



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
**TEACHERS
OF SINGING**

Mississippi Chapter

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING
Spring Conference and Student Auditions**

**Official Minutes
of the
Mississippi District Chapter Meeting**

Pope Banquet Room, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, MS
Saturday, February 26, 2022, 8:00 A.M.

President Amanda Johnston, Presiding

- I.** Call to Order – 9:00 a.m.
Members Present: N. M. Balach; M. Buchanan; V. Dacus; J. Dahman; K. Davis; S. Buchanan Garlott; K. Johnson-Gunn; A. Johnston; P. Lewis Hale; S. Hurley; L. M. Holliman; B. Johnson; J. Lamar-Kantack; C. Linton; N. Perna; P. Rice; C. Roberts; B. Robinson; S. Shannon; G. Tolbert; R. Tulyaganova; D. Watson; and C. Withrow.
- Review and Approval of Minutes from the November 12, 2021, Region Chapter Meeting (Kimberley Davis, Secretary)
 - a. N. Perna moved to approve; B. Robinson, seconded the motion.

After the approval of the Minutes, President Johnston extended a big “Thank you,” to Susan Hurley and all the faculty here at “The W,” stating that the conference “has run so smoothly, largely thanks to Susan Hurley. She has been working tirelessly for months to get this set up.”

- Welcome back!! Recognition of New Members:
 - a. New Members: Chris Withrow (MSU and Stanford University), Garrett Tolbert (MSU); Danielle Watson, USM doctoral student/Teaching Assistant.

- II. Governor’s Report – Nancy Maria Balach**
Big congratulations to Jamie, Phyllis, and Viola for their presentations and contributions last evening; “That was incredible. We come for the students to compete, but we also come so significantly for those experiences, and we seriously thank you for inspiring [us].”

She wanted to share that a former member of our chapter, Sandie (Sandra) Franks, passed away with pancreatic cancer; she was a former student of Cynthia Linton when she received her undergraduate degree from the University of Mississippi. She was the president for the Memphis Chapter. In her honor there will be a benefit concert coming up to establish a scholarship fund. Balach will share this on the Facebook page but wanted to share it with the MS Chapter because she was associated with us. She went to LSU and was part of our Region. It will be on March 25th. The event is to establish the Sandra Frank's Award for Outstanding High School Singer. Franks had an established private studio and was very involved with NATS. Cynthia Linton added a few comments regarding their history and teacher-student relationship, adding that "her passing is devastating." Balach stated that it will be nice to honor her with this posthumous award to continue her legacy because she had such an impact on so many young people.

Governor Balach announced that after this conference, her tenure as governor will end. She expressed that it has been lovely serving the Chapter in this way. "We had a really great Board meeting yesterday; really purposeful conversation about where the Chapter is going and what we'd like to, so she is really excited for the future and appreciate your being here."

III. Auditions Chair's Report – Jamie Dahman

After his greeting, AC Dahman reported that the most important information to report is that we have 60 entries representing 55 students, with five of those being dual entries. He believes those to be good numbers considering that this is our first time to convene with an in-person conference after a two-year absence (2020 was canceled and 2021 was virtual). What he believes could be a moment of concern is that turnout in the younger categories and stated that if we know any independent teachers teaching high school students, we should reach out to them and get them here for next year because, for the first time since he's been a part of the Chapter, we had no high school boys to enter and very few high school girls. Additionally, we had very few freshmen trebles, tenors, basses, or baritones. This could still be because of Covid; he is not sure. However, what he is certain of is that it does not bode well for the future of our Chapter conferences if that is, indeed the trajectory we are on. Because each level creates a succession – freshmen become sophomores, sophomores become juniors, high school students become freshmen, etc., and if they are not participating, this becomes problematic. So, he encouraged us to do a better job of reaching out to independent teachers of high school students. Also, invite our community college colleagues to come and bring their students.

IV. Treasurer's Report – Susan Hurley

Susan Hurley presented her report. At our Region Conference meeting on November 12, 2021, the Chapter had a balance of \$9,454.86. Since then, she's had one check to come in, but there are still outstanding check out from students and she has been writing some for this conference. Technically, we currently have a balance \$9,135.07.

Continuing commentary from the Treasurer's report, President Johnston added that at yesterday's Board meeting, some of what was discussed was what we could do with some of this money; how we can serve the students by increasing awards, increasing fees for pianists, bringing in guest clinicians that specialize in things we do not offer (e.g., CCM, etc.). Also discussed the possibility of joint partnerships with the host institution. If we plan far enough in advance and we know who is hosting and who could chip in some money, so that we are not footing the entire bill to bring in someone we'd like to feature. Perhaps someone within our membership that already has things that could be showcased at the host institution. Be on the lookout for further correspondence from the Board, once we have a chance to meet in-between conferences to discuss all these new, exciting initiatives.

V. President's Report – Amanda Johnston

Johnston's first item of business was to discuss the date of our next conference. She feels that every single time we meet, since she has been president, the date of our conference has been a point of discussion, despite planning, changing bylaws, to clearly leave the weekend after spring break, there have been repeated conflicts with ACDA. Now we have new hurdle in the state of Mississippi, in that our spring breaks are no longer occurring the same week. This is something she feels we do not want to have to deal with every single year. The Board discussed this at length at yesterday's meeting and would like to propose changing the dates to be equivalent of this weekend every year – the last weekend of February. In full disclosure and if any were curious, she made it known that we talked about just about every weekend: the first weekend of March is The International Women Composer's Festival; conflicts with MMTA; and other conflicts with National ACDA. This weekend appears to be the best chance to give us a good turnout. If all are aware that NATS will be earlier than usual, it will give studio teachers time to plan repertoire. If it is a consistent date, that would be good for all of us, which will assist us in our planning, and there would be no concern regarding spring break. She called for discussion:

N. Balach stated that the dates that we'd selected were dates for spring break for all of us, except for one institution. With this earlier date, the only conflict that we are aware of is the Southern Division ACDA but in weighing out what would be the greater conflict this was the best solution.

Nicholas Perna added that if in any particular year one of our choirs were to be accepted to sing at SD, that school in that year, anyone in that choir would not be able to attend; if that is the only sacrifice, it seems to make sense that this date works. So, knowing this in advance, as we are planning our performance calendars, we can avoid our musicals/operas occurring on that weekend, or choral concerts. If we go back another week, that is when the community colleges have their big choral festival in Meridian. He wanted all to know that the Board really did consider practically every weekend in the semester at our meeting. It seems that this weekend will have the least amount of conflict.

So, for 2023, the dates will be February 24th & 25th. We are still hoping that Delta will still be able to serve as hosts for that – they have been planning and trying for years. 2024 will be February 23rd -24th. Brad Robinson volunteered the University of Mississippi for the 2024 date. There is also a volunteer from William Carey

University to host 2024. She asked if anyone else would be willing to volunteer. R. Tulyaganova spoke up to volunteer Mississippi State but added that they were in the middle of a search for a new department chair and as soon as that is decided in summer, she will be working on that; however, at this moment, she cannot make a commitment, but will confirm later. Their new building should be ready by May. Also, S. Shannon volunteered Northwest Community College. Johnston exclaimed how wonderful it was to have three very good, solid choices.

Balach asked if wanted to discuss 2025, as the Board discussed, with Davis adding consideration for the south, north and middle. Johnston stated that with having the three schools for 2024, all would need to verify with their departments, so since there are three, one will be for 2024 and one of the others will be selected for 2025. She encouraged William Carey, Northwest, and Ole Miss to check with their departments and write her with confirmations. Discussion ended.

Johnston called for a motion to change the dates of our Mississippi State District Conference (this will also be a Bylaw change carried out by the new president) to the last weekend of February – the Friday and Saturday – moving forward.

Motion to change the dates of our MS State District Conference to the last weekend of February – effective 2023 – made by Brad Robinson; 2nded by Jamie Dahman.

The motion passed. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

- **Future district conference sites:**
2023 – February 24th – 25th, 2023 Delta State University.
February 2024 – 23rd – 24th, 2024, Location TBA – Wm Carey, Northwest Community College, or Ole Miss.
- **Regional conference still unknown.**
- Future regional conference sites
2022 – TBA Louisiana – November (9)10 – 12, 2022.
2023 – TBA Arkansas.
- 2022 NATS National Conference is July 2–6, 2022 in Chicago. Nick Perna has a presentation; Danielle Watson will attend due to a student entry. Mary Lenn Buchanan will attend with Kimberly Broadwater – our Region Governor. (Mary Lenn added a message from Kimberly: she regrets being ill and not being here, but sends well-wishes to all of the students.

VI. New Business

- **Election of Officers** – Johnston explained the terms: Vice-President (2-yr term; renewable once); Secretary (2-yr term; renewable once).
Presentation of the three nominees on the nomination slate: the only candidate for VP is Sadie Shannon; nominees for Secretary were Dr. Shelly Buchanan Garlot and Dr. Byron Johnson.

Johnston read the bios of each candidate.

There were no further nominees from the floor for Vice President.

Call for Motion to approve the nomination slate. The Motion to accept the nomination of Ms. Shannon's as VP was made by N. M. Balach; seconded by N. Perna. Ms. Shannon's nomination was accepted by acclamation.

○ **Vote by ballot for Vice-President and Secretary:**

Candidates for Secretary are Dr. Shelly Buchanan Gallot and Dr. Byron Johnson.

No other nominations were made from the floor. Ballot stands as presented. **Voting results:** Dr. Byron Johnson was voted as the Chapter's new Secretary. Dr. Johnson made heart-warming expressions and tribute to outgoing Secretary, Kimberley Davis, stating that when he arrived at Southern Miss in 2003 as a student, Dr. Davis was his voice professor; she worked tirelessly as a member of NATS, getting her students to participate, and also to get other members included in the profession and as an active NATS member; she has worked tirelessly as secretary over these years, and so it is like a changing of the guard from someone who understands a fellow Southern Miss person and expressed wanting to pay tribute to Dr. Davis for her service. (A hearty applause from the Chapter ensued.)

Nick Perna took pictures of the three rotating off the Board of Control: Kimberley Davis (Secretary), Nancy Maria Balach (District Governor), and Amanda Johnston (President).

Amanda formally accepted Byron's comments and had all of us to stand who were exiting from office. She presented gifts to each, including Mary Lenn Buchanan who rotated off as our long-standing Treasurer last year.

- **Presidential succession:** Nicholas Perna, Vice-President, was welcomed into office as President.
- **Additional topics from the floor:**
Judging assignments were made by Jamie Dahman.

Mary Lenn extended thanks to Amanda Johnston, recognizing that she is the only pianist/accompanist who, besides one other, who has ever joined our Mississippi Chapter and the only one who has served as president. She encouraged us to reach out to other accompanists and encourage them to join the Chapter. Thank you, Amanda! (A hearty cheer and applause from the Chapter followed.)

- **Transition to President Nick Perna.** Stated that as soon as Jamie has confirmed the new dates for Delta State next year, he will start looking for a guest artist immediately. He wanted us to know ahead of time that it will most likely be someone

who specializes in some sort of contemporary singing style that will not only be of benefit to our students but also to help educate us as teachers. He also hopes that we can bring in an individual who will reflect the diversity of our Chapter. He wanted us to know this to be one of his goals. If you have suggestions, please feel free to write him.

VII. Adjournment – the motion to adjourn was made by. B. Robinson; 2nded by C. Coker.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberley Davis, Secretary
MS Chapter of NATS, Southern Region

Thank you, MS NATS Chapter (and Byron Johnson for your lovely tribute), for allowing me to serve as your secretary. It has been wonderful!

Kimberley