

# The State College Choral Society



## NEWSLETTER

April 2002



Thanks for the great send-off for my trip! In the picture, Margo Coffin Groff (soprano) helps me hold up the wonderful sign you gave me (special thanks to Adrian Oceanu for producing it). It is especially appropriate that she is in the photo with me, because Margo has a Fulbright this year, too. She is going to the International Education Administrator's Seminar in Korea. She is more fortunate than I, because hers is in May and she won't have to miss the concert.



My tour starts with ten days in Berlin, then I travel to Weimar, Erfurt, Munich, and Aachen, visiting different universities at each stop. The last five days are spent in Brussels. I'll be with 25 other administrators from all over the U.S. In May, many of the people we visit in Germany will come to the U.S. in exchange. The German Fulbright Commission is very strong, and they have made this into a terrific program.

Ah, but I have to miss the Brahms—and it was so *lieblich* in rehearsal the other night. However, I may not miss hearing it, because if all my planes are on time, I'll arrive in State College at 6:22 p.m. on the 27th. Hope to see you then!

### Guidelines for

### Women's Concert Dress

1. All female members of SCCS are required to purchase the official black concert dress used for performances.
2. When a member decides to leave SCCS, she may keep her dress or inform the chorus manager that her dress is available for resale.
3. SCCS will not buy back dresses, but will act as a clearing-house for members who wish to sell their dresses. Resale is not guaranteed.
4. A member is responsible for buying a new dress if for some reason her dress becomes unwearable for whatever reason—too small, too big, my dog tore it to shreds, etc.
5. If a member is pregnant and needs a larger size temporarily, the chorus will buy that dress for her and then resell it after its very limited use.

Questions? See Margie.

On my way to the podium!



Help 'lil Russ get to the podium—

Sell Tickets!

## Sponsors



SCCS is indebted to the following organizations for contributions and program ads. Please use their services, and make a point of saying, "I appreciate your support of the State College Choral Society."

### Perennial Donor

State College Woman's Club

### Matching Gifts

AT&T Foundation: \$500

United Technologies: \$25 to the D. Douglas Miller Fund

### In-Kind Contributors

Robert M. Sides Family Music Center: discount on music

Shaner Hotel Group/Hampton Suites in Williamsburg Square:  
complimentary hotel rooms for April concert soloists

Centre of the Web: SCCS web site

Fillmore General Store/Frank & Patti Hartranft: use of their  
strategically located yard for our yard sale

### Program Ads

Advanced Color Graphics

American Association of University Women

Albrecht Audiology

Ameriserv Financial

The Cat's Meow

Centre Insurance, Inc.

Gay D. Dunne, MD and James H. Dunne, MD

Furniture Medic

The Granary

Harmonic Progressions

Leitzinger Imports

Miska Jewelers

Mr. Tux

The Music Academy

Ritchey, Cox, Hollis, Mock, & Klein, PC

Tri-County Oral-Facial Surgeons, PC

Wienken & Associates

We also have reciprocal program ad agreements with the Nittany Valley Symphony and Pennsylvania Centre Chamber Orchestra.

**ELECTIONS** for new board members coming soon

**VOLUNTEER** to serve a three-year term

**VOTE** It's your ~~evie~~ choral duty



## ACAPPELLA



As I write this, our 2001-02 season is coming to a close. So much has happened in so short a time.

On behalf of the SCCS Board of Directors, I want to extend my thanks to you, the personnel of the State College Choral Society, for another great year of singing. This miracle of people with such diverse backgrounds gathering together to share in the joy of making music is something that never ceases to amaze me. Each of us in our sections, singing our own song, joining together to produce such a beautiful sound that in one way or another touches both our audience and us.

My personal thanks also go to those who serve with me on the Board. You are a divergent group of people who come together to make SCCS run smoothly. Thanks for your ideas, your challenges and your concerns as we've gone through our season and laid plans for our upcoming seasons.

To Janet Haner, Margie Wyand, and the rest of the SCCS staff, all I can say is that you people are amazing. Your talents, dedication and professionalism are astounding. Without you we would not be the organization that we are.

And to our Music Director, Russ Shelley. . . thank you again, sir, for another year of special moments. Together we've explored new music, re-visited old favorites, and laid the groundwork for exciting upcoming seasons.

Enjoy the off-season. Keep singing and keep sharing the miracle!

## Madrigal Dinner Manager position available

The Madrigal Singers and the SCCS Board are searching for a new person to serve as manager for the Madrigal Dinners held each December. Beverly (Balger) Sutley has done a superb job as the Madrigal Dinner manager for the past three years. However, due to mounting personal responsibilities and additional duties at work, Beverly has reluctantly submitted her resignation.

The Madrigal Dinner manager coordinates ticket sales and reservations for the Madrigal Dinners, makes facility arrangements for performance and rehearsal times, and coordinates the dinner menu. Traditionally, the Dinners have been held at the State College Elks Country Club. She or he works with the Madrigal Singers director and the SCCS general manager. This position is salaried by the SCCS Board.

Interested persons should contact any SCCS Board member for additional information.

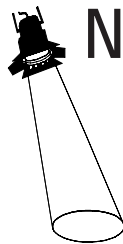
## Singer Notes



Monday's rehearsal really got me thinking about why singers do or do not blend. And it made me remember when I was a younger singer, singing with other people was the only time I got an opportunity to sing, and I was more concerned about enjoying myself than with blend. Plus, singing with other folks gave me "cover" and I felt I could finally sing without hesitation. But I didn't really stop to consider that I was probably doing more harm than good to the group as a whole by not blending. My education as a singer mostly comes from a solo experience, and blending just isn't an issue.

I have to honestly admit, what really turned the light bulb on was hearing the St. Olaf Choir. It brought me an awareness that I simply didn't have about what a choral group COULD sound like. It absolutely re-defined my expectations on what we could and should sound like. Singing with a group is not an opportunity to let it all hang out. It's a responsibility to work as a team, use discipline to create a unified voice, to sing more clearly when leadership is needed, and to hold back on phrases my voice simply can't negotiate effectively.

- Angela Taylor, Soprano



## New Kids on the Block

Introducing new members in SCCS

by Margie Wyand

### Sharon Shriver

Sharon grew up mainly in northern Virginia before attending Indiana University in Bloomington to pursue a degree with majors in both music and psychology. While at Bloomington, she focused on instrumental music and played flute in the Owensboro, Kentucky, Symphony Orchestra. Her graduate degree from Case Western Reserve is in biology. Sharon has lived in State College for four years, and teaches genetics and bioethics at Penn State. Her husband also teaches at Penn State; they have a six-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son. The rest of the family includes "Katie," the dog, and a cat, "Elphaba"—a name chosen because of Sharon's deep interest in the *Wizard of Oz*. Except for church choirs, Sharon has no previous choral experience, but she is delighted to be singing with SCCS and enjoys Russ' "fun" rehearsals and the Society's friendly members. Her hobbies include growing fruit trees and vegetables. She and her husband also enjoy orienteering, a sport which combines running and hiking skills with navigating and compass reading. The couple belongs to a club based in Harrisburg; state parks are often the venue for orienteering meets. Sharon will gladly explain the hobby to anyone who is interested. Please welcome one of our newest altos-- Sharon Shriver.

# Sale!

State College Choral Society Second Annual  
**YARD SALE**

Tentative date: Saturday, August 17, 2002

Save this date, and start saving items to sell: clean new or used clothing, collectibles, housewares, furniture, sports equipment, even massage chairs!

## Practice Ideas

*from an educator with little musical confidence and very little time*

Since my musical education is not as strong as many others in the SCCS, I've figured out some practice tricks that maximize my learning and minimize the "homework" time I spend preparing for our concerts. I share them here in hopes that others may get a couple of ideas from things that have worked well for me.

1. I can't imagine preparing for any concert without some sort of recording of the music. I've spent more hours practicing choral music behind the wheel of the car than anywhere else! I also listen to recordings with a Walkman while doing the laundry or other housework or while walking. There are at least 4 different kinds of recordings you can use. The first, of course, is a commercial recording. Favorite websites for tracking them down are: [www.cdnw.com](http://www.cdnw.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), [www.cdconnection.com](http://www.cdconnection.com). If you are hesitant about using your credit card online, you can call their 800 numbers to order. Many SCCS people are generous about sharing their recordings if you ask around, too.

2. The second kind of helpful recording you can make yourself during rehearsals using a Walkman-sized cassette dictation recorder. It's not heavy to hold up while you're singing, and it's not expensive. And, this recording will feature your part! I also like to hear myself on tape and assess my own vocal progress (for example, where I'm most likely to go flat or sing off the correct rhythm). Using cassettes posed a bit of a problem when we had a car with no cassette player, so I purchased a small inexpensive cassette player to put on the passenger seat. I selected one that's easy to manipulate the controls while driving.

3. It's easy to make your own practice tapes by simply taping your own at-home practice sessions, repetitive drilling and all, with any tape recorder. This really speeds up learning time. I don't have a piano, so I play my part with one finger on my little \$40 Radio Shack electronic keyboard while I sing into the mike. As you learn the pieces, it's sometimes helpful to make another one later with fewer stops and starts. These two recording sessions can be the only keyboard time I need to spend preparing for a concert if I listen to the tapes faithfully. (Yes, I even have a cassette player in the bathroom for—singing in the shower, of course!)

4. For some of the pieces we perform, you can purchase "Learning Tapes" and CDs from Hammond Music or another company in California. Margie has the 800 numbers. These have piano only and no text. I plan to experiment some time with making my own tape by singing the text over the Learning Tape using the cheap-o karaoke machine I've had for years, since their professional accompaniment sure beats my one-finger stuff.

5. It can be a surprising amount of benefit to look over the music with no keyboard around. I like to do this at bedtime for a few minutes, especially right after a rehearsal. This usually works best for things like clarifying text and rhythms, but a pitchpipe can come in handy at times like this; I asked for one a few Christmases ago. (It's probably starting to sound like I've got all kinds of varied equipment, but the expense over the last few years hasn't been great since I've been getting things gradually, and no worthwhile hobby isn't without its equipment expenses!)

I have found that when I use even just a couple of these labor un-intensive methods I end up having semi-memorized the music for my next concert without even trying to, which is like nothing else in boosting my none-too-great confidence in my ability to read and interpret the music while following the conductor's direction. I firmly believe both from being a (non-music) teacher and a learner that there is no substitute for repetition to gain accuracy.

*- A Concerned Choir Member*

9th Annual Nittany Valley

# HANDBELL FESTIVAL

## Concert

State College High School  
North Building Gymnasium

April 13, 2002

7:30 p.m.

*Cute little baby sizes available!*

**STATE COLLEGE  
CHORAL SOCIETY**

**Purple T-shirts**

**\$12.00**

Email your order to Janet: [jhaner@adelphia.net](mailto:jhaner@adelphia.net)

