

Valley of the Moon Theatrical Team and Board of Director's Meeting Minutes July 27, 2018

Attending: Bob Murphy, Michael Williams, Travis Deyo, Autum Provetear, Dante Crossroads, Leslie Eldenburg, Jenni Sunshine

FY 2017-2018 went well – which included a great leadership team, all roles filled, and people could do what we needed. Volunteers included a director, assistant director, stage manager, costume queen, set and prop ninja, and someone for carnival. Thus, we were able to split responsibilities so it was not overwhelming for any one person. These seem to be the roles that need to be filled to have streamlined operations. The team utilized budgets well and had plenty for this last show because they held back earlier. LGS was the best ever (sets, costumes, operations). Having defined leadership roles gave ownership to one person, the cast knew who to go to, volunteers having defined responsibilities helped, too. The use of the volunteer opportunities page helped and gave us more of a community feel, the team was able to find parents with more flexibility to help prepare during the week. Volunteers had more autonomy in doing things on their own and could avoid working during rehearsal times. Having the cast and board respect costume design and sets/props helped ease security concerns. It also helped to have someone for guest services. Autum did an excellent job. Michael needed funds periodically, and with the prepaid credit card, he could get what he needed. These types of transactions were then more professionally handled. This is a good idea for future, it helps keep track of purchases. The performance also had excellent coordination regarding directing the cast to the right place at the right time. The costume person (Sarah) was sensitive to individual needs in communication and her kindness was appreciated.

Opportunities for improvement

We need to be sure we have that quirky VOM humor in our scripts. LGS had great characters, but it lacked humor that people expect. It didn't feel like a "Valley" show, but like it was a show done at the valley. We excel with original stories and VOM as pivotal part of the show, VOM property use can help the audience value the property and the magical sense of VOM. Emily injected the current script with the humor and a sense of the Valley. She's done an excellent job. Some cast members didn't speak loud enough and others talked when not performing so that it was noisy for other vignettes. Jessica did a good job with the cast along these lines. However, we need to remind the cast to be quiet between scenes and to speak up when in character. The team didn't do debriefing after the last performance each night. They to eliminate them because people were critical and the discussion went too long, especially on nights before school. Travis wanted to debrief before each practice, but too much was going on. We need something in between. We do need to discuss audience count info and encourage cast to distribute flyers. We did not advertise enough. Travis emphasized the need for flyer distribution and all flyers were taken. We don't know if they got posted. Travis felt that people wanted to put them up rather than feeling they HAD to put them up. Travis thought that more flyers were distributed. Jenni suggested that we probably could be more low-key for the Halloween performance and up-level PR for other performances. We can be more influential with parents who are not doing other

things. Michael invited all parents to the back lot to help with set/other things. Autumn encouraged parents to sign up ahead, but they would just show up. Sometimes the parents would leave their kids at the Carnival and wander around. We need a child wrangler to prepare activities for the cast. Apparently, it's difficult to find people who want to do this. It needs to be the right person, someone independent in developing the role. Martha was working on a visit to a different theatrical organization that is doing everything well. We need to protect the directors from shouldering too much responsibility. If we can get more positions and structure, it will help everyone. It's been a little more difficult to manage as we've grown. It's good to have new people with ideas about improved operations. We need to support people in new roles. Jenni brought up two problems. We may have someone who you like but they don't do what they say they will do. We don't have a good way to address this. We could get the slack system set up to record who is doing what. How welcoming are we to new cast and team members? Dante thinks we're doing well there. Michael has had people that are energized by our community, and yet others who have been here for a while to throw in the towel if there are problems. Sometimes the kids get wrapped up in their roles and behavior deteriorates. Some families/ kids leave because they don't feel valued. Also, some tension between non-performance volunteers and performance volunteers. Valley attracts a diverse set of people, and that can increase tension, too, although we usually do a good job accepting others. Right now, we are straddling the line between community and theatre. We need to find the right balance. We have folks who supervise others without any training. We could give people more support in leadership roles and teach them how to give gentle feedback. Michael felt that the kids who come here have a good set of values, relative to outsiders. Travis believes that we are continuing to get better, more organized while keeping our friendships. Dante suggested that scheduling of the spring show was a problem, there were too many competing events. The team needs to check out alternate activities as we choose the time period. Bob noted that PR didn't get done, so that was part of it. Michael thought that we need spring show scripts about now so we can pick scripts that will fit better with current events and avoid times with conflicting events. Travis feels like we don't have folks who want to write scripts or who know how to do it. We need to describe scriptwriter and script requirements and provide an example or two and contact info. We could have a workshop featuring this. The theatrical team has talked about holding a workshop. We could also ask for scripts instead of outlines to start the process. Can comment on the scripts at an early stage and incorporate valley themes and values. Need to announce script needs more often and earlier. Need to have enough to choose from early enough to work on them. The team wants to announce the next show at end of each tour. Once we have a structure, we could open up script writing to students at UA. May need Zogog and other character descriptions for them. Could have a contest or request for outlines. We have improved script timeliness and completion. Goal for Theatrical Board – have spring show name and announce it in Feb or March.

Budget

Having a budget set aside for theatrical expenses was a big positive. There were some glitches with getting funds available on prepaid cards. Starting the process of determining budget and getting money on cards well before the casting call would be a better practice.

Theatrical team's structure

This year the team has a goal of creating structure within the group. Is there a head of the theatrical board? We need to reconsider what has been "assigned" to the board. How should they recruit new members? Recently they are developing descriptions and policies for the cast and crew. The team needs to get together to hammer out responsibilities, recruiting, structure, etc.