



FATE E-LETTER

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From the President

Congratulations FATE Members!

With over 200 members, we are now stronger than ever! What a wonderful way to celebrate our upcoming 25th anniversary! The numbers show that we teachers are ready to join forces to save theatre arts education in Florida! Bravo!

Please spread the word to your theatre colleagues about everything FATE has to offer. Let's build our team. We must come together to educate our administrators, school board members and legislators. YOU must educate them. To do so, *stay informed* so that you can quote the statistics that prove that *arts education improves test scores!*

Go to the links on our FATE website. Learn more about important tools you can use to convince your superiors that your class is important!

Brainstorm. What can YOU do to bring attention to the good work of your students? What can YOU do to prove your kids NEED theatre arts?

How many of your students stay in school because of YOUR program?

Enjoy your summer, but in those free moments, think about what you can do to save the arts – which, in the long run, may mean YOUR JOB!

Most importantly: VOTE. Learn more about those in political office who may either help or hurt arts education.

Finally, plan to join us at our 25th Anniversary conference in Clearwater. Remember that FATE is “your silver lining!” You owe it to yourself, and your students, to attend. Let us help you.

My best wishes for a safe, restful summer.

Conference '04: FATE is YOUR Silver Lining

October 14 – 16 at Clearwater Beach Marriott Suites

Register Now and Save!!

Early Bird Registration: \$160.00 before September 15

Registration form on the web site: www.fatefirst.org

Silver Anniversary Conference

Bows to Past, Preps for Future

FATE's 25th Anniversary Conference in October will look backward and forward at the same time. Chair **Gary Graff** and Co-Chair **Debra Barnum** are planning activities that will honor our past members and successes, and workshops that will prepare our members to meet tomorrow's challenges in theatre education.

Reception Honors Charter Members, Past Presidents

Thursday evening's opening reception and cocktail party will pay tribute to the organization's charter members and all past FATE presidents. Special guest for the reception will be FATE co-founder **Stan DeHart** and his wife, **Mollie**. When Dr. DeHart learned from the Department of Education that drama programs were being cut, and would suffer even more cuts, he came to the State Thespian Festival to tell sponsors they had to do something about it or drama could disappear from Florida's schools. He and Ann Derflinger organized the Thespian sponsors to create The Florida Association for Theatre Education, Inc. to promote the preservation and expansion of theatre education throughout the state.

FATE was incorporated in July, 1979 with Ann Derflinger as the first president, and 53 charter members. Gary and Debra hope that many of these charter members, as well as many of the 11 past presidents, will attend the reception Thursday to reminisce with Stan. If you know any of these founders, please encourage them to attend.

Preparation for Future Takes Two Paths Preparation for Future Takes Two Routes

In addition to the usual exciting mix of workshops that have been the hallmark of all FATE conferences, this year's chairs are planning two "themed" paths to prepare FATE members for the future.

Calendar

July 15	Postmark Deadline for workshop proposals
Sept. 15	Postmark Deadline for early bird \$160 registration fee
Oct. 14-16	Conference!

Recognizing the ever-present threat to theatre education from forces such as budget cuts, class size strictures and even the obesity problem, the organizers are planning panels and workshops to arm members to face these challenges. There will be discussions about "selling" your program, demonstrating its necessity to your students and the entire school population; about advocacy in general; and about making your program a vital "attractor" as districts shift to the choice plan.

For newer teachers (those with less than five years' experience teaching theatre), the co-chairs are planning several exciting "how-to" workshops to help you enliven your classroom, improve your productions and make your life a little easier. Actually, these workshops will probably appeal to those "old hands" seeking new ideas.

Bring a Friend in October

FATE members are encouraged to reach out and bring a friend to the conference. What about that fellow teacher who handles TV production, and has no organization and no conference to attend?

Or the theatre teacher from one of your feeder schools? The theatre teacher from another

school in your area? From a private school? The annual conference has something for everyone.

Need Theatre Certification?

The single theatre course required by the State of Florida for theatre certification is a course in Methods of Teaching Theatre. If you aren't close to a university offering this course, or can't attend the class during the normal school year, Florida A&M University may have the solution for you.

In the past, FAMU has offered the course via the internet for six weeks during the summer – no need to travel outside your home, and no fixed time to do the work. The course normally runs from the last week in June until the first week in August.

Dr. Keith Tucker says it may be possible to offer the course next summer (June, 2005) if there is enough interest and need. There has to be a minimum of 12 students enrolled to justify the offering. If you are interested, or know someone who might be, Keith asks you to “spread the word.” Then drop an email to him for more information at Keith.Tucker@FAMU.edu.

If It's about Theatre Education, FATE Members Are in Demand

As FATE grows and becomes more active in the area of advocacy, more and more state organizations are turning to the Association for input, participation and guidance.

* Several FATE members are currently poring over new theatre books as part of the State's textbook adoption committee.

* FATE members have spent the past year writing, revising and testing Florida's new Theatre Certification exam, which goes into use this year.

* President **Beverly Blanchette** and members **David Alfano, Tim Flay, Don Jones** and

Murray Mintz represented FATE at the recent Arts for a Complete Education state leadership workshop in Sarasota.

Congratulations to ...

Dirk Kuiper, whose adaptation of *The Phantom of the Opera* is being published by Eldridge Play Publishing Company. It should appear in their catalog some time this summer. Bigger news from Dirk, though, is his wife Jenn's latest production – a son named Riley.

Scott Barnum, who has revamped the FATE web site and given it an exciting new opening page. Be sure to check it out at www.fatefirst.org.

From the Executive Director

It's All About Advocacy

When I was still teaching, I was content to stay in my auditorium, teach my classes and do my productions. I was completely oblivious to the world outside my auditorium, and how that world could impact my work environment – even my ability to keep my job.

Being Executive Director has brought me a rude awakening to the harsh realities of the education world: there's only so much money, and the arts are easy to cut. We have been lucky this past year; through calls and letters, we have managed to stave off some potential funding cuts – for now.

But that was last year, and a whole new State budget process is about to begin again. We must be prepared for it. The old adage about “the best defense is an offense” applies to us. Rather than wait for someone in Tallahassee to look to our programs for possible cuts, we need to go on the “offense” by demonstrating the value and importance of our programs so strongly that no one would even consider cutting them.

That's why advocacy is so important -- on a state wide level through FATE, and on a local, personal level in your city, your school, and in your faculty lounge. This year's conference will help prepare you to advocate for your program.

FATE Offers Conference Break For Full Time College Students

Current full time junior and senior theatre or theatre education majors can get a real break in cost if they attend this year's Silver Anniversary Conference October 14 - 16.

First, the normal \$20 membership fee will be waived for them. More important, though, is their savings on the registration fee itself. They will be able to register for the conference for the special rate that was offered at State -- \$145.00. That's a savings of \$55.00.

Sorry, the special rate is only available to currently enrolled full time students. One of FATE's goals is to encourage theatre students to become theatre educators, and this waiving of fees is a step toward achieving that goal.

If you know any current theatre students who might be interested, encourage them to contact the Executive Director at murray_mintz@msn.com for the necessary registration materials.

Money is always a problem for college students (or their parents), so you might remind them that the Marriott is an all-suite hotel, and the suites sleep up to four people comfortably.

FATE Represented at 'Future of Arts' Conference

Board Member **Bob Strickland** and Murray Mintz recently participated in a discussion/planning session about the future of arts education in the State of Florida.

Sponsored by the Florida Higher Education Arts Network, the workshop brought together college deans and arts professionals from across the state, with an aim to assuring that the arts will have a future in Florida education. While no conclusions were reached, the group agreed to continue working to bring the arts to the forefront.

Arts Education Organizations Continue Collaboration

Recognizing that we share the same interests and concerns, and in response to impending legislative cuts, the executive directors of the dance, art, music and theatre educators' associations began a series of meetings last summer to share ideas and strategies.

One concrete result of those meetings was the state-wide survey of the status of arts education in Florida's public schools. This marked the first time such a survey was undertaken, and gives a comparison point for future growth or decline in arts education and its funding.

Another result was the frequent legislative alerts sent to the members of all the organizations when letters or phone calls to legislators were needed. These alerts resulted in responses that averted possible cuts in our funding.

The executive directors have agreed to continue these meetings, with the next one scheduled for July 30. They will begin discussion of strategies for the coming year, and will eventually present these ideas to the Florida Cultural Alliance for possible inclusion in that organization's state-wide agenda.

FATE's Conference '04 chairs are working closely with the Executive Director of the Dance Educators to bring the same kind of collaboration to this year's conference. Because teachers in both fields face the same external pressures, the Dance teachers will join us for two sessions - the opening panel Friday morning and Education Chancellor Jim Warford's luncheon address Saturday afternoon.

Planners are also looking at the possibility of cross-over attendance at workshops that might appeal to both theatre and dance teachers.