

Subject: Long range FSMTA State Conference Planning

Ad hoc committee appointed by Past President Paulette Kilts

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Attending: Adrienne LeBlanc, Mary Beth Purchase,
Carolyn Troupin, Charles Turon, Sheron White

**The committee was asked to address the following topics:
In doing so, we were in constant reference to the
conference survey taken in 2008.**

Time of year -

A communication with Carol Dennes, Southern Division Competition Chair, revealed that the 1st weekend of November would be the latest that we could hold our competitions and still get the winners names sent on in a timely fashion.

Recommendation: The committee decided that the best time for our conference would be the first week of November. After talking with exhibitors, and determining conference dates of other organizations, we found this to be the weekend with the least conflicts.

(2009 -Oct. 22-25 World Pedagogy Conference -Oct. 22-25 MENC Conference)

Location -

One general determination we made is that if it is at all possible, it would be very pleasing to our membership if everything could happen under one roof. This has occurred during a few conferences, and everyone enjoyed the convenience.

We discussed three possibilities regarding location:

1) A central location, probably in the Orlando area - to be tried for 3 years - then determine if attendance increases.

Pro- No one would ever have to travel to the extreme opposite ends of the state. The area is an attractive area to promote inclusion of family time. Group transportation could be encouraged for long distances. Rapport with a hotel or other venues could be built up over the years.

Con- Although each district would be responsible for the majority of planning and hosting as in the past, there could be problems with long distance planning. We felt that the uniqueness of each district would be missed if we don't move around. Also planning a conference that isn't in your city or nearby could prove difficult for the host district to provide enough volunteers.

2) Rotation between 3 areas only - Miami, Orlando, Jacksonville/Tallahassee.

Pro - There would be times that members would have the conference in their own area, making it very convenient to attend.

Con- Same as for one area.

3) Continue as we have with the conference in the host districts' area.

Recommendation: We thought that possibly another pre-conference survey might be in order.....asking a few questions about the location of the conference. However, this survey could be taken verbally at the local meetings guaranteeing a large response, and where discussion might give further insight as to how to improve attendance at our conferences. Attached is a sample survey .

Cost / Duration

It was discussed that with the extraordinary amount of talent in the state of Florida, that it would be wise to try to find our concert artists here when at all possible to avoid large travel expenses.

Any attempt to cut costs should not be in the quality of the venue.

Recommendation: We suggest that the conference begin with the board meeting on Wednesday, followed by 3 days of sessions, master classes and concerts, and end on Sunday with the Collegiate Convocation. Adding the collegiate convocation to the conference has the potential to address several issues. Among these is featuring Florida faculty

and independent artists, as well as involving more non-piano events, and increasing attendance.

Exhibitors -

Mary Beth Purchase contacted several publishing houses and former exhibitors to examine their thoughts on attending our state conference. We found the following information from them to be helpful in our decisions:

√ The exhibitors all expressed the necessity for the conference to be near a major airport and access to rental cars.

√ They felt October and summer dates conflicted with other major conferences.

√ They would appreciate some time exclusively for exhibits.

√ General comments and observations were that in Florida they saw in our sessions very little move toward the new world of technology, a lack of RMM, jazz and improvisation sessions and that we were pretty much just a piano group.

Recommendation: After reviewing results of our FSMTA survey, we found that exhibitors are very important to members attending the conference, and therefore should be included each year.

Other

Recommendation: In the survey, the request for more publicity regarding the conference came up frequently. The desire to know precisely what sessions and workshops will be available was very strong. There should be a great emphasis in the publicity on the importance of professional development gained by attending the state conferences, that the benefits gained will far out weigh the expense incurred. A periodic article in the FSMTA newsletter promoting the Collegiate MTNA and Professors, aimed at gaining interest and momentum for attendance at their events.

Recommendation: A standing conference committee be created consisting of the following:

Exhibits Chairman- to act as contact person with exhibitors. This person could greatly facilitate the securing of exhibitors by doing the job several years in a row . The knowledge gained during one year of Exhibits Chairman could be used to great advantage if repeated. Trying to learn everything and then pass it on is not only inconvenient and inefficient, it is also slightly annoying to the exhibitors to deal with an inexperienced person each year.

Hotel /Logistics Chairman - Again, a person with some experience in doing this could be extremely helpful, and possibly financially important to secure the best accommodations and prices.

Presenter /Sessions / Workshops Coordinator: A person who advises the work done by the host district to assure that a continuity of programs is presented year to year. Curriculum Track suggestion for teachers, with the idea of some type of recognition to encourage participation and help with session planning, e.g., tech, business, finance and administration, web sites, pedagogy. Also to insure that a balance of activities is provided to attract a wider range of our members, making sure that there are no direct conflicts in scheduling.

In closing, the committee thinks it is important to stress that each district hold annual conferences/workshops, as required in the bylaws. It was brought to our attention that there are some districts that do not do this. The state conference, as important as it is to many of our members, cannot be all things to all members. Stronger programs at the district level will strengthen the state organization and will help to place the state conference in a better perspective.

Sample of survey questions:

Would you be more / less likely to attend a conference held yearly in a centralized location- *possibly* in the Orlando area?

More likely _____ Less likely _____ Would not matter _____

Would you be more / less likely to attend a conference held in the northern part of the state?

More likely _____ Less likely _____ Would not matter _____

Would you be more / less likely to attend a conference held in the southern part of the state.

More likely _____ Less likely _____ Would not matter _____

Would you be more / less likely to attend a conference if the distance justified some form of prearranged transit..... ie a chartered bus?

More likely _____ Less likely _____ Would not matter _____

Would you be willing to help as a volunteer if
your district was hosting the conference in a
distant location?

Yes _____ No _____