



FATE E-LETTER

Volume Three, Number One

November, 2005

From President Gary Graff

It's Time to Educate Decision Makers, Teachers

Happy Holidays! As we enter this holiday season, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours the very healthiest and happiest of times.

As this is my first newsletter, let me extend my thanks to Beverly Blanchette for her outstanding leadership during the past two years. Her goal of opening communications has led to many advances for theatre arts education not only here in the state of Florida, but around the country.

During my tenure as President, I want to extend what Beverly has started. Now that we have opened communication, we must take the next step: FACE TO FACE. Now is the time for you to meet the decisions makers both at your school site and in your district. It is always wonderful to tell them of your accomplishments at a district or state festival,

but you also need to let them know that what you do is an ongoing process. The key word being *process*. We are all educators and you need to educate your decision makers about the process. Invite your principal or school board member to a rehearsal. Allow them to see the working on the piece.

Sit down not just with your Language Arts faculty, but also with members of other departments. Let the Math faculty see that in stagecraft the students are using geometry and trigonometry. Science needs to see that Lighting Design includes the physics of light. In Theatre History you make the social and historical connections that make the connection for the Social Studies department. And of course let everyone know about all of the FCAT reading skills the students use when they have to complete a script analysis.

As we have been saying for years, we do all of these every day. It is time to let everyone know. By meeting with them FACE TO FACE, we will have a bigger impact.

I look forward to talking and working with all of you during my term. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any thoughts you may have.

GARY

Calendar

Jan 27	Deadline, Junior State Thespian Registration
Feb 6	Deadline, Thespian Festival Registration
Feb 11	FATE Executive Committee Meets

FATE Honors Three at Conference

Dennis Sims, Theatre Educator of the Year

A long-time member of FATE and currently a member of the Board of Directors, Dennis has taught at Dreyfoos School of the Arts for the past 11 years. Prior to that, he headed the theatre program at Lake Worth High School.

In making the award presentation, President Beverly Blanchette quoted two of Dennis' former students, now his colleagues at Dreyfoos. One said "This man's passion for theatre is infectious ... he spreads his love for the craft to his students and co-workers."

Another student said, "What has this teacher given me that has stayed with me? Discipline ... determination ... commitment. Having the discipline to stay focused on a goal; the determination to reach that goal; and the commitment to follow through."

Dennis is constantly challenging his students to excel, while inviting them to laugh and enjoy what they are doing at the same time.

June Hinckley, Administrator of the Year

The Music and Fine Arts Specialist for the state's Department of Education, June has been a good friend to FATE since she joined DOE more than 19 years ago. Her workshops at our annual conferences have brought FATE members the straight goods on what is happening in Tallahassee, and what the newest trends are.

June taught music in Virginia, New York and Florida on the elementary and middle school levels, and has held several leadership positions at the national level. She initiated a project that has become the text for many graduate program in music education, and has influenced the development of textbook series and teacher preparation programs.

But June doesn't confine her focus to music. She has given workshops and addresses on the role of all the arts in strong schools nationally and internationally.

Judy Lisi, Arts Advocate

A former educator/singer/actor/director, Judy Lisi has been president and CEO of the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center since 1992. While building the Center's Broadway subscription program from 4,500 to the current 12,000, she has consistently opened TBPAC's door to area students, and to the Florida State Thespian Festival.

Most recently, the Center opened the Dr. Pallavi Patel Performing Arts Conservatory, a school for the performing arts which houses the fifth theatre of the complex.

Prior to joining TBPAC, Ms. Lisi was president and CEO of the Shubert Performing Arts Center in New Haven, where she collaborated with Yale's School of Music to produce four major opera productions a year.

Mini-Grant Available For AIDS Outreach

FATE wants to provide some financial support for Florida theatre teachers to help you implement AIDS awareness projects with your students, and is offering mini-grants for such projects. The goal is to raise the awareness of AIDS with students and the community.

The idea, and the funding, were developed from silent auctions at the annual conference in October. The items auctioned were signed Broadway posters provided by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

The application deadline is January 12th, and the rules and application form are available at www.fatefirst.org, or by contacting Executive Director Murray Mintz.

The project time line is for March 1 through September 30, 2006. Requests may be for amounts up to \$350.

Scholarship \$\$\$\$ Go Begging

Every year FATE offers theatre teachers scholarship money to advance their theatre education in graduate courses. There isn't much money; this year's budget was \$700 for scholarships – enough to pay for a couple of credits, or to buy a few books.

But this year no one applied for it!

That's right. Not one teacher, member or non-member, applied for the scholarship money.

It's too late for this year, but the money is there for next year, the scholarship form is on the web site, and you have at least eight months to prepare it. If you're planning any graduate theatre work, take the time to apply for the scholarship.

Congratulations to ...

Ana Mederos-Blanco who received an educator of the year award from *Stage Directions Magazine*. She has taught in the Miami-Dade system since 1982, and has served as technical director of the JCC musical theatre summer camp since 1999.

Ana was nominated by one of her students, who called her the "queen of technical theatre."

Bob Ankrom, who is now Professor Emeritus at Miami University after teaching there for more than 40 years. Bob continues as Executive Director of the Florida Theatre Conference.

From the Executive Director

Keep up the Pressure

FATE's fiscal year ended October 31st, and a look back reveals that the organization has made strides in speaking for Florida's theatre teachers.

The joint sessions held with executive committees of Music, Art, Dance and Higher Arts Education organizations last June showed us a common ground and enabled us to begin working together. We hope that will continue.

Very important the past year has been the response of FATE members to the alerts and advocacy messages we've passed on from various sources. Thanks to your contacts with elected officials, we have seen a growth in arts funding at the state and national levels.

Now we have to focus on "pull-outs" and find some way to convince parents, politicians and school board members that pulling students from arts classes for remediation is not the answer to the FCAT situation! It will be an uphill battle, but it's one we must win to survive.

