

**Strategic Conversations
Volunteer Presidents & Presidents-Elect
Redacted Minutes – Call #5: Conference Overview & Member Recruitment
Fall 2016**

Facilitators:

Debbie McKinney, President, Volunteer Council
Becky Odland, President-elect, Volunteer Council
Cindy Kidwell, Secretary, Volunteer Council
Caitlin Whealon, Volunteer Liaison, League of American Orchestras

Participants:

Group 1: (2) Midwest
Group 2: (1) Central
Group 3: (2) Central, South
Group 5: (1) Central

Membership Bylaws: Member Commitment, Obligations, and Consequences

- Participants discussed their organization's by-laws, specifically in relation to the authority of the volunteer organization and how to handle members who fail to fulfill obligations.
 - Presidents and Executive Boards should have greater power to manage members with a lack of commitment.
 - One organization commented that their President did have to ask an individual to step down.
 - Debbie noted that it is always best to "save" a non-compliant person, perhaps placing them in a different position and providing them with a graceful out.

Overview of League Conference 2017

Volunteer Programming to take place Monday, June 5 – Thursday, June 8

Programming, led by Becky Odland

- Overview: Goal of programming is to showcase projects that are the best of the best as presented to the Volunteer Council and to allow time for networking among Leagues and Guilds from across the country.
- Monday, June 5
 - Volunteers should plan to arrive Monday afternoon.
 - Reception for Gold Book winners will be held late afternoon.

- A volunteer “Dine Around” will follow at an Italian restaurant located on the Marriott property where the meetings will be held.
- Tuesday, June 6
 - Gold Book presentations will be delivered by Leagues and Guilds receiving the highest award for their submitted projects.
 - Roundtable presentations for notable projects will be presented on Tuesday and Wednesday.
 - A networking lunch on Tuesday will focus on leadership, team building, and membership recruitment and retention.
 - A panel featuring Gold Book winners with projects related to communities will present.
- Wednesday, June 7
 - Additional Gold Book presentations
 - Additional Round Table presentations
- Thursday, June 8
 - Membership presentation in game format (similar to Jeopardy)
 - Debbie gave examples of some of the projects to be presented:
 - Presentations will cover a broad range of topics including fundraising, education, and communication between members. Presentations will be made by orchestras of all sizes.
 - One League created subgroups within their organization to bring people together and build friendships. Some of those subgroups included a cooking group, a book study group.
 - Las Vegas will present a creative fundraising idea—“Live with Liberace”—that can be adapted for other Leagues and Guilds.
- **Detroit – Conference City Highlights**, led by DSO Volunteer Host Ginny Lundquist
 - Marriott Renaissance Center (conference site) overlooks Canada, has 72 stories and holds the record of the tallest building in Michigan.
 - Andiamo, site of volunteer “Dine Around”, has not only delicious food but a scenic view overlooking the Detroit River.
 - Temperatures during conference are expected to be in the mid 70’s with sunny skies.
 - The Detroit Orchestra Hall, built in 1919, has received extensive renovations and is top rated for acoustics. Conference participants will have an opportunity to attend a DSO concert on Tuesday night.
 - A “Tune Up” party will be held immediately after the concert on Tuesday evening. This big celebration with champagne and wine is hosted by the home orchestra. Transportation will be available for conference participants.

- Detroit is a vibrant city and includes a new stadium for the Red Wings and Pistons, many young professionals are coming into the city, 30- and 40-year olds living in the downtown area, great shopping, new restaurants and entertainment venues opening up every week, and a new QLine for city light rail transportation.
- **Conference Overview**, led by Caitlin Whealon
 - Networking is unparalleled at the conference. Over the four (4) days, 1,000 people will attend. Last year 70 volunteers participated.
 - Conference registration will operate in the same way as last year by opening in February and continuing through Conference. The early bird pricing (\$650 for League members) closes on April 28. After April 28, registration increases to \$785. A one-day pass is \$365.
 - Group rate is available for groups of three or more. Members need to be prepared to register together. The cost for groups is \$495.
 - Hotel and conference sessions are all in one building. Hotel rooms are \$185 per night, and with tax will total around \$200.
 - League has been working closely with the DSO to get participants out into the city.

New Member Events, led by Debbie McKinney

- Best way to recruit and keep volunteers is to ASK. Literature and research shows that people don't want to volunteer for a job, they want to be asked. An individual may say "no" initially but could be available at a later date.
- Becky commented that she became involved in her volunteer organization because someone specifically called, saying that she would be good at a particular job, and asked her to consider joining. She was asked to consider a specific job through a personal ask.
- Debbie shared that members are reluctant to go to events by themselves. She encouraged participants to call someone to attend a luncheon/tea and to challenge officers and members to bring a new friend.
- Leagues and Guilds could consider offering existing members \$5 off dues for every new member they get to join.
- Debbie further encouraged participants to approach their symphonies and request free tickets. Then, take a new person to a concert.
- Rather than have people come to a large general membership meeting, invite them to lunch. Five (5) active members bring five (5) new members. Three (3) of the five (5) might join! Should be social event.
- Give new members a t-shirt, "I just joined..." or "I love music..." The t-shirt becomes a walking billboard, and people will inquire for more information.
- Orchestra can join in with other community organizations (zoo or art group) to co-mingle and build membership in both groups.

- The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer by Jonathan McKee and Thomas McKee is a great resource for volunteer recruitment.
- Visibility of new members is important.
 - In one League / Guild, new members asked to wear a red boa to their first meeting so that officers would know to visit with them.
 - New members can be recognized from the podium by asking them to stand.
 - One League assigns chauffeurs to pick up new members for the first meeting.
 - [Gold Book Online](#) features several projects to enhance membership recruitment and retention.

Midwest:

- One organization offered two (2) backstage passes with their home orchestra to attend a rehearsal with continental breakfast. Another League held a scavenger hunt in the building where the concert was to be performed the next evening.

Central:

- One organization hosts an annual holiday luncheon and asks members to introduce, from the podium, the new member they sponsored.

South:

- One organization recognizes new members as a group at a spring meeting.

Fundraising

- To have a successful fundraiser, find good chairs.
 - Becky described a successful fundraiser, “Vintages of Note”, which features wine through a Minneapolis company, a live band and dancing in a downtown boutique hotel, live and silent auction. She identified two (2) friends who agreed to chair the event together. They in turn found another friend to chair the auction. This fundraising team formed a fast friendship and the original core group of six (6) friends still meets every other month for happy hour.
 - One participant described a fundraising event she is considering implementing to recruit new members. For \$25, individuals may attend a preconcert party where a member of the orchestra plays while guests enjoy wine and hors d’oeuvres. Wine is donated; members provide the food and a corporation would donate the space for the event.