

# Spring Chapter Meeting of the Ontario Chapter of NATS



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF TEACHERS OF SINGING  
ONTARIO CHAPTER

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## GENERAL SPRING CHAPTER MEETING

May 4th, 2013

University of Toronto

Toronto, Ontario

### MINUTES

#### 1- Call to order

#### 2- Opening remarks

President Catherine Robbin welcomed members to an exciting day of professional development. Catherine also updated the membership on Lynn Blaser's health, who has been in treatment at Sunnybrook hospital in Toronto—treatment is progressing well. Tannis Vetter sent out a greeting from the membership.

3- Approval of minutes for November 16, 2012 Fall Meeting. Motion forwarded by Gloria Gassi, motion seconded by Tannis Vetter. Motion passed.

4- District Governor Torin Chiles reported on recent Skype meeting with other Great Lakes regional district governors. Strategies were discussed which could make regional and NATSAA auditions more accessible and foster more balanced participation from teachers and students from all geographic locations. Prospective and strategically centralized locations are being discussed to facilitate participation. Torin reported that he is also serving on the NATS President's strategic planning committee, which is looking at ethical, methodical and pedagogical issues surrounding voice studies for young children. Torin requested that members please share their ideas on this issue with him so that he can address our concerns within the Big NATS policy-setting framework. Michelyn Wright pointed out that there are discrepancies in how different chapters approach this issue, which are reflected in how audition categories are structured. Michelyn reminded members that our Ontario chapter, despite some disagreement, created category A (ages 12-13) for young singers. Michelyn pointed out that American chapters do not presently have such audition categories for younger singers. Amanda Brunk added that the point of giving young singers the opportunity for adjudication is to provide a mechanism for the assessment of healthy, age-appropriate sound production. Gloria Gassi pointed out that the adoption of the RCM curriculum in the US would lead to a legitimization of vocal training and adjudication for younger age groups. Alison Moodie suggested that this would be an excellent "chat" topic for the chapter website.

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## 5- Reports from officers

5.1- Elizabeth McDonald reported in place of VP of Membership officer Lindsay Isaac:

As of February 2013, we have 103 members in the chapter. However, only 64 have paid their 2013 membership dues. Elizabeth asked members to please educate their colleagues about NATS and get them on board. Michelyn Wright pointed out that members frequently wait till the Fall auditions to update their membership. Four members recently announced their retirement from teaching—Brian Macintosh, Diane Nelson, Gwenn Little and Diane Loeb. Michael Donovan raised the topic of creating more college-level audition categories as an incentive for musical-theatre teachers to join the chapter. Michelyn acknowledged that she would love to create more categories if more teachers would join. Elisabeth added that the executive would continue to address this issue. Linda Condy welcomed a few new members to NATS Ontario—Jelena Ciric and Frederique Vezina. We were also delighted that two attendees also joined the chapter—Barbara Young and Deborah Scott.

5.2- Financial officer (treasurer) Linda Condy gave the following report:

Linda gave a brief description and update on the chapter's three bank accounts (administrative, charitable and GIC). Paypal is now being for about 60% of chapter transactions. Linda went over various expenditures over the 2012 financial year. There are three different levels of membership fees; \$35 for timely payment of yearly fee, \$40 for late fees, \$17,50 for new members joining late in the year. Motion to receive financial report by Linda Fletcher. Motion seconded by Michelyn Wright. Motion passed.

5.3- VP of Projects Alison Moodie gave the following report:

Alison first announced the presenters of the day—Dr. Aaron Low and Barbara Young. The Fall 2013 chapter meeting will take place at the University of Western Ontario, with the Friday evening dinner event on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> and the auditions on Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>. We have not yet finalized a speaker or a venue for the dinner event. Linda reminded members that the speaker for the 2012 dinner had to be cancelled due to insufficient attendance for this event. At least 25 attendees are required to justify the expense of having a speaker. Linda acknowledged the hard work of Dan Lichti and Kim Barber in organizing the 2012 event at Wilfrid-Laurier University. Different strategies were discussed to improve attendance for Friday night event; members should be encouraged to bring spouses. Dinner reservation deadline will have to be earlier next time. Amanda Brunk pointed out that students needed incentives to attend Friday event. It was then decided that the creation of Friday event for students could be a SNATS initiative. We are looking for a few point people to help out with the organization of the event in London 2013. Gloria Gassi informed membership on her research into hotel prices in the UWO area. Elizabeth reminded members that we held a very successful “Making the Cut” recruiting day at the Fall 2012 auditions. Based on the success of “Making the Cut,” this type of event will continue.

5.4- Auditions officer Michelyn Wright gave the following report:

Our Fall 2013 Meeting will take place on the Friday evening event on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Michelyn reiterated her openness to creating new MT audition categories if we have new teachers in place. Michelyn reminded members that teachers who are sending students to auditions MUST adjudicate. Michelyn also mentioned that she would be searching through the ranks SNATS to recruit and train her eventual successor as Auditions officer.

6. – VP of Special Events Elisabeth McDonald reported on the creation of a new SNATS chapter at the University of Toronto. Lorna MacDonald was instrumental in getting this project started. Elisabeth is the faculty advisor for this chapter. The mission is to foster a new generation of NATS teachers.

Elisabeth thanked Catherine Robbin for attending successful inaugural event at Hart House of UofT. Event featured students presenting their research, as well roundtable discussions and masterclasses. This SNATS chapter is also open to alumni as well as to young non-UofT teachers. Those interested should contact Elisabeth anytime.

7. – Amanda Brunk reported on the Kitchener Waterloo SNATS chapter. It was a quieter year, with recruitment weaker. Many members have grown up. Amanda suggested that there might be a disconnect between SNATS and NATS. Michelyn Wright reminded all that teachers no longer require more than two years of teaching experience to join NATS, facilitating the transition from SNATS to NATS. Amanda brought in SNATS members to perform with her choir. Some proceeds from this concert will be donated to the NATS scholarship fund.

8. – Tannis Vetter announced a performing opportunity for students at Gilda's Club in Toronto, a centre for cancer Patients—those teachers who are looking for opportunities for their students can contact Tannis directly.

9. - President Catherine Robbin addressed issues surrounding scholarships, donations and awards: Catherine first listed the three main sources for the scholarship fund: member fees, member donations and member recitals. Each year a total of between \$4500 and \$5000 is awarded. Last year our scholarship fund was bolstered by Irene Illic's recital donation (\$1000) and a recital donated (\$300) by Michael, Michelyn and Linda. These initiatives minimize the necessity of depleting moneys collected through membership fees. Catherine encouraged members to hold more recitals and collect tax receipts for their donations. Currently, only about 15 people (15%) donate per year. The website constitutes an effective vehicle for the promotion of such recitals. All donations over \$200 will be posted on the website upon request by the donor. Continued donations would free up funds for more professional development for members.

Catherine then asked if we are happy with our current auditions award system, with 1<sup>st</sup> prize (\$75), 2<sup>nd</sup> (\$50) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (\$25). The advantage of this structure is that many receive some dollars. Catherine then proposed that we eliminate the 3<sup>rd</sup> place money, and instead, award 1<sup>st</sup> place winners \$100 and 2<sup>nd</sup> place \$50. A bigger dollar amount for awards will offset costs (travel, etc.) for participants more effectively. Michelyn Wright reminded all that, in the current system, all 19 categories follow the same \$100-\$50-\$25 award structure, but that there are frequently two or three-way ties for third place, sometimes resulting in different tallies for different classes. Various scenarios were discussed by which different amounts would be awarded for different age categories. Michelyn Wright was able to illustrate the complexities and inconvenience of an uneven award scheme. After much debate Torin Chiles was able to propose the following motion: 3<sup>rd</sup> place will henceforth be renamed Honourable Mention, with no \$ rewarded. First Prizes from categories 1-4 will be \$75. First Prizes from categories 5 and up will be \$100. Second Prizes will be \$50 in all categories. Motion seconded by Gloria Gassi. Motioned passed by membership. Catherine reminded teachers that they must make sure that their students thanks the donors in writing—students are always given donor contact info, but do not always follow up.

10. – Appointments/Nominations

District Governor Torin Chiles announced that Catherine Robbin would be stepping down from her position as President of the Ontario NATS chapter. Torin thanked Catherine for her three years of service, saying how the chapter was honoured and elevated by her presence and dedication (thunderous applause). Citing NATS bylaw 4 section 2A, Torin explained that, as District governor and chief elections officer, he is empowered to make mid-term appointments in response to mid-term resignations. Torin then proposed the appointment of Elisabeth McDonald as President for the

remainder of the term (one year). Due to Elisabeth's new portfolio, the following one-year appointments will be made: Mark Daboll will become the new VP of Special Events. Lindsay Isaacs will move to the newly created position of Website Manager. Shannon Coats will take over Lindsay's position as VP of Membership. All new appointees will then run for election at the 2014 Spring meeting. Motion to affirm these mid-term appointments by Torin Chiles. Motion seconded by Linda Condry. Motion carried by membership.

11. – Michelyn Wright presented Catherine Robbin with a thank-you gift on behalf of the executive and the membership and again praised Catherine's incalculable contribution to the chapter. Catherine thanked Torin and the executive for their dedication and support. Catherine Robbin then motioned to adjourn meeting. Motion seconded by Alison Moodie. Meeting adjourned.