

The State College Choral Society

NEWSLETTER

September 2003

Auditorium Named for Soprano Norene Ferris

R-B dedicates new auditorium

by Catherine Richards

At the Bolivar-Richburg senior high spring concert on May 22, the recently renovated auditorium was dedicated to **Norene Crowley Ferris**, retired Bolivar-Richburg Central School music teacher. The dedication plaque by the door to the auditorium states: "This auditorium is dedicated in honor of Norene Crowley Ferris, who for 30 years made our hills come alive with the sounds of music." Anyone who has attended a concert or performance presented by her students would readily agree that she inspired her students to give their very best performance.

Bolivar-Richburg's superintendent, Robert Mountain, spoke about Ferris' accomplishments during her 30 years of service to the community. She directed the junior and senior choirs, junior and senior ensembles, swing choir, dessert theaters, musicals, variety shows, in addition to preparing many of her students to perform in the solo festivals. Ferris was the president of the Allegany County Music Association for a number of years, chairperson for All-State Choir for four years, performed professionally in an opera theater in Michigan, and was called upon to perform as a guest conductor for All-County and All-State Choirs.

Mountain told the audience that at the time of Ferris' retirement, some of her students had wanted to honor her in some way. That was the beginning of the process to dedicate the recently renovated auditorium to Ferris, a place where she spent many hours inspiring her students to give their best performances. Mountain said that although Ferris retired in 2000 the dedication had to wait until the auditorium was ready.

During the dedication ceremony ... former students ... spoke to the audience of how Ferris had inspired and influenced them. Ferris' daughter and former student, Katie



Norene Ferris outside "her" auditorium. One of her students at a regional event in Bolivar was none other than a young Russ Shelley!

Ferris Alpigini, spoke of her mother's teaching as "not just dedication, but passion." During the concert, the students, most of them former students, dedicated two songs to Ferris. Ferris received standing ovations from the audience, which included members of Ferris' family administrators, teachers, staff, parents of the students in the choir and band, and members of the community.

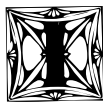
In responding to the recognition ... Ferris told of the numerous people over the years who helped her to put on the performances. She expressed her gratitude to those who helped, with time, energy and goods to make the performances possible. Ferris told the audience that Bolivar and Richburg were a unique combination of villages, and had produced many talented young people over the years that went to major competitions. Ferris said, "It's for the children this auditorium needs to be filled." That night the auditorium was filled, for the children ... and to honor her.

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ACAPPELLA

By Pat Daniels



have sung in choirs, choruses, chamber choirs, and chorales; even in a quartet that is best forgotten. But 1999 marked my first year in a choral society. Now in 2003, as I begin my term as chair, I'm starting to see what the "society" in "choral society" means.

It means an amazingly dedicated staff, people who work on SCCS business from their hospital beds, from their homes late at night and their offices early in the morning, performing the hundreds of tasks that keep our organization afloat. Like the legendary mail carrier (and better, in fact, than my mail carrier), they don't allow snow or rain, not to mention miles of hilly roads and multiple commitments, to stop them from giving our choral society their full attention.

The society also includes our board, twelve volunteers who work with the staff to represent the members and the community. The board plans for the future, monitors the present, and, not least, keeps the books and pays the bills. The fact that the SCCS is going into its 55th successful year as a musical organization is due in no small part to the dedication of our boards over the decades.

Most of all, our society means our members. So many people give of their time not only in rehearsals and performances, but in non-singing roles as well—rolling up their sleeves to carry risers, pinning up posters, reaching out to friends and strangers to sell tickets, advertising space, and even yard-sale knickknacks at ten for a dollar in the rain.

Our choral society doesn't exist in isolation. It's woven into the larger society of our families, our audiences, our supporters, our musical colleagues, our towns, and the worldwide community of music.

Those of us who believe that the point of being in a choral society is to experience the personal pleasure of singing great music are seeing only part of the picture. If that were true, why not just stay home and warble in the shower? It takes more than one voice to make a chorus, and it takes more than singing to keep a chorus going. For a choral society to work, it has to be a community, with each member lending his or her talents to the organization as a whole. As this year goes on, we'll be asking all of you to participate in ways that go beyond rehearsals—by reaching out to your neighbors to sell tickets, CDs, and ads, by getting to know new members and recruiting others, by volunteering special talents for committees, and simply by seeing your membership as a long-term commitment of more than your voice. That's what makes us a choral society, and not just a scattering of singers.

State College Choral Society
has a new phone number: 861-1277



Music in the Big Apple

So you pine for outstanding music? Visit the "Big Apple" (New York City) for opera and Broadway musicals! Here are some suggestions that your correspondents—on a tight budget—recently checked out in person.

Park your car for free at the Lewistown train station (522W off 322) and take Amtrak train #42, which leaves at 11:20 a.m. and arrives at Penn Station in New York at 4:45 p.m. Return by train #41, which leaves at 1:45 p.m. and gets into Lewistown at 7:20 p.m. We garnered half price tickets.

From Penn Station, take the 8th Avenue subway (perfectly safe) to the inexpensive Comfort Inn at Central Park West (31 West 71st Street). Albeit small, the hotel has unbelievably reasonable rates—well under \$100 for two, complete with continental breakfast. The walk to Lincoln Center and the Metropolitan Opera is only six short blocks. Purchase opera tickets beforehand on the Internet (www.metopera.org); ask for "family circle" (nosebleed section) at \$25 per ticket (honest!).

Everyone knows about TKTS, the kiosk at Broadway and 47th that sells half price Broadway tickets the day of the show. But—there's a better deal: try the Times Square Visitor's Center at 1560 Broadway (between 46th and 47th). There you will find "two-fers," coupons which you take directly to the theatre and redeem for any available seats at half price. TKTS is a gyp because they only sell the most expensive orchestra seats. With the two-fer, two people can attend a Broadway musical for around \$50 per person, whereas TKTS will cost you twice as much. Be forewarned!

For suggested musicals, read "The New Yorker" theatre section published daily in the *New York Times*. And for tourism and more outstanding advice, get Frommer's New York City guide.

— Marty and Margie Wyand

Notable (?) Quotes

(To a trumpet player): God tells me how the music should sound, but you stand in the way. — Arturo Toscanini

Of all noises, I think music is the least disagreeable. — Samuel Johnson

When you are listening to music it is better to cover your eyes than your ears. — José Bergamín

I can't listen to that much Wagner. I start getting the urge to conquer Poland. — Woody Allen

WHO'S WHO IN SCCS: Below are some of the folks who do the work in Choral Society, and their responsibilities.

Artistic Staff



Music Director

RUSS SHELLEY

- Chooses repertoire
- Plans and directs rehearsals and concerts
- Sets rehearsal schedule
- Conducts auditions for new members
- Selects and engages soloists, and facilitates procurement of orchestra personnel
- Orders choral and orchestra scores
- Serves as liaison with other community/University musical organizations
- Serves as highest authority for all things musical

Email: shelley@juniata.edu Phone: 643-9241 (h) 641-3473 (o)



Madrigal Director

NORENE FERRIS

- Plans and directs madrigal rehearsals and dinner performances
- Sets madrigal rehearsal schedule
- Consults with Music Director on auditions for madrigal members and music selection
- Works with madrigal dinner manager and madrigal singers to create and stage dinners

Email: ncf3@psu.edu Phone: (814) 238-6351 (h)



Accompanist

ASA CARNS

- Accompanies rehearsals
- Accompanies concerts as needed

Ace Volunteers



Keeper of the Lists

ELIZABETH SPECHT

- Maintains databases with mailing lists of past and current members, and friends of SCCS

SCCS is currently looking for a historian/archivist. If you are willing to take on this volunteer position, please see Pat Daniels.

Many thanks to Patty Zarkower for her years of service.



Administrative Staff



General Manager

JANET HANER

- Concert arrangements
- Tickets and reservations
- Publicity, including newsletter & website
- Concert programs and season brochure
- Rehearsal space arrangements
- Special fundraising and other projects as needed

Email: jhaner@adelphia.net Phone: 861-1277 (h) 865-0771 (o)



Chorus Manager

MARGIE WYAND

- Membership, including registration & rosters
- Supervision of section leaders
- Audition arrangements
- Announcements & information dissemination
- Monitors attendance and ensures outfit compliance
- Sales and distribution of tuxedos, folders, etc.
- Chorus trips and other projects as needed

Email: mjw2@psu.edu Phone: 234-8984 (h)



Director of Development

JOHN KRUMRINE

- Development to include corporate sponsorship and private contributions
- Grants: applications and reporting
- Special fundraising as needed

Email: jk4@verizon.net Phone: 867-2601



Madrigal Dinner Manager

RUSSELL BLOOM

- Madrigal Dinner arrangements
- Tickets and reservations for Madrigals

Email: RussellBloom@psu.edu Phone: 863-1118



Sales Manager

NANCY WILSON

- Sales & distribution of scores for singers
- Sales & distribution of concert tapes & CDs

Email: naw6@psu.edu Phone: 466-2002 (h)

The Board of Directors

The State College Choral Society is governed by a Board of Directors, which manages the administrative and fiscal activities of the Society. While the Music Director is responsible for all music decisions, the Board sets policy for SCCS activities. The Board consists of twelve members, each elected to a three-year term. Four members are elected each year. You need not be a member of the Choral Society to serve on the Board. The Board meets the third Wednesday of every month in Room 403 of the Kern Building on the Penn State campus. Meetings, except where evaluations of salaried personnel are to take place, are open to members of the Choral Society. Listed below are the current Board members.

Telephone key: (h) = home (o) = office



PAT DANIELS, Chair
 2002-05, 1st Term
 Email: pdaniels117@adelphia.ne
 Phone: (814) 861-5402 (h)

BILL HESSERT, Vice Chair
 2003-04, (completing vacated term)
 Email: sw4@psu.edu
 Phone: 231-1213 (h) 863-4325 (o)



JULIE PETERSON, Treasurer
 2000-03, 1st Term
 Email: jjp5@psu.edu
 Phone: 238-6233 (h)

EMILY GREGORY, Secretary
 2003-06, 1st Term
 Email: egregoryjv@yahoo.com
 Phone: (814) 238-8769 (h)



NANETTE BOHREN
 2001-04, 2nd Term
 Phone: 466-6264 (h)

RALPH LOCKLIN
 2003-06, 1st Term
 Email: rhl@psu.edu
 Phone: (814) 355-8864 (o)



PEGGY HALLECK
 2003-06, 2nd Term
 Email: msh4@psu.edu
 Phone: 692-2104 (h) 863-1767 (o)

ANDREW REVELL
 2002-05, 1st Term
 Email: revell@psu.edu
 Phone: (814) 357-1179 (h)



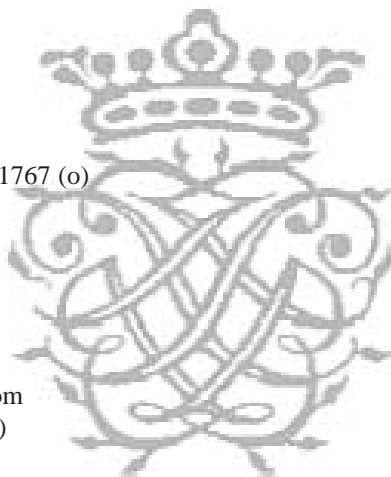
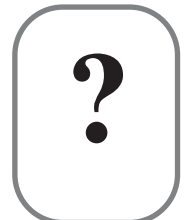
PATRICIA KELLEY
 2003-06, 1st Term
 Email: norwin304@aol.com
 Phone: (814) 237-6355 (h)

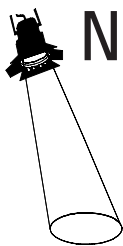
NONA UHLER
 2002-05, 1st Term
 Email: muset@aol.com
 Phone: (814) 355-3264 (h)



PHIL KLEIN
 2002-05, 1st Term
 Email: pak11@psu.edu
 Phone: 238-8570 (h)

THIS COULD BE YOU!
 We need one more person to replace a board member who is unable to serve— see Pat Daniels if you are interested.








New Kids on the Block

Introducing new members in SCCS
by Margie Wyand

Pat Daniels

I am very pleased to introduce to you the newly elected Chair of the SCCS Board of Directors. While she technically doesn't qualify as a new member (this is her fifth year singing with us), I thought it might be a good idea for you to learn a bit about her. She is one of those quiet, loyal, and unassuming members whose leadership qualities were readily identified once she became a Board member last year. Pat was born in Pennsylvania, but grew up in Greenwich and Westport, Connecticut, and, like many of us, choral singing began at an early age and has become a pretty constant part of her life. She graduated with a degree in English from William and Mary in Virginia and, after a brief stay working in Wisconsin, moved to Washington DC, where she worked as an editor for *National Wildlife* magazine and then for Time Life Books as head of the children's books division. It was in DC that she met her husband, Jim Tybout, who is currently an economics professor at Penn State and has an office next to our very own Phil Klein. Pat and Jim have two boys, Andy, age 13, and Sam, age 10. Pat currently works out of her home doing freelance editing and writing for magazines, newspapers, and book publishers, including the book division of *National Geographic*. While she enjoyed singing in the Bach Chamber Choir in Milwaukee, her most memorable musical moment was singing in the Georgetown Community Chorale at their annual Christmas concerts in the Kennedy Center. In her small amount of spare time, Pat enjoys reading.

News & Notes

-  Thanks to Margie Wyand, Dan Moerdyk, Ed Novitsky, Morgen Hummel, Martha Hummel, Norene Ferris, Gail Ritchey, Sharon Shriver, Winnie O'Halloran, and Steve Houtz for answering phones for the **WPSX Pledge Break** on August 13. The evening was a great success—at one point, Norene sang a high C off camera, while local radio personality Jeff Brown mugged on camera as if HE were singing! The show, complete with our volunteers, was re-run on the following Saturday night. The Pledge Breaks provide great free publicity for our organization.
-  Many thanks to the folks who made **Preregistration Night** on Monday, August 25th possible. Led by Chorus Manager Margie Wyand, the team included Treasurer Julie Peterson and her assistant for the night, Nona Uhler; and Sales Manager Nancy Wilson, with her helper, Sig Byers. They registered and supplied music to 110 members that night! This greatly alleviates lines at sign-up tables the first night of rehearsal, although another 50-plus folks joined after preregistration, putting our current membership at more than 160 singers.
-  Yahoo!! Our **Yard Sale** has now netted more than \$1400!! The Nordic Trak and double stroller both sold, and there is more to come from sales in the *Bargain Sheet*. We still have an Alpine car CD player, seven ironstone plates, a pair of silver plated candlesticks, two dining room chairs, an ugly red rug (12' x 12') and (a late donation) a DVD player. See Janet if you are interested in any of these items, which are available at GREAT prices. **And start saving stuff for next year!**



What a joy to sing Vivaldi, Handel, and Rutter after my loooooonng summer. My heart is full of gratitude for the cards, flowers, calls, and visits I received from all of you during this difficult time. The prayers and good thoughts were an important contribution to my recovery; the good news is I am cancer-free and require no follow-up treatment. Thank heavens I am back to my normal life and things I love, like the Choral Society.

Speaking of things I love, what do you think of our new rehearsal space? Good Shepherd is indeed a beautiful church with many advantages. The large foyer, or "gathering space," is conducive to social interaction before and after rehearsals. The Church, built in 1992-93, features a large bas relief sculpture carved in the brick on the exterior wall facing the road. Other points of interest:

The Baptismal Font, when you first enter the sanctuary, is large enough for baptism by immersion, and has constantly flowing or "living" water.

The Wall Hanging behind the altar depicts saints as if they are observing and participating in the activities from a balcony. The appliqué was designed and completed by members of the Parish.

A smaller worship space, the Chapel of the Word of God, is to your right as you enter the building. There you will find the Pregnant Madonna, a bronze statue commissioned by the Church as a presentation of Mary, pregnant with the Word of God.

For more information, there is a "Walking Tour Booklet" and a separate booklet about the wall hanging in the foyer.



From the Podium . .

By Russell Shelley

Teachers are faced with the perennial question of whether they will teach toward the lowest or highest common denominator. Pace, content, sequence and assessment are all determined by the sometimes conscious and sometimes subconscious decision regarding which denominator guides the experience. Risks of loss abound on each side. Teach toward the highest common denominator and risk losing those needing a slower more comprehensive approach. Teach toward the lowest common denominator and risk losing those needing a more challenging approach. In courses where the teacher/professor serves as a gate keeper of the profession/subject matter, the tendency may be to teach toward the highest common denominator, thereby weeding out those not ready, willing or able to meet the demands of the subject. This promotes quality and preserves integrity. In a course where the teacher/professor

serves as a generator of interest in the profession/subject matter, the tendency may be to teach toward the lowest common denominator, thereby increasing general interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. This promotes understanding and preserves interest.

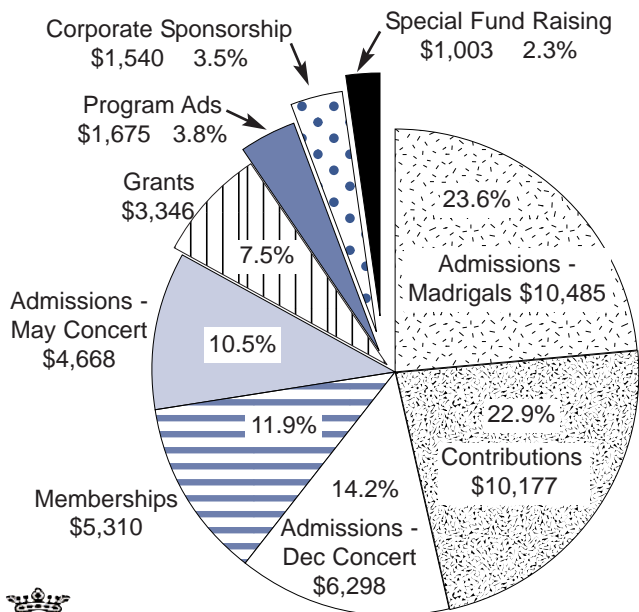
As is so often the case, the theoretical dichotomy melts in the face of reality. The choice in Choral Society is not between the highest (ability to sight-read Webern in four languages) and lowest (I've fallen and I can't get up) denominators. The reality in Choral Society is the magical blend of varying degrees of readiness, willingness, and abilities that all combine to achieve the whole. As choral music gatekeepers, we are called to reach our highest potential. As choral music stewards, we are called to increase enthusiasm in our audiences. As choral music lovers, we are called to nurture each member. Together, we "create the chorus" and find the patience to teach the willing but not yet able, the courage to inspire the able but not yet willing, and the wisdom to utilize the ready, willing, and able. The question is not about highest and lowest. The answer is to utilize the highs and lows to achieve the goal.

Show Me the Money

By Janet Haner

As a Choral Society member, you may wonder why selling program ads is important or why dues were raised this year. Below are two pie charts showing SCCS income and expenses for 2003-04. If you add up the amounts, you will find that we took in slightly more than we spent, according to these graphs. However, these charts do not include the purchase and sale of music scores, CDs and tapes, dresses and tuxes, folders, and other things that should not add costs but invariably do. Please note, that while Madrigals bring in the most money, with the addition of the instrumentalists, they cost well over \$9,000. And the May concert, once you add in instrumentalists and soloists, actually cost \$3,975. Operating expenses include postage, copies, telephone, website, bonding, insurance, and other things needed to run an organization such as ours.

Income



Expenses

