

**MINUTES OF THE  
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING  
Capitol Park Welcome Center  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Friday, January 17, 2020**

**Folklife Commission members present:** Ray Berthelot, Sharon Calcote, Cheryl Castille, Brian Davis, Teresa Parker Farris, Herman Fuselier, Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Tommy Ike Hailey, Jim Hogg, Charles McGimsey, Susan Roach, Ray Scriber, John Sharp, Kimberly Walden.

**Folklife Commission members absent:** Cynthia Bryant, Rebecca Hamilton, Rodneya Hart, Erik Kreuzsch, Karen Leathem, Miranda Restovic, John Silver, Melissa Yarborough.

**Guests and Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present:** Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts; Erin Greenwald, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities; Valerie Feathers, Division of Archaeology; Conni Castille, Louisiana State Arts Council.

**I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER**

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 11:03 am at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge. She welcomed Ray Scriber to the commission.

Maida Owens explained changes in the membership of the commission. Sharon Calcote will represent the Office of Tourism. Guy Hughes will represent Jean Lafitte National Park until Erik Kreuzsch's position is filled. Chip McGimsey has resigned and Valerie Feathers will represent Division of Archaeology. Rodneya Hart has resigned from the Louisiana State Arts Council, which affects her position as their representative. Conni Castille is on the Louisiana State Arts Council and is interested in serving as their representative. Until these appointments are made, they are not voting members. The Governor has started the process of naming boards and commissioners for his second term.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes for the meetings of June 14, 2019 was accepted. John Sharp moved, and Kim Walden seconded.

**III. REPORTS**

**A. Chair Report – Teresa Parker Farris**

Parker Farris reported that short bios of each commissioner were added to the folklife commission page on [www.louisianafolklife.org](http://www.louisianafolklife.org) and that the closed Facebook group for commissioners to communicate folk-related news is seldom used. If any commissioners would like to pursue this, they should contact her, but she is leaning toward deactivating it. Maida Owens added that the Louisiana Folklore Society page and the Bayou Culture Collaborative Facebook group are also seldom used. Guy Hughes added that Jean Lafitte NHPP's social media person could participate in these. Parker Farris asked John Sharp about the Legends and Lore Marker Program. Sharp reported that one marker has been completed. Erected at the Merryville Historical Society & Museum in Beauregard Parish, it recognizes the outlaw Leather Britches and draws on Keagan LeJeune's research and books. Sharp said that is an easy process, but it has been difficult to get other applications. Commissioners suggested contacting Main Street Programs, Cultural Districts, and Scenic Byways.

**B. LDOA Budget Report – Cheryl Castille**

Castille reported that LDOA has a continuing budget from the legislature. State funds in addition to the National Endowment for the Arts funds will support folklife initiatives in FY20.

### **C. Director's Report – Maida Owens**

Owens directed Commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda and highlighted contacts made with other governmental agencies and non-profit organizations for the Bayou Culture Collaborative. Owens reported that the Bayou Culture Collaborative supported 3 workshops and events in August and September 2019 and more are in development for the spring and summer. *A Sense of Place—and Loss* workshop will be March 25 in Thibodaux in partnership with Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and she will be speaking at the BTNEP Management Council meeting on February 6. Herman Fuselier added that Mr. Willie Durisseau passed away and Owens said that Louis Michot had done some documentation of the centenarian fiddler prior to his death and will be able to complete his contract.

## **IV. BUSINESS**

### **A. Folklife Month 2020 – Teresa Parker Farris**

Parker Farris referred to the Folklife Month report in the Director's report for the 2019 events. Brian Davis created a collage video about the tradition bearers being honored so that commissioners can promote the initiative via social media.

Parker Farris presented a proposal for 2020 Folklife Month that she drafted with input from Susan Roach and Maida Owens. The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities is focusing on folklife for their fall issue and would like to feature the tradition bearers honored during Folklife Month. To meet their print deadlines, the process to identify ambassadors, tradition bearers, and events where they will be honored must be moved up. Commissioners requested that a new webpage be added with the guidelines, ambassador responsibilities, and list of those honored or a map showing their locations. Brian Davis made a motion to accept the proposal as presented with the additions. Susan Roach seconded. The motion passed. The following volunteered to be a 2020 ambassador: Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Brian Davis, Tommy Ike Hailey, John Sharp/Herman Fuselier, Kim Walden, and Teresa Parker Farris.

### **B. Special Meetings Committee - Teresa Parker Farris**

Parker Farris reported that the Special Meeting Committee (Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Ray Berthelot, Steven Fullen, Brian Davis, and Teresa Parker Farris) did not meet because there was no need.

### **C. Set date for next Commission meeting – Teresa Parker Farris**

The next full meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 12, 2020 at 1 pm at Capitol Park Welcome Center unless the Special Meetings Committee makes other arrangements.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sharon Calcote reported that the Office of Tourism Byways program has five 3-minute videos on the Byways website (<https://byways.louisianatravel.com/>). Four are online: Myths and Legends Byway, Boom or Bust Byway, Flyway Byway, and Bayou Teche Byway. The Historic US 80 video will be posted soon.

John Sharp reported that the Louisiana Folklore Society will meet March 27 and 28 at Nunu's in Arnaudville. The deadline for proposals is March 1. He directed commissioners to the website, [www.louisianafolklore.org](http://www.louisianafolklore.org). He also reported that the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Center for Louisiana Studies received a challenge grant of \$125,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to restore the Roy House, a historic UL-Lafayette property included on the National Register.

Teresa Parker Farris reported that the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival will have a sustainability tent as part of the Folklife Village. They are looking for traditions that relate to recycling and other forms of sustainability.

Brian Davis reported that the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation will have its Spring Ramble on March 14 in Minden. The Fall Ramble will be in Bogalusa on October 10. The Trust's conference will be April 16-17 in Monroe. Nominations for the Trust's Most Endangered Sites List is March 8.

Erin Greenwald reported that two-thirds of the fall issue of the Louisiana Endowment for Humanities *64 Parishes* will be about folklife. While most of the content is set, they are looking for a north Louisiana topic.

Ray Scriber reported that the National Park Service has provided \$600,000 for the Division of Historic Preservation to offer grants to rehabilitate historic buildings. He shared a report on the impact of the Louisiana Main Street Program.

Jennifer Ritter Guidry reported that Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Regional planning meetings are Feb 4-6 and free and open to the public.

Cheryl Castille reported that Folk Alliance International received sponsorship from the Office of Cultural Development and the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area for a booth about OCD resources and lowered registration rates for Louisiana residents. Herman Fuselier, Kelsea McCrary, Chris Stelly, and Reed Wick will present at the conference. Castille also reported that the deadline for the Cultural Districts Program is in July and has a new portal online. The Louisiana Division of the Arts is changing its grants program with Project Grants replacing the Decentralized Arts Program. Since this is based on regional rather than parish funding, larger and more creative grants will be possible.

## **VI. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the Commissioners agreed to adjourn at 12:31 pm. Jennifer Ritter Guidry moved, Susan Roach seconded.

The Commission toured the River Model exhibit at the LSU Center for River Studies along with Office of Cultural Development staff and Bayou Culture Collaborative and Louisiana Folklore Society members.

## Folklife Program Director's Report – January 17, 2020. Maida Owens

**Folklife Month 2019:** Five Folklife Ambassadors participated in 2019. Tommy Ike Hailey honored songwriter James "Buzz" Jackson. Gary LaFleur and Jonathan Foret honored Houma Indian basketweaver Janie Luster. Jim Hogg honored Gospel quartet Zion Travelers. Ray Brassieur and John Sharp honored brown cotton weaver Elaine Bourque. Rebecca Hamilton honored artist/author Mariana Titus. Brian Davis created a video featuring all of the tradition bearers which was shared in social media and on the Folklife Month webpage: [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/FM2019.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/FM2019.html) The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities again supported Folklife Month by funding the artist honoraria. Folklife Month was featured in the LEH fall issue of *64 Parishes* and the *Preservation in Print* October issue.

**Bayou Culture Collaborative:** The project expanded to all coastal parishes with the priority being workshops and mini-apprenticeships by tradition bearers to pass on a tradition. Details about the program are online: [www.louisianafolklife.org/bayouculture](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/bayouculture). In August, Janie Luster offered a palmetto weaving workshop in Theriot. Ann Luster offered a workshop on working with Spanish moss in September. Other tradition bearers are being identified for support in the spring.

The September 21 *Sense of Place—and Loss* workshop in Lafayette was attended by 47 artists, scientists, administrators, educators and cultural researchers. Paddy Bowman with Local Learning National Network for Folk Arts in Education facilitated the workshop. Acadiana Open Channel videoed the workshop and produced excerpts from the day: <https://youtu.be/v3QNKLwj6Wo>. We are planning two workshops for this Spring. One is in partnership with BTNEP in Thibodaux and one is with the Louisiana Folklore Society meeting March 13-14.

BCC supported the Rougarou Fest's addition of two features. Folklorist Carolyn Ware consulted with them to add a narrative stage. And master quilter Renee Hoeprich consulted regarding creating a community quilt during the festival.

At the American Folklore Society on October 19, Maida Owens, Shana Walton, John Sharp, Carolyn Ware, Susan Roach presented the forum, *Traditional Culture, Climate Change, and Folklorists in Louisiana* at the American Folklore Society about the Bayou Culture Collaborative.

In an effort to dialog with agencies and organizations involved with land loss issues, Maida Owens has met with a number of organizations about the Bayou Culture Collaborative: Foundation for Louisiana; The Water Institute, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM); LSU Sea Grant, LSU Center for River Studies; Governor's Office of Coastal Affairs; Studio in the Woods/Tulane; Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA); Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX); Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP). On January 8, 2020, Office of Cultural Development staff toured the LSU Center for River Studies river exhibit on the Water Campus in Baton Rouge as part of the ongoing dialog with the Governor's Office of Coastal Affairs, as is the Commission tour on January 17.

**Musical Instruments Project:** Megan Barra is designing an exhibit of three pull-up banners based on Holly Hobbs' essay, *Innovation, Tradition, and Change in Louisiana Musical Instrument Making and Repair*, which will be displayed at Folk Alliance International conference in New Orleans on January 22-26. And then made available to organizations throughout the state. [http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/instruments1.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/instruments1.html).

**House Dance Songs: The Willie and Irma Durisseau Project:** The Division of the Arts is supporting Louis Michot's project to document 101-year-old fiddler Willie Durisseau and his wife Irma through Louisiana Folk Roots. They will also provide an essay to be added to the Folklife in Louisiana website.