

2017 MTNA NATIONAL CONFERENCE LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

Baltimore, MD
Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Sue Field, SW Division Director, presiding

Attendance:

Twenty-five people attended the meeting. Sue Field, CA; Karen Thickstun, IN; Peter Mack, WA; Diane Blanchard, NC; Karen Campo, OH; Carol Durham, MS; Cheryl Rytting, UT; Davis Dorrrough, OK; Kathy Wilson, OK; Sherry Frush, TX; Fredrica Phillips, TX; Mary Beth Shaffer, CO; Susie Martin, CO; Barbara Rogers, KY; Kathleen Gault, OR; Barbara Stoudenburgh, AZ; Janet Fetterman, MO/KS; Deborah Rodgers, PA; James Litzelman, VA; Andrew Horowitz, VA; Susan Atkins, VA; Jeanine Skinner, NC; Alec Davis, MD; Maria Lonchyna-Lisowsky, MI; and Alicia Operti

Sue Field introduced herself, Karen Thickstun, MTNA VP and Membership Chair; Peter Mack, future MTNA VP and Membership Chair; and Diane Blanchard, Southern Division Director-Elect and future Forum Facilitator. Sue welcomed everyone to the Forum and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

Sue asked Karen for opening remarks about membership. Karen explained the make-up of the Membership Committee. She shared a graph that shows the 10-year trend of the membership numbers in MTNA. The graph showed a downward trend for the last decade, but a positive rise last year and a leveling off or slightly downward trend for the current year. MTNA membership efforts are considered a marketing challenge where we try to identify what the customer wants and needs and we help them try to find it. This is a shift from membership campaigns done in the past towards a continuing set of strategies that are an integral part and ongoing process of the organization. An area that the committee has researched is, "Why do different generations join associations?" and equally as important to research, "Why do organizations think that members join?" Organizations think that members in their 1st 5 years join for conferences, networking, and advocacy. Members say they join for job opportunities, socializing, certification and credentials. They want to know how to build a studio. Millennials want jobs, Generation Xers want industry information and Baby Boomers are interested in Code of Ethics and the responsibilities they feel as professionals. The different generations also vary in how they would like to receive communication. Email was the preferred means of communication, but the Millennials and Generation Xers want mobile communication on their phone and in apps. Karen asked the group if they know what their teachers want and need; this includes current as well as potential members. Karen shared a small group survey – they think they want information on running a studio, professional development, communication and connecting with colleagues, opportunities for their students, and social media connections. Karen then asked if the group knew what resources are available at national for local associations; there's a wealth of resources available - the Membership Handbook, mentoring ideas, the VIP Newsletters that offer perspectives on marketing for membership, and a strong support staff at MTNA headquarters (Melissa Curtice handles membership). The group was asked a few questions...are local associations welcoming to new members? Are associations working on retention of members also? Are groups working in the area of arts advocacy?

Discussion of new, especially younger, members – issues facing them, how to attract them, how to retain them:

- Peter Mack suggested that new members can become overwhelmed with too many association responsibilities too soon.
- Sue explained the Young Professional Leadership Network as an initiative of the CAPMT that supports new teachers in the early stages of their career. There is no extra fee for this 'subgroup'. They have their own programs, professional development events, opportunities for their students, etc. This has led to the formation of many more chapters.
- Peter said that the only reason the collegiate students join at the Cornish College is to get more students.
- Arizona stated that younger members in their area aren't interested in physically attending meetings or volunteering for positions in the group.
- NC stated that Millennials won't commit to taking positions.
- Sue suggested that what's worked in CA is to split a larger job so that 2 people can share the responsibility.
- OH told how a president-elect that was in their late 20's cut the # of meetings of their association because they thought the younger members didn't want to attend meetings. The result was a nose dive in membership. The next president-elect, also in their 20's, reversed the decision; they decided that members don't become engaged if they don't interact.
- Sue suggested that the day and times of meetings can affect attendance.
- Someone stated that their state pays the 1st year dues for graduating students
- MO says they have a free music event...students play and as people come to hear them...they learn about the association and their events.

Discussion about whether or not local associations are solely affiliated with MTNA or jointly affiliated with the National Federation of Music Clubs:

- VA asked the initial question.
- PA says that they have separate groups but they do get together and hold combined meetings.
- VA says that in northern VA some people want to disaffiliate with the Federation because they think that the ideals of the Federation are outdated or old.

Discussion on nonmembers participating in events:

- VA asked which associations allow nonmembers to participate in events and if they do allow it, are they welcoming to the nonmembers.
- Many members stated that this was mandatory.
- OK asked why someone would join if they can get the benefits without joining.
- Diane pointed out that if the members are welcoming to the nonmembers, then they may decide to become members. But if we're not welcoming...they probably would not want to join.

Continued discussion of how to retain new members:

- Sue asked if current members are welcoming to new members or potential members.
- Peter told a story about visiting a church for the first time, but never returning because he wasn't approached or spoken to.
- AZ told how their president goes out and communicates with each new member. They are also aware of being welcoming to potential members in music stores, libraries, etc. They help to make their association known in the area through posters and brochures and reaching out to prospective teachers.

- Sue suggested that it's important to engage the members to retain them. Organizations need to have mentoring programs to guide the new members and connect with them.
- CO said that their new members didn't want to have a mentor, so the current members do it secretly anyway and check up on the newer members periodically. It seems to work well for them.
- OK said that their main draws for their members are the activities of the association...the festivals, the competitions, etc. They got rid of their state certification program to open the pathway for more teachers to join. They offer high quality programs, with presenters like Scott McBride Smith and Wendy Stevens, and offer good refreshments afterwards.

Discussion of types of programs at association meetings and how they affect membership numbers:

- AZ said that when they have good programs, the numbers attending meetings will swell
- OH said that younger members are very interested in programs on how to teach beginners
- One teacher stated that their program with Fred Karpoff had very low attendance; because of low attendance the group has reduced the number of meetings from 8 to 6 and lowered their quorum requirement for their association business.
- Washington state chapter requires its members to attend 3 meetings before they can enter their students in events. Some groups require the teachers to work in some capacity on 2 events or they can't have their students compete.
- VA stated that the quality of the speaker definitely has some effect on attendance.

Sue asked about local association needs or pressing problems:

1. Grants to help financially:
 - For financial help there are MTNA grants available to local affiliates, grants for collegiate chapters, and grants for state associations. The MTNA staff is a good resource for more information in these.
 - AZ stated that they have grants available and often times they go unused.
2. Complete MTNA membership directory online.
 - OK said that she would like to see a complete membership directory online for MTNA, not just for the certified teachers.
 - Younger members are looking for students and being listed in a directory is very important to them.
 - OK hopes that the new MTNA website will connect the national directory in an easier fashion than is currently available. She says that a complete directory will provide better connectivity between the states.
3. Membership requirements – national, state, and local:
 - CO really doesn't like that someone can join at the state or national level and doesn't have to join a local association.
 - OK understands that issue. It creates problems when members don't belong to the local associations where they are participating in events because they're not plugged in to how things work; this requires more effort and time of the local association volunteers.
 - Different states have different rules. For example, in Ohio members are required to join a local association when they join at the state and national levels.
 - OK suggests that not all teachers live close to a local association.
 - Sue mentioned how the upcoming E-Festival that is being chaired by Amy Immerman will be a great event for those rural teachers.

- AZ is worried that the online festivals could keep members from physically participating in their local events; they may choose to do the E-Festival.
4. Website needs –
- MD...Could MTNA provide templates or other help with state websites? Or could they offer a session on website design at a conference? (Some members explained that this concept had already been tried before with Association in a Box. Sue pointed out that the states are all so very different with different needs, but she will ask MTNA about this issue.)

Sue told the participants that these minutes will be available on the MTNA website under Forums. She thanked everyone for coming.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Blanchard, NCTM
MTNA Southern Division Director-Elect