

Approved by the Membership on 3 November 2012

**ASTR**  
*American Society for Theatre Research*

**Minutes of the Fall 2011 ASTR Annual Business Meeting  
Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montreal, Quebec  
19 November 2011**

The President called the meeting to order at 1:28 pm.

**1) Approval of the Minutes of Fall 2010 meeting--Blair**

**MOTION:** to approve the minutes of the Fall 2010 Annual Business Meeting. Moved by Nellhaus, seconded by Williams. **The motion carried by acclamation.**

**2) Approval of Agenda--Blair**

**MOTION:** to approve the agenda for the Fall 2011 Annual Business Meeting. Moved by Nellhaus, seconded by Arons. **The motion carried by acclamation.**

**3) In memoriam: Jeffrey Richards, Dorothy Heathcote, Lisa Wolford Wylam, Ruby Cohn**

Heather Nathans offered words of remembrance for Jeffrey Richards, professor of English at Old Dominion University. Remembered as a kindly, generous, and warm mentor, he encouraged junior scholars, entered debates with passion and humor, and will be sorely missed.

E. J. Westlake spoke in remembrance of Dorothy Heathcote, pioneer in using process drama across the elementary school curriculum. Born 1926 in West Yorkshire, Heathcote left school at age 13 to work in a woolen mill. After a few years, her employer sponsored her to study drama at the Northern Theatre School in Bradford. She shifted from acting to teaching and developed the "mantle of the expert," which empowered young children to put their knowledge to use. Heathcote approached death without fear, considering it the greatest and most mysterious adventure of all.

Laura Levin memorialized Lisa Wolford Wylam, who suddenly passed away in October. She taught for the last five years at York University, where she served as Director of Graduate Studies. Wolford Wylam loved ASTR and loved keeping up with the latest scholarship. Lisa led the Practice as Research Working Group and was a founding Vice President of Performance Studies international (PSi). Her work consistently challenged the boundaries between theory and practice. This interest grew out of her ethnography based on insider knowledge first with the paratheatrical work of Jerzy Grotowski and later in collaboration with Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his company, La Pocha Nostra.

Janelle Reinelt offered words in memory of Ruby Cohn, renowned scholar of Beckett and, more broadly, modern drama of continental Europe. Cohn retired in 1992 after thirty years teaching Comparative Drama at the University of California, Davis. Her work on Beckett presented a lucid and critical dialogue between author and critic, setting new standards for drama

scholarship. One of a handful of female scholars who gathered accolades at a time when women were not welcomed in the field, Ruby Cohn did not consider herself a feminist because she claimed to never have experienced discrimination—yet she mentored many younger feminist scholars. Similarly denying any political content in her work, she engaged in important political actions.

#### **4) Announcements--Blair**

--Thank you to outgoing EC members Penny Farfan, Scott Magelssen, Sandra Richards, and Patricia Ybarra for their three years of service to ASTR and to Kimi Johnson for her service as GSC representative.

--Congratulations and welcome to new EC members Soyica Colbert, Suk-Young Kim, Kirsten Pullen, Leigh Woods, and to incoming GSC Representative David Calder.

--Thanks to Shaun Sewell for his marvelous work as webmaster and to Matt Omasta for his service as website editor and launching the new site. Welcome to Charlotte MacIvor, who is taking over his duties.

--Thanks and congratulations to conference chair Nicholas Ridout for his superb work in putting this great event together.

--Thanks to Nancy Erickson for her guidance and support in our work for this organization—conference site selection, record keeping, fiduciary matters, and so much more in addition.

#### **5) Secretary's Report—Arons**

##### a) By-law Amendment

--Introduced a motion to amend the by-laws in order to make the chairs of the Publications and Awards committees vice-presidential positions and to turn the current VP position into the Vice President for Conferences. The full text and rationale will be emailed to all members in the coming month or so by the new Secretary. Reviewed the process for voting on a by-law amendment and urged members to read the email when they receive it.

--Turned her duties over to Marla Carlson, thanking the current and past officers with whom she served and Nancy Erickson. President Blair thanked Arons for her guidance and meticulous minutes, archival of materials, and her input into decision to be made.

##### b) 2011 Election

Thanks to Shaun Sewell and Nancy Erickson for once again creating an electronic ballot. In addition to the EC members already introduced by the President, John Fletcher was elected as the new at-large member of the Committee on Conferences, and Gay Gibson Cima as the new Executive Committee member on the Committee on Conferences. There were no changes to the bylaws.

c) Website

Remember that minutes from Executive Committee meetings and from the general meeting can be found on the website, along with the handbook detailing ASTR policies and procedures and describing the work of all of the committees.

**6) Vice President's Report--Wolf**

--Thanks to Nancy Erickson and her able team for conference organizing, and to Nic Ridout and his committee for organizing this excellent conference program. Thanks to all for attending, and to members of the Committee on Conferences for their continued work on the conferences. Special thanks to Koritha Mitchell, who put together the career session this year and will do so again next year. The Vice President would welcome all thoughts and feedback on the current conference.

--Look for an open call for applications to be conference planner beginning with the 2014 conference.

--2012 Conference: The registration packet contains a call for papers for our 2012 Conference in Nashville with the theme "Theatrical Histories." Thanks in advance to Patricia Ybarra and Patrick Anderson for their work as Program Chairs.

**7) Treasurer's Report--Nellhaus**

--We are well on our way to meeting membership goals and exceeded projected conference attendance and received a \$10,000 donation from Ms. Grace Hope Hill to support the Errol Hill Award. Our investments currently stand at \$600,000. We moved \$50,000 from checking into the investments, and our portfolio increased 4.72%. We were able to reinstate the monetary component of all awards and to provide it retroactively—so apply for awards. Also remember that the Treasurer position, which is hard to fill, can have an important impact on our fiscal ethics. Cindy Brizzell-Bates now assumes this position.

--Nellhaus offered thanks to the membership for allowing him to serve for six years; to Blair, Wolf, and Arons for congenial service together; and to the past year's finance committee. Many thanks to Nancy Erickson for the assistance she provides in financial matters on a regular basis. Blair thanked Nellhaus for his outstanding service, clear communication, and meticulous care of our finances.

**8) GSC Report—Kimi Johnson**

--Described this year's new method of fundraising, a raffle, with the final drawing to be held at the end of her report. ASTR-GSC listserv has expanded resources. For this conference, the GSC provided a French travel phrase guide, information about Montreal, alternative housing options, and pedagogical resources.

--Expressed thanks to President Rhonda Blair, members of the EC, and to Nancy Erickson. Congratulations and thanks to incoming GSC President David Calder. Many thanks also to all who helped organize this year's raffle.

--This past year the GSC has continued to expand resources to graduate students, maintained a quarterly newsletter, and increased its Facebook presence.

--Extended an invitation to all graduate students to attend the GSC meeting at the conference and leadership opportunities.

### **9) TLA Report--Schlesinger**

--TLA and ASTR officers are meeting for breakfast on Sunday to discuss how the two organizations can collaborate more effectively. Schlesinger expressed thanks to Blair, Wolf, and Nancy Erickson for making this happen.

--TLA celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. A major benefit at Lincoln Center on October 12 in conjunction with its annual book awards will include tributes to TLA and performances connected to the benefit theme, *The Year 1937*. TLA is offering a special anniversary contribution membership rate of \$75.

--TLA asks ASTR to join efforts underway to preserve the print, multimedia, and electronic documents that record the history of the performing arts in the Americas.

### **10) Ad Hoc Committee on New Paradigms in Graduate Education Report—Nathans**

--Attendees at the luncheon received copies of the committee's report.

--The conference provided three opportunities to engage with the issue of sustaining and growing our field at this time when we're faced with so many challenges: Friday's lunchtime career sessions, Saturday morning's New Paradigms roundtable, and Sunday's plenary "Thinking About Working."

--With respect to ways in which ASTR can help all members, noted that 64% of grad programs have identified changes to come, and 94% of grad students said that they intended to become professors. ASTR can be a clearinghouse for information and can provide non-financial support for regional meetings for any purpose members may desire. Nathans encouraged us all to speak to members of the committee about this opportunity.

### **11) Fundraising Report—Davis, Pullen, White**

--Pullen encouraged members to make contributions to the Helen Crich Chinoy award and encouraged us to become involved in the project of documenting her contributions to the profession.

--To encourage contributions to the Oscar G. Brockett essay prize, White reviewed the contributions to the profession of both Brockett and scholars that he trained.

--Davis noted 537 attendees at this conference and requested contributions in order to perpetuate our work.

**12) President's Report--Blair**

a) Fundraising: We raised \$446 through the sale of raffle tickets at the conference and sold nineteen t-shirts. Blair will replace Tracy Davis as chair of the fundraising committee, which expects to focus on funding for the Brockett and Chinoy awards and on bequests.

b) Gifts: Thanks to Dorothy Chansky for her work in securing Grace Hope Hill's \$10,000 donation to fund the Errol Hill award and to Tobin Nellhaus for his support in that effort.

c) Pending business: The proposed by-law change regarding vice presidents will circulate via email, and all members are urged to read it carefully.

d) Mentorship: Just prior to the conference, Tracy Davis conducted a successful workshop on mentoring doctoral students.

e) Ad Hoc Committee on Archive Preservation/American Theatre Archive Project: We anticipate a decision in April from the NEA regarding the funding application that ATAP resubmitted.

f) Leadership summit: ATHE President Bill Doan is organizing a summit meeting for leaders of the organizations.

g) Remember to check the website of the American Council on Learned Societies information on grant and funding possibilities for professoriate and graduate students. Members have applied and received funding from this organization.

**14. Questions and New Business**

**None.**

**15. Adjournment**

MOTION: to adjourn. Moved by McConachie, seconded by Magelssen. Motion passed by acclamation.