



FATE E-LETTER

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From the President

‘We Must Educate and Advocate’

Our 2004 “FATE is your Silver Lining” conference in Clearwater was a huge success. Hurricanes couldn’t even keep us away! It was a wonderful time to share experiences, participate in workshops, and get to know each other.

One message resounded throughout the weekend: Advocacy! We must do all we can to save our programs, theatre arts education and, most importantly, our students!

If you didn’t read the November issue of NEA Today, I suggest you do. The cover story, “Curtain Call” by Kristen Loschert is worth reading and sharing with your school administrators and board members. As stated

there, students who study the arts score, on average, 40 to 60 points higher on the verbal portion of the SAT and 15 to 40 points higher on the math portion.” With statistics like this, why is your program being cut?! Why are your students being pulled from your class to take remedial English or math? It would seem that your class is the one they need!

Let’s stay together and fight together – we must educate and advocate. It is up to every one of us to do our part to save theatre arts education in Florida!

Silver Anniversary Conference Draws Crowd, Praise

Conference ’04, held October 14-16 at the Marriott Suites Clearwater Beach, was packed with members and crammed with workshops and activities, drawing praise from all who attended.

Despite hurricanes and reclaimed “training” days, more than 120 members attended the conference and took advantage of the 27 workshops, including a master class by noted mime artist Doug Berky.

Keynote speakers included FATE cofounder Dr. Stan DeHart at the Thursday reception, Florida Cultural Alliance president Sherron Long at Friday’s luncheon, and Education Chancellor Jim Warford at Saturday’s luncheon. All three talked about the problems facing theatre education in Florida, and challenged FATE members to prepare to meet those problems.

Calendar

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| January 22 | FATE Executive Committee Meeting – Orlando |
| March 2-6 | SETC |
| April 6-10 | State Thespian Conference |

FATE Honors Outstanding Educator, Administrator, Advocate at Conference

The contributions of three individuals garnered special praise at FATE's conference when awards were presented to Graham Howard as the Outstanding Theatre Educator, Ellen VanArsdale as the Outstanding Administrator and Sherron Long as the Outstanding Arts Advocate for 2004.

Outstanding Educator

Graham Howard is chairman of the Center for the Arts and Communication at John Hopkins Middle School in St. Petersburg, where he has taught theatre since the magnet school opened 11 years ago. He has been active with the Florida Junior Thespians since their first year, and served that organization as district chairman for four years and as state director for two years.

Howard has said, "I set for myself a goal that as a middle school magnet, we should be trying to achieve a level of perhaps an average high school. I'd like to think that most of my students, when they leave here, are capable of walking into any high school program and doing well." Pinellas county teachers will tell you he has succeeded in that goal.

Outstanding Administrator

Ellen VanArsdale is the principal of Alexander Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach. When Mrs. VanArsdale arrived at Dreyfoos three years ago, she was faced with the same drastic budget cuts everyone was experiencing at the time. Rather than cutting arts classes and arts teachers,

she started a \$400,000 fund raising campaign called "Save the Arts". Thanks to her efforts, Dreyfoos maintained its standing as an arts school and kept class sizes down.

Mrs. Van Arsdale is the kind of principal who insists that arts classes are placed on the master calendar before academics so students can choose their arts classes first. She is tremendously supportive of all the theatre activities at Dreyfoos.

Outstanding Advocate

Sherron Long was the keynote speaker at Friday's luncheon, reminding us all we have to "focus our light" to advocate for our programs. She manages three statewide organizations, the Florida Cultural Alliance, The Florida Professional Theatre Association and The Florida Association of Local Arts Agencies. A former president of the state's ACE/FAAE, she is a major advocate for the arts on the state and national levels.

Ms. Long taught theatre, speech, dance and humanities at the high school and university levels and has directed and choreographed a number of productions in educational and professional settings.

Shakespeare Theatre Offers Summer Institute

The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington D.C. is holding it's second two-week summer institute for secondary school teachers as part of the NEH-funded Theatre History Initiative. The institute will be held July 10-24 at American University. This program integrates drama and theatre history into the high school curriculum through teacher training, curriculum development and technological dissemination. When completely developed, THI will be an on-line resource to promote the teaching of theatre history in the high school curriculum.

For more information or to download an application, go to <http://www.theatrehistory.org> or call (202) 547-2005. Your application must be postmarked by February 20th.

FATE Founder DeHart Encourages, Inspires Members; Board Honors Him with Life Membership

FATE co-founder Stan DeHart kicked off the '04 conference at a reception Thursday evening honoring charter members and past presidents of the organization with a stirring speech that reminded everyone why they were theatre teachers. After praising deceased co-founder Ann Derflinger and introducing charter members of the organization, Dr. DeHart spoke about FATE's founding and reminded members of why we were there. Here are excerpts from his speech:

"I understand ... money is being cut and so are programs. And on top of that is this scenario familiar? It's Wednesday night, dress rehearsal to open on Thursday. You had to cancel Monday night's rehearsal because the Red Cross needed to be in the auditorium. Two of the boys forgot to bring their black shoes or their shirts. Or their black pants. Three female costumes are not finished... The sound tape is not completed and you will hear it for the first time along with the audience. And you're sitting in the audience and your stomach hurts and you wonder why you didn't take three more hours of history and be a history teacher.

"Why ... oh why?

"I'll tell you. I want everyone in this room who got started in theatre in high school to raise your hands and keep them up. Now everyone who got started in college, raise your hands. Now on the count of three, all together, speak aloud the name of your high school drama teacher.

"Now I want you to remember why you got so involved with that high school program ... it was different ... it was exciting ... it was FUN! For many of us, the drama program saved us, kept us, held us long enough to finish high school."

Later, when we became teachers, it became WORK.

"I'll tell you why you're here, and why FATE survived when things were even tougher than now, and why FATE will be here for its fiftieth birthday.

"You're why.

"Remember that drama teacher whose name you cried out? In twenty-five years, one of your students will be here, shouting your name. Because in spite of all the grief and overwork, you've become THEIR FUN, THEIR REASON for staying in school.

"Because we reach the kids nobody else can. So ... try and remember who you really are and that when some of the fun left it got replaced by something infinitely more important. But don't forget the fun ... never forget the fun.

"I remember a friend of mine who retired after thirty years of teaching chemistry, and he said, 'My students may remember some chemistry, but they won't remember me.'

"None of you will ever have to make that statement."

The FATE board honored Dr. DeHart by awarding him a life membership. He joins two other life members, Judith Kase-Cooper and Joe Boyd.

FATE Offers Mini-Grant to Members

The FATE Board of Directors has voted to award a \$300 mini-grant to a school that will reach out to students at risk with an AIDS message, using money raised through a contribution from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Thanks to the efforts of Joe Norton, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids donated ten Broadway posters signed by current casts to use as a fund raiser at the recent conference. Through a silent auction, the posters raised \$600 for FATE. At its October 17th meeting, the Board voted to offer half of that amount to a school that would spread the AIDS message to students at risk.

Members are invited to submit a proposal for a project by January 31st. This may be a new

project, or an existing project that you would expand to use the funds. It should not be used for something you were going to do anyway. If your proposal is accepted, the project would need to be completed this school year, and any program would have to credit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and FATE. The word "project" is deliberately vague. It could be a one act play that you take to schools, but it could be much more. The only limit is your imagination.

Please address your proposals (in letter form) to Executive Director Murray Mintz at 2553 Forest Parkway South, Largo, 33771-1459. Be as specific as possible about your project's needs, audience and expected impact. All proposals need to arrive by January 31.

Congratulations to ...

Paul Hughes, who recently received a fellowship from the Surdna Foundation. Through the foundation, faculty members from arts high schools "receive the opportunity to revitalize their artistic practice." Each fellow receives a maximum \$5,000 award, and an additional \$1,500 is awarded to the Fellow's school. Paul teaches at Harrison School for the Arts in Lakeland.

Mary DeCosta, who has been recognized as Escambia County's Arts Teacher of the Year. Mary teaches at William Woodham High.

Nancy Topper and **Tim Topper**, who are both finalists for Teacher of the Year in Pinellas County.

Tim teaches theatre at Perkins Elementary arts magnet, and Nancy teaches at Seminole High.

Gary Graff and **Debra Barnum**, who co-chaired an outstanding Conference '04 in Clearwater. And to everyone who worked to make it such a huge success.

Job Wanted

FATE member **Tom Smith** is looking for a teaching job. He is a certified theatre teacher, K-12, and has completed all his course work at Roosevelt University for an MA in Directing. He has worked in professional theatre, as well as films and commercials.

If you know of any openings, please contact Tom at (863) 494-2062, or at his email address:

tomnoel@earthlink.net

Set Design Kit

Michele Terl asked us to pass along details about a magnetic model builder she mentioned to people in the design workshop at the conference.

It is the Set Design Kit from Theatre Things, 1590 Briarwood Ave., Littleton, CO 80120. Web: www.theatrethings.com (754) 323-0200

The kit is \$75 plus \$10 shipping and handling.

Cultural Alliance Sets Goals, Offers Access to Politicians

After consultation with FATE and other arts education organizations, the Florida Cultural Alliance has included three arts-education issues as part of its goals for the 2005 legislative sessions:

- Advocate for a well-balanced curriculum, with no additional mandates, that protects fine arts and physical education learning opportunities for all students.
- Authorize collection of data on the state of the arts in Florida's K-12 schools to produce a plan to strengthen and implement arts components of the Sunshine State Standards.
- Advocate for a one-full credit requirement in fine arts for admission consideration into a Florida university.

This is just one segment of the Cultural Alliance's issues for 2005. To view the full agenda, visit their web site at www.FLCA.net.

Click, Zip, Influence

The Cultural Alliance has made it easier to contact your state and national government representatives. A new program called "Click, Zip and Influence" lets you email politicians just by entering your zip code. You don't even need to know their names! (Although you should.)

Go to the Alliance's web site, click on the issue you wish to talk to your representative about, enter your zip code and you can automatically send an email to one or all of your state and national elected officials.

Throughout the next few months, FATE will be sending you alerts about legislative issues, and asking you to contact your local representatives. "Click, Zip and Influence" would be a very efficient way of doing this.

My Big, Fat Geek Drama Student?

The recent concerns over obesity, PE and what happens to the arts led to a meeting between PE and arts representatives in November. A spirit of cooperation, rather than conflict, is the goal. Additional meetings have been scheduled.

One reflection of that cooperative spirit is evidenced in the Florida Cultural Alliance's first education issue: a balanced curriculum with ***no new mandates***.

Doug Berky Workshops Available

Doug Berky taught an exciting master class at Conference '04, and his agents have received several calls about his availability for educational performances and workshops.

Berky presents performances in school and theatres for elementary, middle and high school students. He offers two performances: "No Show" introduces students to a variety of classic theatre styles including mime, mask theatre, circus arts and physical comedy. "Gems: Stories of Wisdom from Around the World" utilizes masks, puppetry and movement to tell three stories of peace from different cultures. Both performances are accompanied by an educational study guide.

In addition to performances, Berky offers workshops for student and teachers. For more information, contact Loyd Artists, 800-476-6240 or www.loydartists.com.

Doug Berky's workshop at the FATE conference was sponsored by the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center's Education and Humanities Department.