

April 30, 2021 - WV ODA / ASTA Annual Meeting

Zoom meeting

Dr. Houde started the meeting at 6:01pm

The meeting started with introductions.

Future Meetings and Conferences

Information about future conferences and meetings was shared. Mr. Jones shared the WVMEA dates for the next three/four years. They are:

March 3-5, 2022

March 2-4, 2023

February 29-March 2, 2024

March 6-8, 2025

The location for all these conferences will be at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center.

These dates are set in as part of a five year contract with the venue.

Andrea Houde mentioned that next year's national ASTA convention will be in Atlanta on March 15-19, the first time there hasn't been a conflict with WVMEA for quite some time. Justin Jones confirmed that there won't be another conflict the following year either.

Ms. Houde brought up the idea of possibly going to one or both of those conferences together.

All State Report

Mr. Jones reported that there were fewer auditions this year, but not as much as they thought there might have been.

They were still able to outfit what would have been a normal sized high school ensemble, though the middle school ensemble was a little smaller.

Conductors for next year are moved over from who would have been this year's conductors:

Larry Loh (current conductor of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra) for the high school ensemble. He hasn't confirmed yet, but he and the WVSO have it on their calendar and they'll try to work it in their schedule.

Matthew Radspinner (orchestra director at the Williamsport Area School District) for the middle school ensemble.

Mr. Radspinner's wife, Anna Radspinner, will be presenting at least three sessions at next year's WVMEA. We are taking care of both of their food and travel for that conference.

This year everything with student auditions was digitized. The plan is to have them back in-person again, but they will continue to have the judging side of things electronic because it's logistically easier.

We don't know where the performances will be held at in the future, because it wasn't talked about too much. The first WVMEA board meeting will be in June and it'll be discussed then.

The Charleston Colosseum and Convention Center is under new management and has been great with getting contracts and the money set up before the conference. The only concern left with holding the conference in Charleston is what the mall is going to turn in to.

Solo Competition Report

Ms. Houde recognized Mary Wilson for leading the solo competition for so many years previously - she offered her retirement from the position in January - and introduced Ian Jessee as the new chair of the solo competition.

Mr. Jessee talked about how this competition has a long standing tradition in the state, and that it has run parallel to the MTNA conference in the fall.

This year the MTNA conference is the weekend of October 8th, 2021. Traditionally the ASTA competition runs the weekend before MTNA.

This past year's competition was held online, which seemed to work. Mr. Jessee wants to continue that format this year: MTNA is also doing that same format. MTNA also offers master classes for that conference.

Mr. Jessee noted that lately there hasn't been much participation with the competition, and wanted ideas how to fix that. Mr. Jessee asked if we want to continue with the previous format online format or make it a state-level event, as part of the WVMEA conference, to get attendance up

Patience Brock noted there's already honors recitals administered by WVMEA happening during the annual conference, and we probably shouldn't hold this at the same time.

Mr. Jessee mentioned he didn't want to step on anybody's toes, but is very interested in increasing participation, noted this competition hasn't been advertised well, and noted that geographically we are spread out, and that it would be nice to hold a ceremony recognizing the participants, and asked if there's a time we meet as a conference (as in just the state ASTA).

Cassie Nelson replied that the goal is to have the String's Day once a year, and she was going to suggest that as a possibility because all the strings teachers and parents are invited anyway. She suggested it might be good to plan preliminary rounds to narrow the list of participants down so the event could be held then. Holding it in Morgantown also has the benefit of having a college to extend a collegiate option. She agreed with Ms. Brock that holding our competition at the same time as WVMEA would step on the WVMEA's toes.

Jeff Lipscomb noted that lack of communication has been a major force in why there hasn't been much participation with the competition. He mentioned he believed it was defunct up until last year, which was the only year he received any information about it from the competition chair. He updated the ASTA website with that information, but nobody got that information. Dr. Lipscomb also offered the possibility that continuing to hold the competition as virtual only might be best because of our geographical issues.

Mr. Jessee if we do continue with the virtual format, the submission guidelines may need to be revised to go more in line with MTNA submission guidelines. He noted that his first time with String Day was effectively a mini conference. When String Day was restarted, that atmosphere didn't get restarted. He asked if it were possible to hold the competition during String Day to make it more of an event.

Ms. Nelson said it's definitely a possibility. There's different venues they can use for performances, rehearsals, clinics, etc. She noted that String Day is not an event with a high parent attendance because of our geographical issues. With COVID, we might be looking at personal transportation only, and that we may have to consider some kind of virtual presentation (like a livestream).

Mr. Jessee said we can keep the same format this year, but was interested in going over ideas. Erin Ellis agreed that it's good to continue brainstorming ideas for the future, but in the immediate future we'll need to advertise.

Mr. Jessee agreed to send updated information to Dr. Lipscomb. Applications will be made available online. Ms. Houde offered to talk about it more with Mr. Jessee.

Ms. Brock suggested sending emails to members about the competition. Mr. Jessee said he would saturate us with information about this.

Mr. Jessee asked about the possibility of prize money for the winners. Ms. Houde replied there are funds available. Everybody in attendance was in support of prize money.

Mr. Jessee mentioned that the award money in another high school competition (administered by the Rivercities Symphony Orchestra) is \$1500 for first place, \$1000 for second, and \$500 for third, and is for everybody in a 300 mile radius of Marietta, OH.

String Day

No date is set yet. Unless anybody wants to set up and hold it elsewhere, it'll be in Morgantown. Based on the WVU football schedule, it'll either be October 9th, 23rd, or Nov. 13th

Ms. Nelson assumed Viola Day will be the 13th, but Ms. Houde replied it will be 'wait and see', because it could be in September, depending on the guest artist

Ms. Nelson said she will be meeting with her county in the summer when they get updated guidelines to see if she can get permission from them.

Annual Awards

In the next two weeks, we'll be getting nomination forms for Outstanding Class Teacher, Outstanding Studio Teacher, Outstanding High School Senior, and the Distinguished Service Award.

When nominations are received, we'll all vote via email.

We're looking to get this done before the end of May so that the high school senior can be recognized.

Viola Day / Cello Day / Honors Orchestra

Viola Day is still in the planning phase.

Cello Day is still in the planning phase. Ms. Ellis doesn't know if it will be possible this year because so far they haven't gotten the go ahead from the campus to allow people in. She is thinking of some online options as well.

Nothing is set with honors orchestra yet.

These things still exist and we will try to continue them if/when we can.

Orchestra Festival

The Strawberry Festival will definitely not be hosting an orchestra festival next year.

Ms. Houde asked if anybody wanted to speak/volunteer an area for a possible orchestra festival, or if we should even have one next year.

Ms. Nelson replied that if we were to have one, it would have to be digital. She noted we talked about in the past recording our groups and sending them around for university professors to adjudicate. She added it's probably not the time to do this as an in-person event yet.

Dr. Lipscomb mentioned that next year will be a rebuilding year and there'll be too many variables before seriously thinking about putting on an event like this. Everybody agreed to pause the orchestra festival. Ms. Houde wishes to keep this on the meeting agenda for next year.

New Business

Fred Meyer asked if there's an audition date set for All-State yet.

Mr. Jones replied that there aren't, but historically it's the first weekend in January, however that won't be the case this next year because that will be New Year's Day. His assumption will be that it'll (tentatively) be January 8th, 2022.

Dr. Lipscomb congratulated Ms. Houde and Dr. Ellis on their National ASTA convention presentations. If anybody wants to see them, but didn't get the chance, Ms. Houde is willing to share a link to them.

Nathan Rihn mentioned he was thrilled to be a part of ASTA this year, and that he was excited that we'll have the option to go to the in-person conference the next couple of years.

If anybody needs anything, Ms. Houde said to let her know.

Dr. Ellis mentioned she did a session for the WVMEA about the cello, for beginners. She doesn't know if it's still up, but if you're interested, she can send that link to watch it.

Ms. Brock mentioned she wasn't asked for a treasurer's report - it wasn't on the agenda. We have a balance of \$7412.10.

We didn't do anything this year, so we didn't spend much money other than on state requirements: She will cover awards costs when awards are set and invoices are sent to her. We also paid the adjudicator for the competition, and paid for our state filings - and that's it since the last meeting.

We can consider some monetary awards for the solo competition. Mr. Jessee guessed that it could instead be a self-sustaining project - that award money could come from a combination application fees and the right amount of attendance.

Mr. Jessee asked if there's an email blast that goes out to members about events, basically what's the best way to communicate with other members. He then asked what's the current membership. Ms. Houde replied she couldn't say because it takes two weeks to get a full listing of membership. Mr. Jessee expressed interest in getting the list so he could introduce himself.