



PSO Meeting - January 26, 2018

Meeting Minutes

President - Faye Chen opened the meeting at 8:20 a.m., attendance 28 people

- **Welcome** - Faye welcomed all members and introduced Shana Martin to discuss membership.

Membership Team - Malena Gibson, Shana Martin, Yolanda Agredano,

- **Membership update**- Shana Martin said the PSO began in 2009. Today about 1/3 of our parent population, or over 700 parents are members. The goal is to have 100% of parents join. She reminded others to share the news to potential new members that attendance at meetings is not required and PSO dues are used to provide grants, and show school appreciation and support for our academic and conservatory teachers.

Ways and Means Team - Teresa Bettenhauser, Candace Carteen, Frances Gorospe, Lisa Matthews

- **Scrip** - Teresa Bettenhauser talked about how you can purchase gift cards that can help you earn rebates for your Parent Funding Account (PFA). For every card you order through Scrip, a significant portion of the rebate (usually 75%) goes toward your personal PFA. The cards can even be used for groceries. Check the website at www.shopwithscrip.com to find participating stores.
- **Box Tops** - Candace Carteen announced the next Box Top Raffle and used a box of cereal to physically show what a Box Top looks like. Submit 10 unexpired box tops to enter a raffle drawing for various prizes such as an elevator pass or movie ticket. The last Box Top collection netted \$500 that is earmarked for an academic or a conservatory teacher's class wish list. See boxtopforeducation.com for a list of products that use box tops.

School Administration Team - Steve Wagner, Teren Shaffer, Michael Ciecek, Becca Freeland

- **Dean Mike Ciecek** announced that we have hired **new security guards** The details will be included in the Friday announcement. He also mentioned the recent **bomb scare** and noted that it was an anonymous threat that was sent via an untraceable app. It remains anonymous. Local police were consulted immediately and worked side by side with administration to plan and direct communication throughout the entire process. A general discussion took place regarding this issue and Kelly Townsend mentioned this tactic has been used by unknown people at other high schools to create fear. There were 1,000 absent students that day or a little less than a half of enrolled students. A PSO member commented that for the students that did attend school that day, they were thrilled with their small class sizes. Any additional questions may be directed to Dean Ciecek.
- **Dean Becca Freeland** - Dean Freeland announced that **student enrollment meetings** begin Feb 5 and will continue through the second week in March. Enrollment forms will be coming home for review. She asked that parents review the form and sign it before it is returned. There will

be a parent information session where parents will be able to hear the same presentation given to their students. She asked that parents please wait until their child has had their enrollment meeting and attend the parent meeting before asking to schedule a meeting with their child's counselor if needed. More information can be found on the OCSA website by selecting the student parent portal and then selecting student services. The **start date for new school year** will be officially announced at the end of February. She surmised that most likely it will be the same week as last year. She believes it will be the week of August 14 but will confirm it in writing to the entire school at the end of February. Dean Freeland also received a very positive response from students and parents regarding holding first semester finals before break. As a result, she did confirm during the meeting that first semester finals for the next school year will be held before the Winter Break.

- **Dean Ciecek** was asked specifically about future **disaster plans** after he was finished presenting. He answered the question by noting there is a reunification plan in the event students need to be evacuated. The plan can be found on the OCSA website. Any additional questions may be directed to Dean Ciecek.
- **Steve Wagner** discussed **school campus expansion and future plans**. He shared the fact that he is continuing to look for ways to use the proven OCSA school model to serve as many students as possible in other areas. He mentioned that OCSA is in the middle of the application season on both campuses. He said there are students from 80 different cities who are attending one or both schools. San Gabriel Valley OCSA began with 700 students. His forecast is that the SGV campus will grow to 1100 students next year. The SGV Campus is much smaller, with 45,000 square feet and 16 classrooms, than OCSA. Full enrollment will be 1200 students at SGV. It currently has 8 Conservatories including IA, MT and others. There may be an additional roll-out of Commercial Music and Digital Media in the future. At this time, the SGV campus, in terms of size and Conservatory offerings, will serve as the model moving forward. Steve is continuing to search for additional sites in areas such as San Diego, South Bay and North Long Beach area to serve more students.
- **Teren Shaffer** talked about the upcoming **Gala**. He said it is OCSA's largest annual fundraiser. \$ 1.4 million was raised last year and the goal this year is to match or exceed that amount. He is very appreciative of all the support of the parents.

Parent Ed Presents: Half Way to Summer -

Kelly Townsend introduced a new PSO series called, "Working in the Arts." She and Todd Davis asked our panel of Actors a variety of questions regarding their Acting experiences.

The guest Speakers: Shannon Page Cutler, Jeff Brem, Donald Amerson, Dan Klass and Malena Gibson

- **Working in the Arts** - Kelly thanked the OCSA parents above who described working in the fields that relate to our student's conservatories and shared their own personal experiences of their artistic journey.
- **Please see below for minutes from this extremely informative and entertaining presentation** where the guest speakers above shared their experiences, advice and knowledge about the entertainment industry as well as how your child could use his/her own acting experience in a variety of career opportunities.

Save the Dates! - Upcoming PSO Meetings

- **Friday, March 9th 8:00 - 10:00 AM** - Webb Event Center
- **Friday, April 27st 8:00 - 10:00 AM** - Webb Event Center - **Potluck & Elections**

Questions for each panelist: About the Actors:

Questions were asked by Kelly Townsend Kelly and Todd Davis

Guest Speakers: Shannon Page Cutler, Jeff Brem, Donald Amerson, Dan Klass and Malena Gibson

Kelly: First question: Please give us the 2 minute “My Theater Life In A Nutshell.” Please include how you began in acting, what did you do as an actor, where did your acting life go later in life and please describe how you were able to create a career using your acting skills? Please include: What type of acting or training you practice (if any) such as Method, Stanislavski, Chekhov, etc.?

Shannon Page Cutler: Shannon is a PSO member, OSCA proud parent and teacher. She teaches movement at OCSA. She started as a dancer at 3 years old by taking a dancing combo class. She participated in high school musicals and watched tons of theater. As a young adult she auditioned for the Christmas Parade at Disneyland and got it! Worked at Disneyland, Musical Theater, New York 2-year AMDA Academy, Cruise ship then Disneyland Beauty & the Beast. Next, she became a stage manager of the parade department and later an event planner for Disney. She is currently performing in the musical James and the Giant Peach where she is portraying the nasty Aunt at the Chance Theatre. *

Jeff Brem: Jeff is a parent of two OSCA students. He acted a little in high school but didn't think he was going to be an actor. He put acting on the side for 20 years. He became a teacher in Japan and then has taught in a public school high school for 17 years. His wife sent him to the Sound of Music audition out of nowhere. He speaks some German but was completely surprised by being cast as Captain Von Trap! He wanted to write Science Fiction. He teaches English and loves narrative. He used the narrative style to create a back story and became hooked on stage shows. In addition to teaching English, he is also the Director of the Sonora High School Theater Company. He performs lots of Shakespeare and scouts shows that feature female leads because his cast is about 75% female. “The journey has been long but thrilling!”

Donald Amerson: Mr. Amerson is the Director of the International Thespian Troupe at OCSA. Acting was something that was consistent with him even though he tried everything else. He has a Public Policy Masters and his primary goal was to make changes in the world. He went back to school and moved to New York to be an actor. He believes theater makes changes in the world. He was a working actor for a year and a half in New York- “It can happen!” He played the young roles even in his 30's. He was in children's theater because he truly looked the part. In addition to teaching 4-6 classes a year, his goal is to be part of a production at least one time per year. Coming up he will be starring in “Bud, Not Buddy” at the La Mirada Theater on February 22.

Dan Klass: Dan is a new OCSA parent this year. When he was 8 or 10 years old, he knew he wanted to be an actor and a comedian. He grew up in upstate New York and participated in acting in junior high. He studied advertising and psychology. In addition, he studied the Meisner technique. He began his career in stand up comedy which led to exposure, then agents and finally work! He proclaims that is he is mostly a screen actor. He suggests that the vast majority of “acting” people will need a back up career. His acting work includes key roles on Xfiles, Party of 5 and other popular shows. He is also multitalented and has created and sold an animated Internet movie to Dreamworks and is currently producing his own podcast called The Bitterest Pill. Kelly commented that it “is very personal and humorous.” Dan also became a podcast producer in 2004 and continues to produce podcasts as well as coach and train others on the ins and outs of podcasts, interviewing skills and more.

Malena Gibson: Malena was a litigator for 25 years then retired to be a full time stay at home mom. Her children have extensive work in the television business.

About the business:

Todd: What is the best piece of advice you have for young graduates for classes to take when they go to college?

Shannon Page Cutler: A good friend suggests to go to NYC (Broadway) later in life (such as in your 30's, 40's and 50's) because he was so much more marketable when he did so.

Jeff Brem: He believes that for the most part major in whatever you want (not necessarily acting) for your undergraduate degree.

Donald Amerson: Forget about the names. Go to the school/program that feels like it is your place. Go for your dream (not someone else's) but don't discount other opportunities.

Todd: What can they (students) do outside of school to advance their career or dream?

Kelly: Create your own jobs by writing your own parts.

Dan Klass: Stay active in your field.

Kelly: Do you have to have an agent?

Dan Klass: Dan said you need to have an agent if you want to be on television as opposed to YouTube. If you are in short films you don't need to necessarily get one. If you have an agent and they require you to go to a class or a specific photographer then it's a scam. Also, he said you have to stay active in your craft as opposed to sitting around waiting for an agent to get you a job.

Todd: Have you ever turned down a part offered to you? Why?

Shannon Page Cutler: Yes, she has. She felt content was not appropriate for her now as a parent.

Donald Amerson: He had an abusive producer that was bullying/threatening him and the cast. Donald left and he was glad he did.

Malena Gibson: She always reads the script before her children's auditions and is not afraid to say no.

Kelly: Tell us about Thespians? Its purpose, mission, goals, benefits, who can join?

Donald: The International Thespian Society - People who want to become actors or who are just interested in any aspect of theater may join. It's an opportunity to get experience to compete and try out different plays and also to audition for scholarships. "It's pretty much a theater club and an honor's society which means there are certain standards that must be met or exceeded." The General Assembly meetings are in the DMS 218 every Tuesday of the month at lunch. There is a small fee to be inducted into the Jr. Thespians (made up of 7th and 8th grade students) or Thespians (High School students only). There is a trip to New York filled with musical theater, courses, etc that is open to any thespian that would like to travel with a parent. The Jr. Festival is February 3 in Claremont, CA and The State Festival (high school) this year will be held in Upland, California. Currently there are 160 students at OCSA who are official members with cards. Others will be inducted. It is open to all conservatories.

Kelly: Having kids in the business auditioning for shows, commercials, voice overs – what are the top 3 things that other parents should know?

Malena: She has 2 children working in the entertainment business. She uses an agent. Some kids do have managers as well but she has not chosen that path. Some discussion among the panel ensued and the general consensus among the guest speakers was that you can get a manager to manage your social accounts. A general rule of thumb is that managers take 10-20% of profits and they operate in a gray area. In her opinion, it's important to get all the information from managers and/or agents up front.

She recommends reading [BizParents.org](https://www.bizparents.org) on Facebook. Also, she encourages interested parents to watch the documentary called "Open Secret" that shows the ugly side of the business. She never leaves her children alone on auditions. She has even been offered and used monitors in a separate room to watch her child/children perform.

The girls got started when one of their school teachers suggested the Young Americans group to her. Both of her daughters attended the camp and they immediately started getting cast. Both daughters now are working in the business.

She discussed the time commitment for parents noting she had been to LA four times in the last four days. There is usually less than 24 hours notice before you have to drop everything and go to an audition. "It's the quickest turnaround ever," she commented. She tries to get later afternoon appointments but it doesn't always work out. Her children have appeared in one or more national commercials, have performed in professional musicals and have done voice overs. She does tell her girls that there are 999 no's for 1 yes. She's tries to make it fun and reminds them that it is just one more thing they do - not the only thing. She noted that this is not a good business for children or adults with self esteem issues. It's a brutal process so be sure to consider all of that before you sign up.

Kelly: How hard is it for the parents to begin the process of auditioning?

Jeff: He teaches classes on auditioning including interviewing for colleges (scholarships,etc). He suggests practicing and taking a class if possible first before you begin.

Kelly: Auditioning is a skill you will use forever whether it's for a job, a first date, etc.

Shannon: Acting classes help you with presentations and other important life skills.

Malena: Words of advice. Even if kids nail the audition, the decision process may come down to nothing to do with their competency. She tells her girls not to compare yourself to others who get the spot because you have no idea what casting directors are looking for.

Todd: Is it rewarding enough for the child and the family?

Malena: She recommends always keeping it light. Make sure they are having fun and it can be rewarding. Sometimes you will never hear the results of an audition, not even a “no.” After every audition, she asks, “Did you have fun?” She also suggests having the kids act as a casting director for something (short film, commercial, etc) so that they get the experience of casting others. Have them do it with 3 other people who are also serving as casting directors for the same production. They have to decide together. This will help them understand the difficult casting process and see it from another point of view.

Todd: What are your plans for the future?

Shannon Page Cutler: After her kids graduate she might go back to auditioning for acting parts in LA. *See below for a link to Shannon’s upcoming play.**

Jeff Brem: Work on his current theater program. Get a PHD in Theater and do more acting.

Donald Amerson: Do more auditions. Embark on his “Passion Project” in Italy thanks in part to an OCSA Grant. After his return, he will put on a piece of work showcasing his newfound knowledge.

Dan Klass: Get back to acting. Finish a script that is a work in progress for the Collaborative Film Maker Challenge - a 2 week short film competition in the Spring in LA.

Malena Gibson: Provide the opportunity for and direct her young actors to take ownership of their business by allowing them to update their resumes, get directions to auditions, submit auditions, etc.

Kelly and Todd thank all of the speakers and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 10:30 a.m., 28 Attendees

** The PSO would like to thank our amazing panel of speakers for our Parent Presentation: “Working In The Arts.” Please support their current & upcoming projects:*

- Dan Klass - <http://www.thebitterestpill.com>
- Shannon Page Cutler - <https://chancetheater.com/production/james-giant-peach>
- Don Amerson - http://lamiradatheatre.com/current_events/teens/bud-not-buddy
- Jeff Brem
- Malena Gibson - Parent of two young actors in the entertainment business



Original

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Welcome Parents!

Today's Agenda:

President - Faye Chen

- Happy New Year!

Membership Team - Malena Gibson, Shana Martin, Yolanda Agredano,

- Membership update

Ways and Means Team - Teresa Bettenhauser, Candace Carteen, Frances Gorospe, Lisa Matthews

- **Scrip** - Purchase gift cards can help you earn rebates for your PFA account.
- **Box Top** - Submit 10 unexpired box top to enter a raffle drawing for various prizes.

School Administration Team - Steve Wagner, Teren Shaffer, Michael Cien, Becca Freeland

- School campus expansion and future plans.

Parent Ed Presents: Half Way to Summer - Shannon Page Cutler, Jeff Brem, Donal Amerson, Dan Klass, Malena Gibson

- **Working in the Arts** - OCSA parents working in the fields that relates to our student's conservatories to share their personal experiences of their own journey.

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PSO on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ocsapso>

Contact us at PSO@ocsarts.net if you have any questions or comments.