



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING  
Spring Conference and Student Auditions

**Official Minutes of the  
Mississippi NATS Chapter Breakfast Meeting**

**APPROVED**

**Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Mississippi College - Clinton, MS  
8:00 A.M.**

**Presiding  
President Nancy Maria Balach**

**I. Call to Order**

The Chapter meeting was called to order at 8:29 a.m. by President Nancy Maria Balach.

Members present: Cheryl Coker; N. M. Balach; M. Buchanan; K. Broadwater; L. Backlin; B. Robinson; J. Robinson; A. Johnston; J. Yarrington; P. Lewis-Hale; J. Lamar Kantack; R. Tulyaganova; S. Hurley; C. Dunn; V. Dacus; L. Holliman; N. Perna; F. Nabholz; J. Fontaine; G. Long; E. A. Hart; R. Landis; J. Dahman; J. Smith; R. Joiner; K. Davis; and special guest, Regional Governor Shawn Roy.

**Approval of November 10, 2017 Chapter Meeting Minutes**

The Minutes of the November 10, 2017 Regional NATS Conference Chapter Breakfast meeting were provided by Secretary Kimberley Davis, for review and approval.

The Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Amanda Johnston and seconded by Jamie Dahman. *The November 10, 2017 Chapter Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.*

**II. Introduction of Chapter Officers and Regional Governor**

Regional Governor, Shawn Roy, made a first time visit to our Chapter. He requested to receive any questions, suggestions, or concerns we may have.

The Governor announced that our state Governor, Phyllis Lewis-Hale has decided to step down at the end of this term and stated that in that the governorship is an appointment position, he has asked Nancy Maria Balach to replace her. Governor Roy extended his thanks to State Governor, Phyllis Lewis-Hale, for her service and welcomed President Balach to her new position.

### **President Balach**

On behalf of the MS NATS Chapter, Nancy Mariah extended her a very hearty thanks to Phyllis for her service and “all she has done” as governor and presented her with flowers.

### **III. Welcome and Recognition of New Members**

Susan Hurley – MUW, Columbus. She joins us from Arizona.

### **IV. Governor’s Report – Phyllis Lewis-Hale**

Governor Lewis-Hale stated that she has absolutely enjoyed serving as governor for the past six years. She thanked Nancy for her support and the Board for all of the work we’ve done together across her three terms.

In that the governor’s position has changed (originally in charge of coordinating the NATSAA Competition), she will work with Nancy during this period of transition. Now the governor must submit two annual reports (September 1/March 1) concerning membership (active and lapsed members), and sharing strategies about recruitment. She will send out an email requesting feedback from all of us regarding best practices for recruiting and retaining members, as well as discussion on collaborative pianists to solicit their membership. Feel free to send her these ideas.

Once again, she welcomed Nancy into her new position and assured her assistance during this transition to get the necessary reports submitted and extended her thanks.

### **V. President’s Report – Nancy Maria Balach**

Mentioned our new website and our first featured faculty spotlight artist, Roza Tulyaganova, and encouraged us all to read her story. Nancy Maria further encouraged the Chapter to send her ideas. She will be reaching out to folk asking if she may feature you on the website. Please share all that we are doing, anything we have going on at our institutions, or as individual artists that you would like to share with the chapter. The more you share the better.

In 2019, we will again be featuring an artist. If you have ideas, please bring to the chapter. Budget must be of consideration.

Balach shared a letter from Jo Miller Orr – deactivating her membership. She is moving with her husband to TN in retirement. In the letter, Jo expressed her appreciation for NATS, her history with the chapter, and student successes. This then initiated brief discussion about Jo (Mary Lenn and Nancy, and then Cheryl) with the conclusion that we need to reach out more to the community colleges for their engagement. Invite people to our NATS events, reaching out to individuals. Various ideas were then exchanged by members with Jennifer Robinson asking about our standing with SNATS memberships across the state; she believes growing SNATS is crucial. Governor Roy added that Louisiana has one and they meet at the same time a the teachers are meeting.

Membership – we can make more of an effort to reach out to people. Phyllis added that National has also added a mentorship program that is part of National’s new strategy for membership. Further discussion ensued.

**VI. Auditions Chair’s Report – Laurissa Backlin**

Chair Backlin thanked everyone for all for their help, particularly Mary Lenn and Kimberly Broadwater. She named the Finals judging list. She requested that all be present 30 minutes ahead of time. Discussion then ensued regarding the timeframe for last year’s event, recalling that we were a full hour to 90 minutes ahead of the estimated time. J. Robinson affirmed the need to maintain the rule of not singing if not present on time; however, they have moved categories around. But if a full hour ahead, it is sad if the students do not get to sing at all. B. Robinson reiterated the need to have students come a category ahead of time and not go by the “approximate” times given. Nancy Maria added that she actually moved the rounds up 30 minutes from last year. Nick Perna suggested to remove the approximate times – or times period – from the program.

**VII. Treasurer’s Report – Mary Lenn Buchanan**

She will give a full report until in November because all has cleared by that time. That report was published in the November Minutes. We began the year with \$8138.80 so we began this year in good standing.

Two – or several – factors are happening that are affecting our budget and our funds:

1. We raised our First Place award by \$15; and
2. With the use of AuditionWare and everything going through the National Office, we lost \$3.00 per student to fees we have to pay. This year NH received \$112 for processing and that doubled to \$224 for the AuditionWare person. We will need to offset this by increasing the student registration fee by \$3.00. Thankfully, this was done at the regional level first.

The decline in overall attendance – registration from students and teachers. She presented the Board with a brief 5-year overview: from 2014 to 2018 our faculty went from 43 to 31; student registration went from 239 to 112; that is an over half drop. This is affecting the difference between what we receive from student fees (we were making a little money) and what was disseminated; last year what we collected was \$210 less than we paid out – paid out a few dollars more for awards that we received. Not a major concern with teacher fees because it is the same and covers the breakfast, etc. We have to cut back on our spending – or spend wisely. We must be careful in spending and mindful of the artist(s) we bring in.

Patton Rice lost his father this week which is why he is absent this weekend. Pat sent students, however. Richard Joiner on the back for his continued activity even in retirement. Reach out to the community colleges and she thanked Jennifer Smith (Holmes CC) for her diligence. She mentioned those on the South end to reach out to JCJC (thinking they were not involved but Susan Smith is).

Eva Hart asked to make a statement regarding the private teachers, expressing the conflict in dates and activities. She could have brought ten students but the conflict with “Show Choir season” prohibited her ability to do so. “This time of year is not good at the high school area.” Mary Lenn mentioned our discussion at the Board meeting; hopefully, this is only a fluke of a year regarding the dates. We are going to be more adherent to set our dates for two weeks following Spring Break unless it coincides with Easter.

In her closing, Buchanan stated “Other than that (the issues mentioned), we are doing good in our finances. We just need to encourage people to join, keep coming, and send us students. She asked for any questions. This was the conclusion of the Treasurer’s report.

### **President Balach**

Moving forward to new business, the president announced that as it states in our By-Laws, the president-elect segues into the office of president at the close of the former president’s term. Amanda Johnston has been serving as president-elect and will now step into the office of president in the fall.

Today we are voting on a new President-Elect and the office of Secretary. Two names have been brought forth.

## **VIII. New Business**

### **A. Election of Officers**

Two names for election: Nicholas Perna for president; Kimberley Davis for secretary.

The floor was opened for nominations. There were no further nominations.

*Mary Lenn, moved to accept the stated nominations by acclamation; seconded by Jamie Dahmen.*

Balach thanked Nicholas Perna for accepting, and Kimberley Davis.

Nick Perna is the new President-Elect; Kimberley Davis continues as Secretary.

### **B. Spiritual Category – High School**

Balach explained that since we have modified the Hall Johnson Spirituals Category for our Chapter and make it more open. Patton Rice has specifically asked that we do more to include the high school level.

Nancy Maria asked Laurissa to explain the rationale for the move to add a fee for the category. For every category a student competes in, there is an additional fee within Audition Ware. Balach’s concern is having enough

participants and having enough prize money. How will this impact the chapter. Discussion from the floor ensued. Perna stated that he adjudicated

the category yesterday and observed that the age differences were just too disparate. They are at a completely different maturation level. Even if judging the rubric, the lower scores sends a message that they are lesser than. They end up in a place where they don't need to be (mentally). It is unfair to place the younger and/or perhaps more inexperienced singers with the older. Lewis-Hale highlighted (read) the age stipulations from the National Auditions, which is 17 – 23; those students would be in this position if advanced to the National Auditions. It was mentioned (Coker?) that there were those younger than 17 that sang in the category. Mary Lenn added that there needed to be seven students to break even in terms of money brought in from the registration fees – if we give a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> – that's \$95. If there is a tie for second, then add another \$25. S. Roy asked how would this align with the National standard? It will not. It will remain mixed but will give opportunity to prepare for the category coming up for the Regional conference. J. Yarrington added that he will have two or three students willing to participate, even at the college level; he appreciates the freedom of being able to sing more than Hall Johnson's literature.

It was a strong category, however, with the high schoolers, there were two different things happening in terms of ability. Lewis-Hale mentioned our assigning of repertoire in preparing them for the larger category. Shawn Roy stated that he would be bringing this up with NH. It may encourage greater participation.

The conclusion: rather than having a separate high school category, make it a lower/upper with the lower encompassing high school/freshmen/sophomore (max age 14 - 22), and upper will be junior/senior/graduates (23 & older).

***Nick moved to change to Upper/Lower Spiritual Category; seconded by Jamie Dahmen.***

### **C. Future Regional Conference Site**

1. November 8-10, 2018, Northwestern State University – Natchitoches, LA.

Nancy backtracked to discussion the National Convention and asked if anyone was attending. Several chapter members will be presenting: Phyllis Lewis-Hale will present a condensed version of her *Afro-Creole Folksongs* Lecture with a colleague from Louisiana; Jeanette Fontaine is giving a poster presentation with Jennifer Patterson, a colleague from Mars Hill University, on Cross-Training for the voice; and Kimberley Davis will collaborate with Lois Leventhal, presenting a lecture recital based upon her book on the Performance Practice of the arrangements of spirituals by Jacqueline Hairston. Nicholas Perna says has been

shadowing John Nix and will be assuming the role Nix plays as poster-papers coordinator for the National Conferences.

**D. Future State Conference Sites**

1. March 29-30, 2019, University of Mississippi
2. March 2020 – Delta State University? A strong maybe. New renovations to be completed. New chair welcomes NATS.

Nancy Maria reiterated that if we have a friend that would like to build their resumé and could join us as a guest artist (inexpensively), the door is open. Spread the word and scout.

**E. Other Topics from the Floor**

Regarding Patton Rice and his hurting. Close knit family and really close with his dad and grandfather. Please keep him in our thoughts and prayers.

No other topics introduced.

**IX. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20, moved by Amanda Johnston; seconded by Jamie Dahmen.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberley Davis, Secretary  
MS NATS Chapter