

The Blues Society of Western Pennsylvania

Minutes Of The Membership Meeting Of August 19, 2007 PD's Pub, 5832 Forward Avenue, Squirrel Hill (15217)

Officers Present: Jim Hamel, President; Jim Franciscus, Vice President; Don Vecchio, Treasurer; Annie Sutton, Membership Secretary; Jonnye Weber, Secretary

Members Present: Ken Lamison, Christopher Ingham, Rich Majeran, Jackie Coates, Mike Rich, Jim Weber, Donna Bennett, Joanne Creely, Bill Creely, and Ed Malloy

The meeting convened at 6:30 PM. Presiding Officers were Jim Hamel and Jim Franciscus

- I. Opening Remarks and President's Report: Jim Hamel.
 - A. Future Projects:
 1. Discussion included Blues programs in the schools, music instructions, artist exchange, further development of committees and welcoming volunteers, traditional and jazz Blues to be introduced to area.
 2. An exchange using the rivalry between West Virginia and Pitt to be the driver to promote a regional band competition, develop pre-game highlights at tailgate parties for such competitions, and contacting alumni associations to gain support for the rivalry competition were discussed.
 - a. Jim Weber will contact those alumni associations.
 3. The November 4, 2007, Blues Bash, benefiting the Pittsburgh Food Bank, to be held at Moondog's was announced. The Blues Society has been invited to have a booth.
 - B. **IBC Information:**
 1. The acoustic competition will be held on Sunday, October 7, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the Thunderbird Café. A jam will follow.
 2. The all day band competition will be held at Jimmy G's on Sunday, October 14, 2007. Jim Franciscus will follow up and confirm the date.
 3. The Final or the second day of competition depending on number of bands wanting to compete will be held October 21 and/or October 28 at Moondog's.

- a. Gil Snyder will contact Ron Esser at Moondog's and confirm those dates.
 - b. Gil Snyder paid the entry fee for the Mystic Knights to enter competition.
4. Will establish precedent for IBC's concerning
 - a. Society will get the door take, the merchandise sales and provide the entertainment.
 - b. The club will get the proceeds from the food and beverage.
 5. Will start planning next IBC in January for possible spring date.
 6. All information re: regional winners and required application packets must be submitted to Blues Foundation by **November 30**.
- C. Harry McCorkle Benefit
1. Benefit for Harry McCorkle, the bass player, will get assistance from BSWPA
 2. Gil Snyder will call Will E. Tri, set date, and keep Society informed.

II. Treasurer's Report: Don Vecchio

A. Financial Growth

1. Don reported that at the beginning of Festival season, \$145 in bank.
2. The balance on July 31 was \$1,788.
3. The balance for August to date is \$3,624.57.
4. Reported on going from red to the black from sales of raffles, shirts, memberships, and Pittsburgh Blues Diva Show door take.

B. Future Expenditures

1. Need shirts for Carnegie Blues Festival in September 2007.

III. Membership Secretary: Annie Sutton

A. Membership Update

1. Year-to-date total of new memberships as of August 09, 2007 is 85. New members comprise 37% of total membership.

2. Year-to-date total memberships renewed as of August 09, 2007, is 13. Member renewals comprise 6% of our total membership.
3. The large majority of enrollments/renewals came through BSWPA presence at events.
4. Increased renewals will be pursued according to available contact info; i.e., email, phone or postcard. Discussed sending renewal letter with membership form and self-addressed envelope to encourage filling out and returning.
5. Keep members updated between newsletters with monthly "Bswpa Blues Blurbs" via email.

IV. Secretary: Jonnye Weber

- A. New to position; determining what is needed given the skills brought to the job.
 1. Skills may include being facilitator and coordinator.
 2. Develop "flock vs. herd" system to enable better communication and better understanding of everyone's role within the society.
 - a. Communication will prove to be the Society's best asset to among board, officers, and membership.
 - b. The Society will continue to evolve as we grow and decide what is working or not working. Changes will be implemented as warranted from assessing the results of our endeavors.
 - c. The Society will determine our strengths to fulfill the wants and needs of our membership.
 - d. The society will develop those strengths and pass on to others in the group to affect a collective response to what needs to be done or what needs to be achieved to realize the Society's goals.
- B. Marketing
 1. Winding up the festival season at Carnegie.
 2. Created a model that worked at Pittsburgh and Heritage Blues festivals.
 3. Continuing to maintain contact with other Blues Societies for information and resources to guide our progress in continuing to be solvent and to fulfill our mission statement.
 4. Have recently made personal contact with Blues Foundation, which will prove to be a resource and guidance tool.

5. Developing the Society's greatest resource, our membership, will be ongoing. The personal contact at the festivals and events has proven invaluable. We have been allowed to ask our members what their expectations are and formulate our endeavors based on those wants and needs.
6. The marketing will continue to raise monies to fund our projects at the Carnegie festival and attract new membership.
7. The marketing committee will be involved with the IBCs to continue to enhance our bottom line and gain more membership recognition to our goals.
8. New merchandise was suggested to attendees and a hand vote was taken on what to consider.
 - a. Merchandise for outdoor activities will resume in spring. Additional choices will be made.
 - b. Merchandise for IBCs will include long sleeve t-shirts as a must. Other items under consideration include hats, sweatshirts and hoodies.
 - i. Decisions for next shirt design will be made and ordered for Carnegie.
9. The marketing committee will be involved in advertising events with given notice.
10. Volunteers will be acquired to better effect the outcome of our future endeavors.

V. Committee Reports

A. Newsletter: Jim Weber, Chair

1. Jim stated that the newsletter needs input from many sources to keep it from getting stale.
2. Discussed potential format of Newsletter, including:
 - a. Feasibility of colored outside wrapper on newsletter.
 - b. Colored edition once a year before festival season starts to get attention and make impact.
 - c. Discussed findings from studying other newsletters and discussed black and white newsletters and the content.

- d. Discussed importance of getting funds from advertisers to offset cost of printing and mailing newsletters.
 - i. First ad from someone resulted from call list.
 - ii. Spot Bar contacted Jim and asked for information on advertising in newsletter.

B. Website Committee: Jim Hamel (for Maria Kovacs, Chair)

1. Maria has placed a calendar on the BSWPA website that is powered by *Google*. The password for the calendar will be distributed to all Board members; then multiple users can update the calendar.

VI. Open Discussion

- Mike was asked to look into feasibility of advertising on radio (WYEP, etc.).
- Discussed developing a web cast with local blues people.
- Don stressed using tax id number to avoid being taxed on our purchases
- Don inquired about email on bswpa.org.
- CD reviews
- CD sales- Gil Snyder discussed doing a pay pal for CDs to benefit the Society.
- Membership will use postcards to contact those members without Internet services.
- Consider legal buy downloads of music on our site.
- Educate potential members/donors of demographics of our Society.
- Areas surrounding Pittsburgh are an untapped market for our Society since those areas have no Blues affiliation.
 - Contact Ron Yarosz about developing interests in Erie.
- Discussion held about our not having booth at Diversity Festival.
 - Determined that we will look into that for future possibility.
 - Newly reorganized entities like BSWPA have to learn from missed opportunities and decide how to better position our effort in the future.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM by Jim Hamel