

**AYCO Board Conference Call  
Minutes**

**March 2, 2008**

4:00 pm pacific 6:00 pm central 7:00 pm eastern

Facilitator (David), Secretary (Jackie/Geralyn), Timekeeper (Jackie/Geralyn)  
*Present: Jackie, David, Rick, Kevin, John, Donna, Geralyn*  
*Not Present: Warren (no working phone), Peggy*

**This Meetings' Decisions, 3-2-08**

- ✓ Board voted unanimously to elect Donna Wood Babcock onto the Board

**ACTON ITEMS THIS MEETING:**

**4:00 pm** Personal Highlights from Month

Donna learned how to build a web site! Circusartsworkshop.com  
Jackie's 13<sup>th</sup> Hilltop Circus is done. She survived!

**4:10 pm** Board Guidelines / Happy thoughts / Focal points

Listen with Heart and Eyes; Take Risks; Don't Blame; Don't tell someone how THEY are feeling; Reflect/Confirm what's said without having to agree or disagree; Stay on point; Respect each other, even if we do not agree on statement/issue; Take turns, Give turns; Have Accountability (Follow through); Communicate outcomes: How? Why? Amplify; Don't interrupt; Don't negate; Don't block; Be part of the Solution; Delegate; Gather ALL opinions before deciding; Don't Pounce/Reflect; Give benefit of the doubt: Ask Questions / Not Attacking; Engage in Non-violent Communication; Email correspondence should be limited as much as possible to information/facts; The only dumb question is the one you don't ask.

**4:15 pm** **Reports and Updates – BRIEF!** (on Task timeline list, and others?)

- **Finance Report – KG**

\$6,209.15 Assumes split cost with Gamma Phi for last year's festival. Orlene did contact Al Light; AYCO covers 50% and sends \$3,000. That makes it \$6,064. Net loss from the fest up to \$15,391.05.

2007 books are now closed. ISU took months to get us their statements. Kevin will cut the check tomorrow; will issue updated financials from last year for prosperity.

- **AYCO Store – JW**

New stock. Sent festival DVDs to Australia. Will cut a check to AYCO tomorrow. Slow action.

Donna: LA guy will be doing a circus festival in LA – will have a youth day. Can AYCO be there? Aug. 29-31. Near China Town, under a tent. Focus is Chinese acrobats; they're reaching out. ACTION: Donna to send details. Youth competition.

- **Festival '07 Wrap-up – DH + KG**

Covered from Finance report. Orlene did have a long talk with Al. She'll share in email what he said. We never got feedback from Al.

- **Website + Communications- RD**

A few more listings – Donna Wood Babcock! New items on bulletin board, getting more use. First draft of AYCOgram. I welcome comments and suggestions.

- **College Circus Conference @ Hampshire College, March 29 + 30 – DH**

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They can't present any physical skill workshops. Hampshire is making it difficult. Lots of talking. DH will be performing with Bindlestiff. Will talk about AYCO, try to compile internship and teaching apprentice and training opportunities around the country. Very first!

- OTHER??

**4:30 pm Accomplishments / Successes**

- We welcome two new people to our new meeting!!!

2 new people at our meeting!

How to make it official?

Legal signature? Formal motion to accept you both.

Typically one serves on committee first, then move up to board if they/we choose.

Clarification – board (Donna) and GERALYN (invited)

DH – Nominate Donna Wood Babcock

JD – I second

**UNANIMOUS Acceptance.**

GERALYN as witness.

- EdCon underway!
- OTHERS???

**DISCUSSION**

**4:40 pm Board Development.**

- We welcome Donna Wood-Babcock and GERALYN BERKERY.

Donna: Retierate the Keynote Speech! I've loved circus my whole life; discovered it was powerful for youth not knowing others were doing it. Blown away and validated and inspired at AYCO in Sarasota. A year ago John asked me onto the board but my own project was prominent; now that it folded what's my excuse? I'm replenished to give out again. Got a letter from David re: Jackie, Orlene, Warren... No excuse now! Very excited and happy about it!

GERALYN: I came to AYCO through the Internet at the 1<sup>st</sup> festival. Was into flying trapeze; I went to the 1<sup>st</sup> festival without knowing what AYCO was. Fell in love with the whole concept. A whole other world. I've come to everything ever since; I feel kind of weird that I don't have a circus. Love the principles, the people at AYCO bear my values. Very supportive! Don't know if I'll ever have a circus of my own but want to contribute in any way I can!

- Introductions and discussion of participation.

**5:00 pm Festival '09 Planning**

- Site Criteria Document – DH

I was going to forward this; haven't done it. ACTION – deadline.

Kevin: We are reviewing whether to have a huge gala, or not; do we need a big facility? This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we've lost money, and this time was pretty egregious. That document should be reviewed.

Rick: Site criteria, it's necessary to go to an area that already has a youth circus base; Normal did not have that. Regarding gala, our fest in Normal would have made money, and the programming was top notch, we would have had a successful fest if we hadn't had the gala. Heavy investment in lighting, advertising, site preparation. Over 10K. It was expressed that the pressure of putting on a gala, and the interference of rehearsals on workshops..

GERALYN – Prevalent across the evaluations. The kids were missing the classes... Why spend so much time on opening and closing, taking away from the kids – on multiple categories.

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Rick- mentioned at every single festival. I would like to see a performance just for ourselves, not marketed to outside public, where we're not dependent on outside tickets. John – what about the S.Cal. festival?

Donna – The hosts did their show.

John – with a special guest or two.

Rick – But the point was it was just for the participants, not the public. Didn't take away from the enjoyment of the experience.

John – If it's such that a public show at the festival, expense wise and scheduling issues, maybe AYCO could sponsor an AYCO performance some place, with someone help sponsor or produce it. A new form or venue.

DH – re not having a public performance. Can it be something in between? We have shows at night... It's clear we're trying to do too much. If the shows were matinees, and for ourselves, but open to the public. So we're not banking on ticket sales. We do shows so kids can perform together... and charge \$5 or even free. But do it at a time that works for families. Do tech work/show prep on Wed. or Thurs., so if you're going to perform you come early.

Kevin – I seek clarity. Free or not free, there's still rental for the arena. Don't have to decide now, but I propose we try it for one festival where no gala performance for the public.

Donna – There's some case by case stuff. David and I talked about Baraboo as a possible option. Ringling clowns are having a reunion, and Baraboo's deal for the clown could work for us, clowns would perform then donate benefits to the museum. Requirement is to use their onsite catering facility for the meals. And Baraboo would be in charge of marketing. So if we can trade it works out great.

DH – Talking about a circus, a show, with strangers coming. I have a hard time thinking of a circus festival without a show.

Donna – it was a height for our kids. Attendance might drop if kids didn't perform.

Kevin – For this festival we would have had zero audience. These kids are strangers to each other.. I just want to make sure that we're so fiscally responsible.

Rick – I agree with both Kevin and David. The kids need the validation. But I don't feel we need the high gloss show for the public. The S. CA fest, where they performed for each other, were just as validating. Perhaps even more so? And to support Kevin's point, even before we sell one ticket, we're putting 12-15K at risk for arena space and tech support... We are at great risk by doing a full-blown gala.

Donna – Why is it so formal? Why not evening performance, groups sign up? Can't avoid some kind of tech so we're not waiting 15 minutes between acts. Everyone comes self-contained. We don't need to close the doors to the public either. But not to rely on ticket sales to make the festival go.

Jackie – Comes down to funding... need sponsorship.. Can we develop a repeated rhythm for the host sites to garner funding each time?

DH - Marketing at Gamma Phi... There is so much free marketing available. You can get the media if you know how to talk to them. Esp. when it's kids and circus. We weren't over seeing ourselves very well, weren't very creative. If we hadn't done that, put the \$ in marketing –

Kevin – we spent only \$4300 on TV and radio. We lost almost 16K. In the past we had a hefty bank balance of almost 25K before hand. Going into this next festival is going to be... we don't have a huge reserve. It will be a very different festival now. We're stepping into a recession, horrible economy. Ability to travel will be affected. We need to think about this for the next festival.

Gerilyn – criteria for performances... from outside perspective – I like the matinee idea, but what if there were smaller, shorter, matinees throughout the day. A few acts, then later more.. Like a workshop time in a separate venue. Not a full-blown show, some variety, doesn't take away from their day... the public can come in and see something.

DH – Does require finding a venue that has a separate space.

Gerilyn - Juventas wouldn't have had a space for that, Sailor... Gamma Phi might have.

Kevin – Jackie's idea to try to use the same venues is very powerful.

Donna – Has anyone expressed interest in re-hosting?

Jackie – Sailor.

Donna – So much depends on the host. Marketing. You need the local people.

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Kevin – We've learned from each fest. SF would have made more money if we hadn't spent 20K on food and 5K on programs. I would also be open to keeping it in one location every time. If we rotate then it's a long time and there's a big learning curve.

Donna – The trick is to find a host to take it on every time.

DH – Moving on – building a community of people. Donna – making connections in Baraboo. \_\_\_\_\_ can't give us an answer until April. So we're always starting from scratch. Also interested in talking to SF. Acrosports next door. We've done it here before. Can have a strong committee.

- Committee Assemblage – DH + JW

John – Looking ahead, each 3 month period (quarters); try to get our stuff done in that time.

Touching base outside conference calls. From the last festival, that roundtable, that enthusiasm in the room can be tapped into. D & I were talking about distributing the contacts to the AYCO board based on where we're living; calling them, talking to them. If we had a task list of smaller, finite things, to offer to those people to do, we'd get them done. See how we can work with these folks, what can they bring. Then look at this information as a group. Identify tasks that can be put into a committee. Create an active committee. That would create an infrastructure to strengthen the board and org. to bring folks into our projects, spread the workload around.

DH – The first step of building the planning committee.. Youth circus parent, a program director with festival experience, a coach, at least 2 other people. These would create a core. For now, we're the festival planning committee.

- Identify committees and tasks
- Each Board member gathers the phone numbers of the 2007 final Roundtable individuals within their designated region.
- Make contact, scouting for folks to help with certain tasks = more tasks get done.
- These individuals may move into a position on the Board

Geralyn – I agree to take the list from the community meeting and merge it with the evaluation form of people willing to volunteer. Will divide it up geographically per board members... so they can make personal contact with these people to see if there's interest in the 09 festival.

DH – Let's take a look before we send it out. It might be geographically heavy, or, some people might already have been making contacts.

Geralyn – Also, I meet different people.. I met a guy from Dallas, had never heard of youth circus, was checking it out... and at the Ed Con in Chicago, a grad student for master's in advertising... there are people who are always expressing interest and I feel bad for them, they're kind of like me, but I never see them again. I think going through this list is a way of saying "we didn't forget about you." To see if we can work with them.. Start now to see if they follow through or whatever...

Donna – at the Chicago ed con, we should look at that list. That vivacious NY girl...

DH – We'll see if we can find a place for her in AYCO.

**ACTION: Task – Geralyn 3 weeks March 23**

**ACTION – David – will look at ed con list from Chicago**

**5:20 pm** Educators Conference, Oct. 10 – 12

DH – Working with Geralyn; Carter etc. are really excited; Donna is helping with \_\_\_\_\_ ; I'm contacting 1<sup>st</sup> aid, local workshops... things are coming along. Board Task: Get the word out to people. **Rick – ACTION – get a web page up. Timeline for registration; ACTION DAVID & RICK to set up date.**

**Rick – I'll be on this next week – web page, registration form, designing post card, with Board's and Kevin's approval , a couple hundred dollars.** We want to announce this as soon as possible – but we don't have any of the meat on board.

Donna – say Save the Date

David – We are just confirming with the hotel, and locking down our caterer to lock down those fees. Like the IJA, people know what an ed con is, they know what to expect. It wouldn't hurt us to get registration up.

Rick – I need to know the fee!

Donna – a sense of overview of program times.

**DONNA ACTION - Will get a rough draft of program – 2 weeks... March 16...**

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DH – What about an in-house showcase of ed con people? Sat. night, in-house recital? We'll have some local people... OPEN RING. Would people like that?

Donna – Maybe we could just ask the local people in Boulder so we don't complicate with tech... etc. In Chicago CircEsteem did a half hour. Takes so much pressure off the conference planners to have the host facility show their stuff.

Gerilyn – Sat. night coffee house for networking, oh and now we're going to have this performance... People could do their thing... A showcase takes away networking time.

Donna – Protocol... Can I work directly with Boulder?

David – When I've spoken with them, I try to consider travel.. We start around 2:00 Friday but also have lunch and registration... then end by noon Sunday. Don't start early in the morning.

David – I have info on room sizes etc. DONNA to talk to DAVID before contacting BOULDER.

Gerilyn A lot is already on website [www.bouldercircuscenter.com](http://www.bouldercircuscenter.com)

- Report
- Budget Review and Discussion

DH – Kevin pointed out an error... I had down \$1k for scholarships, but that comes out of donations... I listed that twice.. Budget based on 70 participants, about 25 not paying for various reasons. Food \$15 per meal, 5 meals. I didn't account for any planner fee, based on current financial status – can't afford it. I did account for special presenters, non-circus educators to do special workshops in their field. One person to present on preventing burn-out with kids, social work etc. Stuff to do with kids too. Money budgeted for at least 2 other people like that. Professional development. I spoke to Boulder people re: 1<sup>st</sup> aid training... we'd pass that cost directly on. Numbers based on previous years. Fri-Sun. I sent letters to Cirque and \_\_\_\_\_ but haven't heard back from either.

Board donations: Donna we typically ask \$300 per board member but contribute as you can.

Kevin – We're to ratify the budget. I have concerns – 1) I don't want to ratify anything until we're firm about receive 2) I can't commit to any scholarships or presenters until \$ is found; 3)

We should try to get speakers from Boulder area first. 4) I think we should do a survey for commitment... How many people do we think will attend? Want to confirm that that variable is covered. Because we only have \$6K.

Donna – So can we send out an email? Yay or nay?

Kevin – Survey Monkey?

Rick – small fee?

DH – People rarely respond. I've called SANCA 4 times but they don't call back.

Rick – Survey monkey takes a few clicks... We'd get a better response with AYCOgram.

Jackie – I recommend a pointed 2-sentence email, please hit reply.

Gerilyn – The list I'm compiling, we can always ask them about the ed con too while inquiring about Fest 09.

Rick – I would caution against an electronic survey. Might get 12, no 20 responses. No way of telling what percentage it represents. What we're trying to do is answer the attendance question. How much money are we spending ahead of time?

Gerilyn – We're depending on 40 – 45 paying attendees.

DH – PLUS \$8,500 in donations.

Kevin – (points out an error in budget) Good point. Half our budgeted expenses, 50% is coming from donations. That's why I want to make sure that we can count on those contributions.

Cirque, Feld... It's been very difficult for us in the past to raise the money.

Donna – Us too – it's hard to ask my own people to donate to AYCO when I'm trying to get money for us. Have you asked Cyndy and Carter about local donators in the city?

David – We've waited so long... any city timeline... If there are sugar daddies in Boulder they might want to help us. **ACTION \_ Contact Cindy and Carter about local sugar daddies.**

Donna – if they're a non-profit they'll know their people. If you know the right city council person they'll send you a check in a week. Think about what need we're meeting. Local people.

**5:45 pm Fundraising**

Jackie – Have youth circus shows donate part of their proceeds?

David – Paul Miller suggested that.

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Donna – Each group is different. Some fund raise all year just to get to the national festival. Did any \$ from the regional go to AYCO?

Rick. No.

John. I thought I sent \$1 per attendee to AYCO.

Kevin – We did get something... We're struggling.. One of our biggest risks is that we don't have people on the ground in Boulder ... Was the CA regional a money maker?

John – It was all through registration. We weren't clear on all the stuff. I think we have a little left, our intention was to seed the next one.


Donna – Redlands provided the space, all the instructors volunteered, no housing or transportation. Nothing like a regular festival.

John – We decided to keep it a one-day event for some of those reasons.

Donna – At Redlands we had lots of people interested in what we were doing.

**6:00 pm** Review Tasks and set next Board Meeting (proposed April 6<sup>th</sup>)

**Tasks & Timeline**

<b>Who</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline (deadline)</b>	
David	Flesh out internship ideas; email to board	ongoing	
David	Contract with Boulder Circus Center	current	
David	DH to forward site criteria to Jackie Davis All board to review draft	3/16	
David	Contact Rick	now	
David	Get Chicago Ed Con contacts to GERALYN	?	
David	Contact Cindy and Carter about local sugar daddies.	?	
Rick	Contact Scott O'donnell, Baraboo. — preliminary way. Re" Festival hosting		
Rick	Ed Con web page, registration form, designing post card, with Board's and Kevin's approval	March 9	
Rick			
Jackie	Review and edit David's Site Criteria document for Board review	ongoing	

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John			
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Donna	get a rough draft of Boulder Ed Con programming	March 16	
Donna			
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Geralyn	I agree to take the list from the community meeting and merge it with the evaluation form of people willing to volunteer. Will divide it up geographically per board members... so they can make personal contact with these people to see if there's interest in the 09 festival.	March 23	
Geralyn			
Geralyn			
General	Create Exit Document/Evaluation Template for festival Host post-fest Create pre-nuptial agreement btwn AYCO and Host for pre-fest	allocate	
EVERYONE	Board bios need updating. Re-do yours by Christmas.	URGENT	

**Reminders**

- Review Task Timeline regularly to complete tasks

**Next Meeting: April 6 ? This time? Email Y or N!**

As much as possible, connect between meetings per John's suggestion. DH will personally make that commitment.

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**Former Tasks:**

Orlene	contact Juventas? Peru, Wenatchee re: Festival hosting '09		
Orlene	Contact Sailor re: Festival hosting '09 – with questions and site criteria OG to revise site criteria, send updates version to Patti with Sailor.		TBD
Orlene	Follow through with AI for post-fest host feedback		In progre ss
Orlene	Snail mail Letter to warren Bacon regarding Board participation	11/08	
Orlene	Letter of Recognition, Regional Youth Circus Festival		
Jackie	Write Gala Director's report with draft for new performer application	Oct. 12	
Jackie	Pending Board approval of Ed Con '08 proposal, put feelers out to AYCO Directors Group for feedback.	TBA	
Jackie	Email final filed evaluations to AYCO Advisors (those present at final festival meeting)		
Jackie	Create timeline, content outline, and tasks for AYCO journal. Submit to Board by next conference call.	suspende d	
John & Kevin	Create Ad Hoc Vendor Committee to draft vendor policy for future festivals. Present to Board for approval.	?	
John	Send Jackie names and info re: regional festival	?	
John	Send Rick new member info on Christina Barnum Barner	?	
John	Meet with DH and OG for Board Transitions planning	revisit	
John	John will send Rick the 2007 dvd and we'll send Charles all of them, and a card from the board.	?	
Orlene & Kevin	Prep phone call with AI	URGENT	
Kevin	Call Rick after hearing from ISU; forward invoice to RD		