season brochures) they wish to hand out in addition to maps/directions. *Note: Watch will reimburse board members for reproduction costs (if requested) on pamphlets, info sheets, guidelines, matrices.*

A total of 75 copies of all materials will be needed. Reps may bring their materials to the first scheduled training session and drop them off. Adjudication coordinator will take the materials to the subsequent sessions. All reps are asked to try to attend first if not a subsequent training session.

Matrix Data Collection: John reported all reps signed off on the sheet listing member productions and scheduled months of productions for 2002. He will submit this information to John Downing to construct the matrix for 2002. John Downing advises the matrix probably won't change since the randomization requirements remain the same this year. Charlie Salas commented that his judges had some scheduling problems because split-month shows were input on the matrix under the latter month when they actually had the previous month to avoid conflicts. John said he would ask John Downing if he could input split-months into the matrix. Leta reminded the reps that Don's advance email reminders were very helpful and that adjudicators should not totally depend on the matrix schedule to book shows.

2002 Adjudicators: Reps were reminded to send a list of adjudicator's names and alternates by mid-October to Suzanne cc Sue. Please provide adjudicator's email addresses. If you don't have names, please finalize with Suzanne by December. Reps are to assign judges their numbers and notify Suzanne.

Criteria Review Committee Report (John, Don, Bob and Leta):

On 19 October, the Criteria Review Committee met to create criteria for the new separate hair and makeup categories and to review the proposal to split the featured category.

Board members were given copies of this report prior to the meeting for discussion and if accepted, amend the by-laws.

Hair and Makeup will be scored as separate elements. Discussion reiterated that if the same designer were listed for both hair and makeup, that designer would receive separate scores for each element. Productions that did not list a name would still receive a score for each element. Sue stressed the importance of educating our member groups to align their programs with the categories if possible.

Suzanne motioned to accept the criteria for hair and makeup categories as stated in the committee's report. Charlie seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjudication coordinator will incorporate the criteria in the 2002 guidelines.

The committee recommended against splitting the featured category into supporting and minor. Kay Martin was concerned there was not a category for ensemble acting and that modern works lean more this way. Sue mentioned this was previously discussed and may need to be considered in the future. Mary-Anne applauded the committee's work and opined the committee adhered to Watch's goal of making their awards meaningful in the theater community by not diluting the performance awards into more, less meaningful awards. The addition of the cameo awards would sufficiently recognize excellence of actors in smaller roles and provide an avenue to award ensemble players in traditional, modern and future works. The committee recommended two additional performance category awards: Cameo Performance in a Play and Cameo Performance in a Musical. The committee recommended the addition of the cameo's definition and clarification of the definitions of lead and featured in the Adjudication Guidelines. The committee recommended the cameo awards be "genderless" and scored by circling a "C" on the ballot. To be nominated in this category a performer must be designated such by seven out of 10 adjudicators. If the performance does not meet the criteria, it will be considered "featured." The board accepted the recommendation.

Whereas the current performance awards category of "featured" is misleading and connotes a smaller role with a single spectacular moment in a production and that adjudicators may score these performers higher than a true supporting performer with more stage time but less dramatic impact and that comparing a less dramatically important supporting role to a less critical by theatrically memorable incidental role is difficult for adjudicators:

It is Proposed:

The WATCH Bylaws, Section IV. The Awards Process, Paragraph A be amended to reflect the following:
A. There shall be twenty-eight (28) awards presented for outstanding achievement in the theater arts by the member theaters in twenty-eight (28) categories as approved by the board of directors. Plus any special awards as deemed appropriate by the board of directors.

It is also Proposed:

The WATCH Bylaws, Appendix B be amended to reflect the following:
Amend Performance (8) to Performance (10) and add the two following awards under this category: Cameo Performance in a Play and Cameo Performance in a Musical.

Mary-Anne Sullivan motioned to accept both proposed amendments. The motion was seconded by Leta Hall. Motion passed unanimously.

Bylaws to be updated on the web by Todd Huse. Guidelines to be updated by Adjudication Coordinator.

Clarification: the new awards will go into effect in the Watch 2002 adjudication year.

PR/Marketing Update: Sue Reported there was nothing new although she spoke personally with Michael Toscano who is a stringer reviewer available to review productions. He has reviewed ESP and TAP, Dominion and Port City. His reviews have appeared in the Post Weekly edition. You may call you Post Weekly edition editor to have him contact Michael.

The Board agreed to invite reviewers to the Nomination Event.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Suzanne Fehl mentioned that WATCH is succeeding in the area of encouraging growth in community theater. Cassie Lee who was nominated in 2000 as an actress (LTA) auditioned for Trip to Bountiful through her contacts with Watch, was cast and is now a future adjudicator for PTP.

Companion Comps were discussed: RLT and SSS will offer companion comps to adjudicators in the upcoming year. ESP & RCP are now the only companies who are not able to offer a companion comp.

Awards Event Committee: Todd Huse was confirmed in absentia to continue chairing this committee. John and Suzanne volunteered to serve with Todd.

NEXT MEETING: There will be a brief meeting right after the Nominations Event at the Birchmere on 12 or 13 January 2002.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary-Anne Sullivan
Secretary