

One River Mississippi

Report from the Artistic Director

Issue No. 2: December 16, 2005

onerivermississippi.org

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Season's Greetings from Mary Lee Hardenbergh, Artistic Director

Welcome to the second issue of our One River Mississippi Newsletter. As you know, we will be sending out these newsletters to update you about our project.

I have so many fascinating and heart-warming stories to tell from each of our sites that will participate simultaneously along the Mississippi River, I hardly know where to begin. Some stories you'll read in this issue, others I will publish later.

I am loving working with all of the people involved up and down the country. I feel very fortunate to have my Project Director Jana Larson, and all of the local Project Managers – they are a formidable crew! And I feel privileged to be able to be working with our roster of choreographers. All of the choreographers and I continue to hold our monthly conference calls, where we delve into artistic issues. We always take up the entire hour because there is much to discuss, and opinions to be thrown into the hopper.

Visit our website (OneRiverMississippi.org) to read more about our incredible project managers, choreographers and composers.

Best to you all,

Marylee Hardenbergh

New Orleans: We have a go!

Last summer, before Hurricane Katrina hit, we had planned to perform at the future home of RiverSphere, the brain-child of the Center for Bioenvironmental Research (CBR) at Tulane and Xavier Universities. The land there, despite the flooding caused by Katrina, remained safe and dry, though right on the river.



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Here's the latest from the acting director of Riversphere:

Marylee,

We are still committed to the performance. I saw Barbara at a marvelous jazz performance by Irvin Mayfield last Thursday at Christ Church Cathedral and we both agreed it is on. By June 24, we will probably have a small cruise ship anchored right off the RiverSphere site which will present even more possibilities and challenges (may have security issues to address). Definitely count New Orleans in.

With A Studio in the Woods on line, we could have performances there and along their river frontage as well as get some space on Algiers point where the Old Algiers Festival has been held the last two Aprils. Come and dance. We are ready for it!



John A. McLachlan, Co-founder and Acting Director Riversphere, Director of CBR, and Weatherhead Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Professor of Pharmacology

And from the Program Director of RiverSphere:

It's good to hear from you and we are all now up and running back in New Orleans. I also feel strongly that we should move forward with our One Mississippi collaboration and I think RiverSphere could be an interesting venue beyond our initial comprehension.

It will likely be at that point a staging area for temporary housing via trailers and cruise ships for displaced Tulane faculty and staff. This dance would bring this village together and could provide for very interesting "stage"! We also got an email from someone on your staff to link to our KERRN website. Just like your dance, this is all about linkages and communication.

Best, Doug

Douglas J. Meffert, D. Env., MBA, the Deputy Director of the CBR and the Eugenie Schwartz Professor for River & Coastal Studies

I am going to hook up with these folks and others in New Orleans during my early January trip [see below].

Venice, Louisiana: We search for another site

Our chosen site, Fort Jackson near Venice in Plaquemines Parish, is still under water (see photo at right), and the roads from New Orleans down to Fort Jackson will not become passable anytime in the next months. In fact, Plaquemines Parish website warns "A roadblock allowing only parish residents to enter south Plaquemines is located near the Woodland Plantation at West Pointe a la Hache. Anyone wanting to go below this point is required to have a permit from the President or Sheriff's Office." To catch a glimpse of what life is like there right now, visit the Plaquemines Parish Government site at <http://www.plaqueminesparish.com/>

On my first trip, our Venice choreographer Angela Hammerli introduced me to Mike Dardar and his wife Daisy. Mike is the tribal representative of the Houma Indian Nation. Mike graciously gave us an insider's tour of Venice. We drove to the end of Jump Basin Road, so named because the river jumped course a while back, and there we stood on the dock, looking at the one of the many Mississippi River's distributaries. Then we drove back up north about 10 miles to Fort Jackson. For dinner, we all went out to a restaurant in Venice for a meal of – can you guess? – fabulous boiled shrimp! It was the best and most plentiful shrimp and they laughed at my graceless manner of getting the shells off. I enjoyed a glorious mess. It is now sobering to see the photos of what happened to the land we stood on.



Angela Hammerli and Mike Dardar in pre-Katrina photo. Post-Katrina photo of same area.

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For general inquiries, please email our Project Director: jana@onerivermississippi.org