

**LWRWC GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, April 10, 2019
TOWN HALL 7:00 PM**

Call To Order: President, Kathleen Cleveland, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Community Scholarship Winners: Pam Szabo introduced our three scholarship winners: (all seniors at LWRHS)

- **Denver Romano** received \$1000. In 4 years Denver logged over 500 hours of volunteer and service hours. She will be attending USF Sarasota and will want to work in the hospitality industry.
- **Renee Ashby** received \$250. In 4 years, Renee logged over 300 hours of volunteer and service hours. She will be attending UF, majoring in nursing.
- **Angela Baldino** received \$250. In 4 years, Angela has logged over 400 volunteer and service hours. She will be attending UCF and will major in health services. She wants to be a Physicians Assistant.

Introduction of Guest Speaker: Nate Jacobs Founder and Artistic Director of the Westcoast Black Theater Troup. (the following written in part by Monika Templeman)

- Nate is an actor, singer, comedian, playwright, composer, and director who has written, adapted, directed, and acted in many shows, shows that have won acclaim from critics and the public alike and are sold out for their entire runs. He is the driving force behind the phenomenal success of the WBTT!
- He has been recognized for his outstanding contributions to young people and has received numerous awards for his contributions to the arts and education in Sarasota, including the Arts Leadership Award for Artistic Achievement from the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota, The Sarasota Branch of the NAACP Youth Council, the Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award, and was named Manasota Goodwill Ambassador for the year.
- Nate told the audience that “While WBTT is dedicated to producing the finest dramatic and musical theater, my dream – my true calling and purpose for founding this organization – has always been to help young, aspiring artists who may otherwise be overlooked to develop their talents and have the opportunity to achieve success.”
- During his presentation, Nate shared his story about what inspired him to work for more than 25 years in the Sarasota community mentoring and developing young aspiring performers and to become the founder of WBTT.
- He is one of eleven children. He was responsible for looking after his younger siblings and entertained them with funny stories he made up himself. He decided to major in fine arts at Florida A&M University because he was told he was a good artist and considered himself to be an introvert. While attending Florida A&M, he met his mentor, professor Henry Porter, a Sarasota native and a graduate of FAMU and Yale University, who was a bishop at the local Westcoast Center for Human Development Church.
- Although Nate had early aspirations to have a career in New York, his dream was derailed when Henry Potter, asked him to teach art at his Church School and Nate agreed to do so for 3 months. Teaching art expanded into teaching theatre and the three months stretched to three years as Nate started writing plays for students, which grew into popular seasonal performances. Eventually, Porter and

his wife Cynthia encouraged Nate to become a professional actor at the nearby the Asolo Repertory Theatre.

- As part of the Asolo Theatre Company, Nate realized he was the only black person around and it became a constant topic of conversation why were there no black theatre companies. The Players Centre for Performing Arts was the first to invite Nate to direct a black show at the professional community theatre: James Baldwin's The Amen Corner. They got a grant for the production, but Nate had to literally recruit and train his first cast from individuals he approached in the black community who had virtually no professional acting experience. The results were tremendous! Despite a lack of advertising and advance ticket sales, Nate told us that "the place was packed. "Half black, half white. The third performance was sold out." Confidence gained from the show's success and the inspiring letters from fans who loved the performances, finally motivated Nate to create the black theatre company he had dreamed of having in Sarasota.
- In December of 1999, Nate founded The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe as a not-for-profit organization. For years, WBTT presented shows in arts venues throughout the region, including many musicals that Nate wrote himself. With virtually no budget, WBTT, relied on their exciting shows to gain community support and, eventually, the money to take them to next level. In 2010, WBTT shows found a home in the warehouse next to the historic Binz Building in Sarasota and they purchased the entire property in 2013.
- Nate describes WBTT as "a gift bigger than anything he could have ever dreamed," and it is a gift that keeps on giving. Hundreds of actors, directors, and playwrights started their careers on WBTT's stage before being recognized as some of the top talent in performing arts.
- Nate told the Women's Club that "At WBTT, we give a unique, high-spirit feeling to our patrons that is unlike any other experience they would have anywhere in the realm of cultural arts." The troupe is still growing and their "Heart & Soul" fundraising campaign continues work towards its \$8 million goal to start renovating the theatre next door in May 2019, to create WBTT's vision for a new, state-of-the-art theatre.
- Nate ended the evening with a rendition of "Minnie the Moucher" and encouraged the audience to sing along! He received a standing ovation. Nate Jacobs is true a blessing for our artistic Sarasota community!

Business Meeting was called to order at 7:45.

Approval of the Minutes: There was a motion by Monika Templeman to approve the minutes of the March 2019 General Meeting. Cheryl Breining seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

President's Report: Kathleen Cleveland

- The club's By-Laws and Policies and Procedures have not been updated since 2016. The board is working on updating them to reflect the new demographics of the club's membership and to allow for co-presidents and co-vice presidents. Once the final draft is written, the membership will receive the changes via email to approve.
- It is time to start assembling a nominating committee to find members to fill the vacancies for next year's board and committee heads. Please send your suggestions or nominations via email to Cheryl Breining, VP and Chair of the Nominating Committee.

Vice President's Report: Cheryl, Eileen Buzzard

- Update on Speaker's Luncheon
 - Our speaker will be Lucetta Zaytoun, author and inspirational speaker
 - The date is May 8 and will be held at the LWR Golf and Country Club.
 - At this point, reservations are coming in slowly. Please tell your friends about this wonderful event.
 - Each guest is asked to bring a donation of a new or gently used children's book or young adult book. Names of donors will be put in a drawing for a special prize.
 - Books will be donated to HOPE Family Services and will become part of the "Book Nook" started by the LWRWC last year.
- SMART fundraiser: Vera Bradley at the UTC will be sponsoring a shopping spree where members of the LWRWC can shop for 2 hours and 10% of all sales will be donated to SMART. The date is to be determined

Treasurer's Report: Kathleen for Kathy Wingfield

- Cash balances as of March 31, 2019: Checking- \$6,514, Savings - \$6,818 for a total of #13,332.
- Mid-year distributions of \$5000 were made to each of our adopted charities.

Publicity: Monika Templeman.

- There is an open invitation for members willing to serve as event Photographers and/or Reporters to join the Publicity team. Please let Monika know if you are interested.
- Volunteers are needed to join the 2019 Holiday Dinner Theatre Charity Fundraiser Committee (for 12/11/19 at the LWR Golf & Country Club). Please let Monika know if you are interested.

Publicity – March & April 2019

- Web article submitted with photos about the Genealogy Presentation at our LWRWC General Meeting on March 7, 2019.
- Press Release and web article submitted entitled LWRWC Supports HOPE's 22nd Black & White, "An Evening Over the Rainbow" that was published in several local media sources including the Herald Tribune.
- Web article submitted and enhanced photo of our LWRWC New Member Welcome Brunch at LWR Town Hall on March 13, 2019. The article and photo were posted on our home page.
- Web article submitted web article "Fun at the Rodeo" and enhanced photos that I received from several members to publicize our Off the Ranch: Arcadia Rodeo Outing.
- Submitted photo and story caption about our Social Lunch Bunch Luncheon at Cassariano Italian Eatery at UTC on March 11., 2019.
- Press Release and web article about Fashion Regatta – Sarasota Style and worked on the size and resolution of the photos from Andy Zirna to make them media compliant. I will submit the Press Release with photos to all our media sources on Wednesday, March 6th
- Web article and enhanced photos received from Kathleen Cleveland to publicize our Off the Ranch Cirque des Voix Outing on March 21 and will be submitted

- Country Club Magazine published an article and photos to publicize our LWRWC Music of the Night Charity Fundraiser in a two-page spread in the April 2019 Issue. Need extra copies.

Pending Publicity - April and May 2019

- Press Release & Web Article about April 10 General Meeting at LWR Town Hall featuring Nate Jacobs, Founding Artistic Director, Westcoast Black Theater Troupe and an introduction of our 2019 LWRWC Community Service Scholarship Recipients
- Web Article about Off the Ranch: Historic Spanish Point Guided tour on April 30
- Press releases and web article about our 2019 Community Service Scholarship Recipients and a Spotlight Interview with our \$1000 Scholarship Recipient
- Photos & short article about Social Lunch at University Park CC on Monday, May 6 at 11:30am
- Press Release & Web Article about Charity Fundraiser Speakers Series Lunch on 5/8 at LWR Golf & CC with Lucetta Zaytoun, Inspirational speaker & author of Your Amazing Itty-Bitty Fear Busting Book
- Reminder: Mark your Calendars for August 22, 2019 so you don't miss the Couples and Friends evening at the Players Theatre. Tickets are only \$15 per person and we reserved 80 tickets.

LWRWC Web Site Update - As of April 4, 2019 the website is completely up to date

- Custom designed header with LWRWC president models
- Fashion Show article with video and music on front page
- Genealogy article on front page
- Ads on front page sidebar to April meeting, May speaker's lunch, May monthly lunch
- Link to rodeo article in sidebar
- Current directory posted
- Events and meeting highlights from 2017 moved to archives

Membership: Ann Sledz

- Spring New Member Brunch was held on March 13, 2019. There were 38 New Members invited, of which 20 attended.
- Acceptance of Renewal Membership Dues for 2019 closed on March 15th.
- Total Members as of April 1, 2019 is 280
- 85 Members who did not renew for 2019
- New Members in March - 5

Philanthropy: Joanie Lawrence

- There are still have a few spots left for our Hope and Solve sight visits scheduled for Monday, April 15 at Hope at 2pm and Thursday, April 25 at Solve at 11am Both tours will take about an hour. We can only take ten on each tour this time but will be scheduling additional tours later. Car pools from Town Hall and will be leaving at 1:15 on April 15th and 10:15 on April 25th. Please let Joan know if you want to carpool.
- Joan is working on a date for the SMART tour. They have a new executive director.
- Earlier this week members received a blast asking for suggestions of Lakewood Ranch/Manatee County charities to be considered as charities next year. If you would like a charity to be considered, please contact Joan by email or cell.

Program: Our next Off The Ranch event will take place on April 30. Members and guests will tour Historic Spanish Point with lunch to follow. There are a few spots left.

There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted

Helene R. Levin
Recording Secretary