

**AYCO Board Conference Call
Sunday, September 14, 2008
MINUTES**

Present: **Facilitator:** David Hunt; **Timekeeper:** Kevin George; **Minutes:** GERALYN BERKERY; Rick Davis; Donna Wood-Babcock; John Whitfield; Jesse Alford (intern); and Jessica Hentoff (joined meeting for discussion on Board and Organizational Development and Festival '09 Planning)

4:06PM The meeting opened with review of tasks and action items from 8/17/08:

- **ALL:** Individual donations: ASK ANYONE! For donations – AYCO is a great organization ☺
- **David:** RE: CFA Grant - David will write a letter asking why not accepted and what we can do next time. No follow-up. Would like to ask for grant to finance future Festival. Donna believed we were pushing the boundaries on guidelines by asking for support for training for coaches, teachers, etc. Jackie applied without being solicited by CFA.
- **David/Rick:** Decide how recognition of our sponsors will be done on website. Cirque was upset we used their logo without permission. Need to set up categories of giving.
- **Jesse:** ask/invite the Redlands people to come to EdCon. Three people are coming; none have registered yet.
- **John:** will ask Redlands and Regional Festival people to come to EdCon. (See Jesse above.) John spoke to Pam regarding upcoming regional conference and will talk to Cheryl Linley.
- **Rick:** Researching “ning.com” for involving more of the youth in participating in AYCO. “ning.com” is a blog + video share, comments, news items, photos, gathering place; Could be valuable for AYCO; Rick is concerned with how much monitoring would be necessary; Similar to “myspace.com” and “circusspace.com”. Rick did not see a way to integrate ning.com with the AYCO website.

NEW TASK LIST FROM 09/14/08:

DUE DATE:	TASK:
Friday, September 19, 2008	Board: Email Kevin how much you would like to donate to AYCO. This will be deducted from reimbursement of EdCon expenses.
	Board: Send updated biographies to Rick.
	Rick: Email his AYCO job description to everyone.
	Rick: Follow-up with Bill Anderson from Peru Re: EdCon attendance.
	All: Email the group your arrival/departure times for EdCon.
	David: Create and send an email to Youth Circus Directors asking them to forward the email to their Boards informing them about EdCon and urging their participation.
Friday, September 26, 2008	Board: Delegate committee to create a working document on guidelines for hosting an AYCO Festival.
Tuesday, September 30, 2008	Rick: Purchase insurance for EdCon.
Before EdCon	Kevin: Remove GERALYN and Jackie from transportation/hotel expenses in the EdCon 2008 budget
	Rick: Create AYCO Business cards for Board Members for EdCon.
	Donna: Contact <i>Baraboo</i> Re: 2009 Festival host.
	Rick: Contact the following Re: 2009 Festival host: 1) <i>University of Purchase</i> and 2) <i>Circus Smirkus</i> .
	David: Contact Dan Butler Re: EdCon participation.
	Donna: Contact <i>Otis School of Design</i> Re: their program for students to organize a festival/event.
TBA	John: Contact Cheryl Linley from Redlands Re: 2009 Festival host.
	John: Ask Dic Wheeler about serving on the AYCO board.
	Rick: Email Shifty's mother, Debbie (from Circus Smirkus), about serving on the AYCO board.
	David: Ask Keith or Vivica about IJA Festival locations for possible 2009 AYCO Festival sites.
	David/Rick: Set up categories of giving on AYCO website.
Friday, November 14, 2008	Board: Goal date for re-assessment of where AYCO is at with the current planning of the 2009 Festival and determination about forward movement.

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4:29 pm Reports and Updates

- **AYCO Store** – JW: 3 new memberships; 1 organization membership; 1 roustabout
- **Website + Communications** – RD: sent 642 AYCO-grams Re: EdCon
- **Finances** – KG: Balance as of 09/14/08 = \$9,224.62
- **Social Circus Task Force** – DWB: the members are vibrant, energized, and invested in the project; There is a t-con with Gil and Michele on Friday, September 19, 2008 to confirm common intentions on both sides (AYCO and Cirque). The mission and vision statement are being written regarding the work of the Social Circus Network; “How to get going” needs to be built into the plan.
- **Southern California Regional Conference** – JW: The conference date is October 26, 2008; need confirmation from Laura for registration.
DH: What deems this conference “a project of AYCO?”
JW: AYCO membership is a requirement of attendance; gathering of regional AYCO youth circuses.
DWB: It would be nice to establish a model and precedent of how it benefits AYCO and how it benefits the region; “mutual benefits” (AYCO + Southern California) – both contribute/both benefit (promotion, registration, money, logistics, programming)

4:39 pm Accomplishments / Successes

- Social Circus Task Force work continues (see above)
- Jesse Alford has been a tremendous help with the EdCon Scheduling! – Jesse has a sharp mind!
- EdCon program is complete – very good line-up! Some programming has not been seen before.
- EdCon got a mention in Spectacle.
- David’s trip to Boulder Circus Center (2008 EdCon) last week went well and was within budget.
- Donna is going to the *Clown College Reunion* in Baraboo September 17-24. She has forwarded an email about EdCon to the Clown Care Unit.
- Rick accepted an invitation to speak at the *Big Apple Convention* in November. He will have his “AYCO antenna” up during the gala.

DISCUSSION

4:41pm EdCon '08 Boulder, CO

- **Registration Report** – RD: 58 participants total: 26 presenters + 7 AYCO board + 25 paid attendees. These numbers are up from this same time before the 2005 EdCon when there were a total of 50 participants: 11 presenters + 5 board + 34 paid attendees.
- **Revised Budget Review** – *remove GERALYN and JACKIE from transportation/hotel expenses.*
- **Logistics**
 - Housing and Transportation among us – no one from the committee is staying at the Holiday Inn Express. DWB/JW – another hotel; all others in non-hotel accommodations.
 - **WHEN** are you arriving? Ride Share very important – *please email the committee your arrival/departure schedule.*
 - Yahoo Group: EdCon – 12 people joined. DH would like to use this group as a place to post details Re: Boulder Circus Center (i.e.: bring water bottle; no black soled shoes; etc.)
 - **Insurance** – *RD: will purchase by September 30th*
- **Fundraising**
 - Board donations - *Email Kevin how much you would like to donate within the week*
 - Individual donations - *ASK ANYONE! For donations – AYCO is a great organization ☺*
- **Promotion**
 - **Call, Email, and Talk it up.** Demonstrate Contagious Enthusiasm and Pride.
If we don't believe in what we are doing, why should anyone else?!!!

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5:00pm Board and Organizational Development (*Jessica Hentoff joined the meeting for discussion on Board and Organizational Development and Festival '09 Planning*)

- What are the specific qualities we seek?
- Who do we know with these qualities right now?
- How can we promote? Who will carry this out?
- Strategic Timeline for recruiting new Board members.

DH: Look for Board Members outside the Youth Circus World; need organizational direction and structure for AYCO.

DWB: Not sure to look outside the youth circus world; the talent and belief lies within the youth circus world.

JH (Jessica Hentoff): Looking for skill sets beyond AYCO

- 1) Look at member boards that have PR and marketing reps
- 2) Go to "Circus Fans of America; Jim Cole is educating on the importance of youth circus.
- 3) Find a corporation that wants their employees to serve on boards.

DH: Need to think about not having program directors from youth circuses on board, but serving as working committee members; need governing leadership role.

DWB: Need broader board base from inside before bringing in outsiders; need more board members.

JW: How do we work "outsiders" in? How do we get their energy?

DH: Serve on committees first (i.e. Carlo Gentile is serving on the Social Circus Task Force).

KG: Look for "festival-throwing organizations" now that we're growing in a new direction.

JW: Asked Dic Wheeler to serve on board a while ago, but he was busy starting his new organization. Dic has sponsored a regional festival in the past. Christina Barnum-Garner is coming to EdCon. Laura Stansfield? **John will ask Dic his level of interest in serving on the AYCO board.**

RD: Committee-to-Board is not the only path for board membership.

DH: Need to pay attention to the composition of the board: teacher / parent of child in youth circus / pre-professional / collegiate

JH: Get Al Light involved. Where is Jeuventas? Wanachee? Smirkus? Peru? There is a huge gap.

RD: What about asking people on other youth circus boards?

JH: Why not invite the boards of youth circuses to come to EdCon?

RD: **Will email Shifty's mother, Debbie (from Circus Smirkus), about serving on the AYCO board.**

DH: **Will create and send an email to Youth Circus Directors asking them to forward the email to their Boards informing them about EdCon and urging their participation.**

DH: Acknowledge AYCO's need to connect with groups that have been alienated or have alienated themselves

5:28 pm Festival '09 Planning

- DH: Do we have a Festival in 2009? 2007 AYCO Festival experienced a huge financial loss.
- Option: Postpone Festival?

DWB: \$15,000 loss for last festival; not a good track record; minimal man power.

RD: Festival positives:

- 1) Don't emphasize the gala (took a huge hit in 2007 from non-ticket sales for the gala).
- 2) The man-power AYCO has is very experienced.
- 3) We are no where near our potential for fundraising; we are hesitant to ask for money and we have a good, worthy cause.

DWB: Need to line up a suitable host and funding.

KG: From a participation point of view, the 2005 San Francisco Festival was successful. Too much money was spent on an organic caterer (\$20,000); also spent \$5000 on glossy programs that did not sell. Gamma Phi in 2007 – invested too much to make the space "workable" – lighting (\$5000), riggers, marketing for TV and radio (thought we could leverage on the Gamma Phi history for increased ticket sales). Need a location with an active youth circus organization. AYCO is getting smarter in how to put on a festival.

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JH: Use real income versus projected income when budgeting.

DH: There has to be some financial compensation for board members doing all the work. AYCO is 10 years old this year!

JH: Have any of the festivals made money?

KG: 2001 Festival in Sarasota (Sailor Circus) broke even.

JH: What were the comparative charges over the festival history? How about doing a national festival on a smaller scale?

DH: Circus Center (2005) – 50/50 split on expenses with gala and ticket revenue. Circus Center gave a lot and made no money.

AYCO paid Illinois State University (2007) a lot of money to schedule rooms, unlock rooms, etc. AI had great optimism on what ISU would provide (i.e. floor plates) and this did not happen.

Troubled waters = lack of communication about the expectations of each party from the beginning.

DWB: Clown College Reunion in Baraboo. The Clown College is required to host a show for Baraboo and use Baraboo's catering service. Logistically, there is no aerial (riggers); no walls on the performance space (or was it no roof?)

JH: You can get around aerial by specifying that no organization can bring an aerial act that they cannot rig themselves.

RD: What about Smirkus? College could provide housing; + the three circus tents from Smirkus.

DH: No practicality around Smirkus. The location prevents a public performance. We (AYCO) have to do a public show: the kids and the public deserve it! We are a national organization.

JH: What about adding to the letter to the youth circus boards inviting them to EdCon that AYCO is looking for a space to host the 2009 Festival?

DWB: In her first board meeting we came up with possible 2009 site locations. There has been no follow-up.

DH: **Will ask Keith or Vivica about IJA Festival locations.**

DH: Suggested a **goal date of November 14th for re-assessment of where AYCO is at with the current planning of the 2009 Festival and determination about forward movement.**

DWB: **Will contact Baraboo.**

RD: **Will contact University of Purchase and Smirkus.**

JH: What about French Woods in upstate NY? Jackie Tan's circus in the Pocono's?

DH: Jonathan Duell is a good contact for Jackie Tan's circus. He is a presenter at EdCon.

DH: **Will follow-up with Dan Butler Re: EdCon attendance.**

JH: What Camp Winnarainbow? Carrie Heller teaches there.

DWB: **Will contact Otis School of Design Re: their program for students to organize a festival/event**

RD: What does it entail to host a festival?

DWB: Need to create an appropriate document regarding: financial agreements (how revenue is split); facility: space requirements (class space, physical space); housing. What's in it for them?

VARIOUS: National recognition; Can be financial rewards from proceeds; Revenue sharing on conference fees and ticket sales.

DH: **Board to delegate a committee to create a working document on guidelines for hosting an AYCO Festival by Friday, September 26th.**

DH: Found and forwarded the "Festival Site Criteria List" to t-con meeting participants. Need to create a "2008 Site Criteria Draft."

JH: What about the winter headquarters for Ringling? We do not invite Peggy Williams ("Circus Fit") soon enough. Big Apple is not much interested in youth, but Ringling should be interested.

**6:22pm Review Tasks and Timelines
Next Meeting: Sunday, October 5, 2008**

6:26pm Meeting adjourned

Reminder: Review Task Timeline regularly to complete tasks. See top of Agenda and Minutes.