

**MSAC Literary Arts Summit Minutes**  
**Maryland Office of Nonprofit Associations, 190 W. Ostend Street, Baltimore, MD 21230**  
**June 13, 2009, 10am-12pm**

**Objective:**

Over the last five years, Baltimore's literary arts community has significantly grown due to the formation of organizations, networking among writers, influx of new writers, creation of several reading series, increased media attention through publicity and blogs, and a new energy in regard to literary art. The Maryland State Arts Council called the first Literary Arts Summit to support this resurgent and active scene, to further communication between organizations, to promote a collaborative spirit (especially during difficult economic times), and to explore the challenges that face those creating and presenting the literary arts, while fostering ways the community can discover solutions together.

**Attendees:**

Rosemary Klein – Maryland State Poetry and Literary Society  
Julie Fisher – poetryinbaltimore.com  
Barbara Diehl – Baltimore Review  
Christophe Casamassima – Furniture Press  
Reggie Harris – Pratt Library  
Andrea Lewis – Maryland Humanities Council  
Andy Rubin – Cyclops Books  
Stephen Reichert – Smartish Pace  
Paul Lagasse – Maryland Writers' Association, Baltimore Chapter  
Dave Rosenthal – The Baltimore Sun, Read Street blog  
Nancy Johnston – The Baltimore Sun, Read Street blog  
Jen Michalski – JMWW and 510 Reading Series  
Chris Toll – Upward Spiral Reading Series  
Adam Robinson – Publishing Genius Press  
Justin Sirois – Narrow House  
Carla Du Pree –HoCoPoLitSo  
Linda Joy Burke- Little Patuxent Review  
Fernando Quijano III - For Crying Out Loud  
Emily Mullin – Goucher Writers' Forum  
Gregg Wilhelm – CityLit Project  
Christine Stewart – Maryland State Arts Council

**Meeting began: 10:16**

Christine – Welcome

## Introductions

Invited Baltimore-Metro Area organizations (not individual writers).

Also coming up: July 18<sup>th</sup>-Writer's Center for DC Metro Area

August 22<sup>nd</sup>- Frostburg

**Asked: How are things going for your organization? How's the budget? Attendance? Etc.**

Attendance

Reggie: Very Good attendance, but program budget in half so next fiscal year will be a challenge.

Christophe: Partner with businesses to help with difficulty in publicity that is happening on both ends.

Carla: Pairing with businesses helps with sponsoring. Attendance at events is on a case by case basis. Where can we hold events? What is manageable? Marketing to those without internet is becoming a problem with loss of newspaper support. Our audience has a lot of elderly people who do not have internet.

MWA looking to partner with organizations for co-sponsorship etc.

Humanities Council- a lot of volunteer applications, in past there were very few

Maybe has to do with economy? People with extra time on their hands.

Look for interns. They can be a great asset. Reaching communities, college demographic.

-They can often work online. Utilize website to promote the organizations, attracts interns that way.

- Very successful (Baltimore Review)

The Sun is developing a new calendar where you can post events.

Baltimore Fun Guide- great for accessing families to promote events.

Baltimore has more of a literary community than other major big cities, we're lucky to be here as people who care about literature.

-The audience is out there.

-Literary events are the "cheap, it" things to do, especially in this economy

- Interest around entire state for One Maryland One Book Project

We should form a Google group, something to keep us connected as contacts.

Lots of poetry events, almost one every night, but the problem with poetry is that the only people that read and participate are those who can - poets.

Corporate or non-Corporate Organizations? – Are you 501(c)(3)?

- a variety of both 1/3 are 501(c)(3) and some are working on it, a few are for profits

**11:00 am Broke into groups to discuss various issues that organizations are facing – groups reported back:**

### **PR and Advertising/Funding**

#### **PR/ADVERTISING**

- Festivals
- Partnering with bookstores, schools, organizations
- Internet issues
  - o It is free
  - o Facebook, Twitter
  - o Localist.com
  - o 600block.com
    - Baltimore focus, reviews of points in Baltimore (venues etc.)
- Interns
- Help people find access to the internet, libraries etc.
- Central list of events

#### **FUNDRAISING**

- Library offers grant writing courses.
  - o Grants Collection e-Newsletter
- Go to business/financial people
  - o Could we have sessions for the group on financial and business endeavors
- 

### **Human Resources/Diversity - development of Audience and Artists**

#### **HR**

- Human interaction as opposed to internet
- venues are important
- Interns
  - o Need executive development, how to watch and administer them
- Need a headquarters for events
- Community outreach
- Also important to have multiple locations to work with for hosting events

## **DIVERSITY**

- Cross genres
  - o Cabarets good way to do this
- Cross venues
- Urge to communicate with one another
  - o Internet as a merger, a tool to bring people together in person
  - o Meetup.com is an option
- Social Media Boot Camp sessions through GBCA/MSAC
- How can art be useful? What can we take from these events?
  - o Workshops
  - o Education
  - o Mentorship program
    - Similar to big brother/ big sister program specifically for the arts
  - o Poetry for the People Baltimore could be a partnership option

## **CENTRAL DIRECTORIES**

- One central calendar
  - o Is it necessary?
    - Go to place to promote events
    - Poetryinbaltimore.com
    - Baltimore Sun Read Street
    - Baltimore Fun Guide (CityLit links to this)
  - o Is it possible?
- Resources list
  - o Centralized literary friendly venues
- Human Resources

- How do you have time to list events on all these sites?
  - Interns

## **COLLABORATIONS**

- Baltimore Review
- Barrelhouse and Smartish Pace
- Cross Promotions
- Reciprocal Ads and Links on each other's websites
  - Also, blogging for one another and adding links on blog to other organizations
- Co-op print or banner ads online – people pitch in when they have an event for the ad
  - Share cost
  - Promote all events from all organizations
  - Does not always have to be the same group, choose to include organization in the month that their events are happening
- Avoid splitting audience; don't plan events on the same days.
- Yahoo, Google or listserv group
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## **DISTRIBUTION**

- Traditional distribution is becoming easier to break into
- New media (online) distribution is the challenge. Can post a book, doesn't necessarily make them go to personalized website to read it
- Self publishing?
  - ISBN number is necessary
  - Return Policy is necessary
  - Check with CLMP – is it worth it to join?

## **OUTREACH EDUCATION TO YOUTH**

- Go to people. Don't wait for them to come to you. Schools especially
  - Go to the schools that are willing to bring a writer in
  - Find the person who is interested in poetry, they are always there
- Videotaping events, taking pictures at events
  - Sharing connections and resources to find photographer etc.
- Go to places that are not conventional, meet people.
- Feature young people on advertising itself
- Have something for kids to do at adult targeted events

## **PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING**

- Combine email and Facebook lists
- Referring artists to each other's organizations
- Use surveys
  - o See what people want
  - o Distribute surveys at major events
  - o Use same questions to we can accurately read the results (maybe each org has a wild card question specific to them)
- How is everyone else promoting their events?

## **QUALITY OF ART THE COMMUNITY IS GENERATING**

- Submissions especially
- Vetting process – some local, some national – different/multiple readers decide
  - o How to get awareness of publication into schools and institutions?
    - Use them as print text in the classrooms
    - Centralized approach to speak to institutions directly
    - Send physical copies to English department chairs

## **WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?**

- Google Group List
  - o Document sharing
- Survey

## **COMMITTEES TO FORM NOW AND REPORT BACK AT NEXT MEETING:**

### Co-op print advertising

- o Gregg Wilhelm, CityLit Project
- o Paul Lagasse, Maryland Writer's Assoc.
- o Andy Rubin, Cyclops Bookstore

### Community Development

- o Christophe Cassamassima, Towson Arts Collective
- o Reggie Harris, Enoch Pratt Library
- o Emily Mullin, Goucher College

**Next Meeting:** Early November. 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday (November 7)?