

## NIETF Board Meeting & Annual Retreat

January 5, 2019

Opportunity Enterprises, Valparaiso, IN

**Board Attendance** (P = Present; A = Absent; E = Excused; T = Teleconference)

B. Jascoviak, President (P)	M. Kuhn, Theatre Rep (P)
A. Heid, Vice President (P)	A. Lowe, Theatre Rep (P)
M. Byerly, Secretary (P)	L. Bouman, At-Large (P)
M. Reister, Treasurer (P)	J. Riddle, At-Large (P)
J. Jascoviak, Theatre Rep (P)	P. Glennie, At-Large (E)
A. Clough, Theatre Rep (P)	

*The board met for their planning retreat 9 am-3 pm.*

*The annual meeting of the members/viewers/member theatres took place 11 am-12 pm.*

### **Member Theatre Meeting Attendees:**

Wayne Puchkors – HCT & Beatniks	Amy Johnson-Sobek -- Viewer
Mark Baer – Gary Shakespeare	Nelson Velasquez – InProductions
Steve Rohe – 4 <sup>th</sup> Street	Dean Johansen – Viewer

### **Theatres and How they interact with NIETF**

- Ways to engage new audiences
  - Park Plays (dates now open for Thursdays June-August)
    - Potential to earn \$100 per time participating
  - Theatrepalooza
    - Sunday, March 3 at IUN Theatre
      - Share the event:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/240488593542053/>
    - Find a way to corral people to table to talk to patrons
    - Staged Readings vs. season preview – what would be the most effective method to gather interest, prepare material
    - \$50 for participation in each (winter and summer) for theatres through matching grant on event expenses
  - Audience Development Event hosted by theatre (VIP receptions, talkback, one-night special event, art exhibit in space, etc.) for different audience
    - Promote with NIETF logo & South Shore Arts
    - \$250 matching grant for production of event
    - Event must take place before June 15; receipts must be turned in by that date in order to receive funding
    - Funding for the first 10 theatres to complete exercises or submit to get targeting of funding

- Participation today impacts budget reduction for next year's membership dues; every NIETF activity has a value assigned to it regarding participation and interaction, and these values can help reduce the next year's membership fees
- Rush ticket seating for half price tickets for NIETF members? Discuss this as an individual benefit, perhaps, if member theatres are on-board with the idea.
- Suggested that NIETF FB groups be restricted to allow only administrators to post, as posting is getting a little heavy, hard to wade through
- Becky currently updating the document on Viewing
- Angie Heid to ask what three key individuals need updates from each theatre in an attempt to further facilitate communications

### **Viewing Administration**

- Viewing Form must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to beginning of production, so that viewers can arrange their schedules
- Form can be submitted MONTHS in advance to ensure that it is in, and updated as needed with casting information or commentary
- Spirit of community theatre – please remember that we are celebrating amateur and open productions. NIETF is not a police force, but members do get upset when it becomes obvious that there was a precasting, use of rented materials, or other things that were not honestly and properly divulged
- More than one performance; the production could run only one weekend, but there MUST be more than one performance, to allow viewer flexibility
- Components viewable at discretion of the theatre
- “Gaming the System” on nominations?
  - Disqualify a theatre from participation for a time if there is evidence of blatant violations of community spirit of participation?
  - Documentation & transparency on any censure
  - Case by case basis?
  - Policy to put in place – possible consequences based upon investigations:
    - Existing Code of Ethics states that will uphold rules and regulations of organization
    - Consider implementation of a servicing contract/signed contract from member theatres – spelled out and signed on paper for documentation; signed and returned by a specific date
  - When someone is found to have broken the honor system, do we give consequences? Awards are ultimately for fun; as word travels in the community, people may end up self-censuring, as theatres will choose not to work with an individual or group known to cause problems or outright lie.

### **Theatre selection of categories for nominations**

- Should viewers have a say in the final nom categories?
  - Viewers should still have the ability at the end to possibly move things around in the categories

- What the viewers submit back – feedback/constructive criticism
  - Currently not given out unless requested, and not until after the Gala of that given year
  - Send to main contact of the theatre, ask the theatre to distribute in case there is interest
  - Audition Form and Viewing Form as one online form, so as to get more information for the website in a more timely manner? Currently, webmistress is chasing down audition information through phone calls and trolling Facebook – would be better if people directly contacted her.

### **Childrens and Improv Theatre: How do they fit in?**

- Childrens Theatre is now open to viewing
- Improv still not viewed
- Where and what to do in order to highlight synergies?
  - Develop a Score Sheet/Ratings Sheet for Improv productions?
  - Long form improv would be the viewable shows – not short-form; must have some sort of a narrative
  - Establish new categories that could allow for inclusion across the board?
  - Evaluate how similar organizations to NIETF in other parts of the country include both of these categories in recognition
  - Invite the Tony Stanzas to be the Opening Number at the Gala – with an improv parody highlighting all the nominated shows for the year?

### **Gala Discussion**

- October 26, 2019 at Hellenic Cultural Center in Merrillville
- Layer rates? People are still complaining about individual costs for the event, yet production costs increase with each year
- Do we need to separate/redo awards and a fundraiser? Passionate on both sides of perspective.
- Solvency is important; participation benefits in direction?
- Recent experience shows that removal of awards from gala may not make for event that will continue to be solvent, fruitful
- Do not over-respond to information about awards; the trolls are hungry....

### **Treasurer's Report**

- **Motion** to approve Treasurer report pending audit. Motion M. Reister, 2<sup>nd</sup> L. Bouman. Approved.
- Thank you to anonymous donor who gave a loan to allow for end-of-year solvency for NIETF; should be able to re-pay within the first few months of the year, pending the arrival of certain grant checks
- **Motion** to apply for raffle license for October 26<sup>th</sup> event. Motion M. Kuhn, 2<sup>nd</sup> J. Riddle. Approved.

## Marketing

- Eric Brant has stepped away from the radio program that was being produced for WVLP-LP. The program has been taken over by Kali Rasala and Bill Moran, though they are stepping away from the program
- Show is currently on hiatus; we paid for a full year in August
- Still seeking a host.

## Formal Commitments of NIETF in 2019 (Must-Do)

Numbers reflect intensity of importance according to board members present

- Park plays 1
- Theatrepalooza (at least one free open to the public event with audience building component) 3
- Awards ceremony 4
- Event on October 26 7(non-awards event)
- Promoting member theatre shows, events, and auditions 6
- Fulfill member benefits (individual members) 6
- Scholarship (Mollin Memorial) 3
- Administer organization (organizational compliance as 501c(3) 3

Have Done (in past):

- This Is My Brave 0
- Community outreach 3
- Group outings 0
- Training seminars 3
- Sponsorships of inserts and events 0
- Social Picnic 0
- Database of patrons 2

Future Discussion

- Theatre festival 0
- Ticket subscription across venues 0
- Shared space/venue 0
- Non-award fundraiser event 0
- Youth outreach/school outreach 2
- "Butts in seats" art event 2
- Database of participants and resources? 2

Top ranking through ongoing discussion:

- Fundraiser Event
  - Fundraising event is the culmination of work; need to start with the process of finding and qualifying donors, building friendships with possible long-term donors.
  - Part of strategy involves getting all of the theatres on board to realize that the shared information will not take donors away from them, but rather add to the

stable in a manner that would not have been possible before. Building the buzz and database includes creating a vision that people would be able to rally behind/build towards in the future (18-24 month lead time in order to get to the large event)

- Sponsorship
  - Establish the benefits that are in place for any sponsorships of the organization as a whole
  - Find people that have the time (during the day) for face-to-face basis; commission basis?
  - Generic brochures to promote the web site and theatre in general throughout the region, target people
- Continuing Awards
  - MOST visible face of the organization
  - Longest-standing tradition in organization
  - “Let’s face it, we’re theatre people and we need to feed the ego, whether we like it or not.”

### **Communication Efforts with Theatres**

- L. Bouman expressed frustrations with getting in touch with member theatres. They are not making communication with NIETF a priority on their end, but not following through on attempts made to contact them by liaisons or other board members.

### **Assigned Project Tasks:**

- Park Plays – Jerry
- Scholarship – Doc
- Theaterpalooza – Maggie
- Administration:
  - Required filings – Becky
  - Member theatre benefits – Matt
  - Individual benefits – Peggy
- Awards – Angela Heid, Jared
- Promotion of Events – Adam, Angie H.
- Sponsorships – Becky
- Non-Awards Gala – Luke

### **Theatre Liaisons 2019**

- 4<sup>th</sup> Street – A. Heid, L. Bouman
- VTC – M. Byerly, J. Jascoviak
- CTG – A. Clough, M. Byerly
- Beatniks – P. Glennie, A. Lowe
- HCT – P. Glennie, M. Kuhn
- MOH -- M. Byerly, L. Bouman (Need to determine if continuing membership moving forward)

- Dunes – M. Reister, J. Riddle
- Genesis – J. Jascoviak, M. Reister
- Seedlings – J. Jascoviak, M. Kuhn
- Region Performing Arts – A. Clough
- Ensemble Theatre Company – A. Clough, J. Riddle
- InProductions – A. Heid, J. Jascoviak
- Gary Shakes – A. Clough, J. Riddle
- LCTG – A. Lowe, A. Clough
- Valparaiso University – L. Bouman, J. Jascoviak
- Munster Theatrical Company – J. Jascoviak (HS theatre)
- Premiere Productions – TBD
- Alliance – A. Heid

### Setting 2019 Meeting Schedule

- Future Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays of the Month @ 6:30 PM
  - February 10 (Lake): LCTG/Great Oaks – **Member Theatre Mtng.**
  - March 10: **Viewer** (Porter): 4<sup>th</sup> Street
  - April 14: **Member Theatre** (Lake)
  - May 19 – **different due to Mother's Day Viewer Update Meeting** : (Porter)TBD
  - June 9: **Member Theatre** (Lake) TBD
  - July 14: **Viewer** (Porter): 4<sup>th</sup> Street
  - August 11: **Member Theatre** (Lake) TBD
  - September 8: **Viewer** (Porter) TBD
  - November 10: **Member Theatre** (Porter): Gala Post-Mortem at figure Eight Brewery, Valparaiso
  - December 8: (Lake) Genesis – Christmas Party and Elections – ALL CALL
- Any theatre or entity that notices a date where they can host and is willing to offer, please contact Matthew Byerly to arrange the schedule

### Unique Selling Proposition: What makes us unique, what do we do best?

- Completion of a worksheet activity to go through six different audience definitions; concentrate on one in particular
  - What problem are we solving for that audience?
  - What are the benefits that we offer to solve that problem?
  - What are we promising/should we be promising to that audience?
  - Compile a statement based upon exercise