

SOA Executive Committee

Minutes of the Meeting

9th October 2014

1. The SOA Executive Committee met on the 9th October 2014 in the Hotel Dream, Mons. (Attendance apologies received from Steve Covington, Jean Vanderwal and Christiane Hermant). Also in attendance were the outgoing and incoming Chairmen of the US Chapter, Jack Haas and Gene Gay. The Executive Committee was also honoured to welcome the presence of the proposed new SOA president, General Shaud. The Chairman opened the meeting and reviewed the 2014 Symposium Welcome Package to include the action items from the previous minutes

2. Action Items from the previous meeting:

- a. Friendship concert (4.a.i.) The Belgian Liaison Officer had provided 46 tickets for the Friendship concert and these would be distributed during the Happy Hour and General Assembly.
- b. Trip to Tournai (4.a.ii.) The bus schedule had been amended to include a second pick up point and the necessary Tourist Office deposit had been provided.
- c. Guest Speaker (4.c.) The guest speaker had yet to be confirmed. Secretary's Note: Subsequently confirmed as MGen Davis DCOS OPI.
- d. VIP Speaker (4.d.) The Chairman had invited MGen Davis and his wife as guests to all the Symposium events.
- e. Photographs (4.e.) An official photographer would attend the General Assembly.
- f. SHAPE invite (4.f.) A SHAPE All Users message had been released through the Belgian Liaison Office inviting all Shapians to the Symposium's Friday afternoon presentation on "MONS – City of Culture 2015".
- g. SOA leaflets (4.g.) The SOA Leaflets would be available for the General Assembly.
- h. Scholarship (5.c.) The parents of the successful candidates had been contacted and would attend the General assembly.
- i. Tops in Blue (7.a.) The SOA sponsored request for "Tops in Blue" to perform at the Mons Theatre as part of the 2015 cultural activities has been accepted in principle. The scheduling will be done in March 2015 and the SOA Executive Committee have been requested to provide three available dates on a Friday or Saturday evening between mid September and first week of October. The MWR will also need to be contacted to determine the proposed dates for the SHAPE concert and it may be possible to schedule the "Tops in Blue" performance to coincide with next years SOA Symposium. (Action: JV & RH)

4. Symposium 2014

- a. The Chairman had provided copies of the Welcome Package and the SOA presentations for the General Assembly. The schedule for each day of the Symposium was reviewed and confirmed. Minor adjustments were made to the Financial Report. A table plan had not yet been prepared for the formal dinner. The table layout was immediately confirmed with the Dream Hotel (6 tables of 6 and one table of 7) and a seating plan would be prepared.

(Action: RH)

- b. The subject of membership status and dues was raised as a potential issue. The Chairman pointed out that the planned change in 2016 to cease 'Life Membership' and require annual dues of 10 Euros had primarily been to maintain control over the membership lists. The current financial status of the SOA does not require additional funding and as the stated intent is a gradual draw down of the existing funds, it could be counter-productive to deter future membership solely because of annual fees. It was also noted that renegeing on the previous 'Life Membership' conditions should not be lightly undertaken. With this in mind, the Chairman would be happy to propose a deferment of the proposed change to 2020 and the issue could be further discussed in the General Assembly.

5. AOB.

- a. The importance of the NATO alliance was stressed and role of the SOA to assist and promulgate the goals and reputation of the Alliance in some way was briefly discussed. The need to engage with both the current SHAPE staffs and the wider national audiences must be a priority of the SOA. The SOA Scholarship Programme and the SOA sponsorship of cultural activities for the "Mons, Capital of Culture 2015" activities were examples of current initiatives, and additional activities and affiliations should be explored. (Action: All)
- b. The last SOA event proposed for 2014 is a Wine Tasting evening. Three dates are proposed in November (the 5th, 19th and 26th) and the price will be 25 Euros (Wine only) or 40 Euros (Wine and Cheese). Interest in this event would be determined during the General Assembly and final details will then be published. (Action: RH)
- c. The first SOA event next year is the "SOA New Years Welcome Drinks" planned for 14th January 2015 at 1700 in the SHAPE Club. (Action: GB)

6. Next Meeting

Wednesday 14th January, 2015 at 14:30 in the PAO conference room.