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## *On having trees fall on me, and Frances George*

*by Leora Schwitters, WA ACDA Treasurer*



Leora Schwitters

Yes, I walked away with just a bump on the head and a few scratches and aches after trees fell right on top of me during a trail run on Tiger Mountain. My husband and I started the run during halftime of the final Seahawks game of the year. After five minutes running up the trail in a light rain, a loud CRACK overhead struck terror in us both, and the clear thought that there was no way to know which way to go sent my husband flying down the trail and me continuing up it. Just a few seconds later my body somehow sensed that it was the target and flattened itself as low as possible on the trail. Three 12 to 20 inch conifers uphill and behind us had been pulled out of the wet ground and came down across the trail where I lay. When the largest trunk just ticked my head and stopped and the other trunks landed over my legs a moment later, I found just enough space underneath the mess for me to crawl out in one piece! It all happened so fast. How had I known to drop just in time? Instinct, I guess, or my guardian angel taking care of me.

As one might expect, events like these can induce thoughts of mortality. There are so many things I've yet to do, most notably to hold my new grand-daughter, Lily, born recently in Wyoming. There's so much more I want to do, and I am so gratefully blessed to have more time.

I had spent the two days prior to the event working on an interesting project. Joel Ulrich, WA ACDA Music & Worship R & S Chair, was contacted this fall regarding a large private choral library that needed to be removed from the house of a member of Vicky Thomas's Seattle First Baptist Church who had passed away. His wife, Frances George, had died several years prior, and her library had been left untouched in the house. The music is stamped with "Seattle Mastersingers," "Seattle Chorale," "Leonard Moore Chorale," and the "Jubilee Singers."

Not totally understanding the size of the collection, Joel agreed to pick it up and I agreed to store the music, thinking I'd take it into the NW ACDA booth during the MENC conference and let people peruse and take what they wished. We ended up with 24 individual cardboard file cabinet drawers in my garage—way too much for that idea.

After throwing away photocopies, dittos, single copies, old catalogues and music that was too deteriorated to use again, I pared the library down to 16 drawers (= 4 cabinets) of catalogued multiple copies of some fine music,

including some large works in pristine condition with 25-30 copies each. It just seemed obscene to think that all this would have been tossed in the dumpster had Vicky not rescued it. As I went through the drawers, I was continually struck by the meticulous care Ms. George had put into this collection. All the 300+ folders of octavos alphabetized, the music in each folder stamped with several different stamps or typed on individually, and all in numerical order.

Who was this woman? A quick Google search on the choral groups stamped showed that Leonard Moore founded the Seattle Mastersingers and the Seattle Chorale which now has become the Seattle Symphony Chorus, and that the recently departed Raymond C. Jones sang in the Chorale and Mastersingers. His obituary noted: "He was preceded in death by his wife, Frances George Jones, a noted Northwest contralto." (Seattle Times Oct. 31, 2010.) That's all I could find.

How are these two stories related? I think it's simply that, had I not survived the accident, I would rest easier knowing that projects which I have invested so much of myself in over the years would not just be abandoned and forgotten in a basement or just thrown out without some effort to honor that commitment. It is important to me, to Joel, and to Vicky that we find a good home(s) for this music so lovingly cared for by this diligent woman from the past. I've asked our WA ACDA board to brainstorm ways to disperse it, perhaps using it as a fundraiser of some sort? If you'd like to take a look at the inventory, email me and I'll send you the spreadsheet to look over. If you have ideas of what to do with this collection, please let me know!

*Addendum: You will be happy to know that Joseph Crnko, director of the Seattle Symphony Chorale, took possession of the library in April. It was exactly the right place for it come to rest, as it returned full circle to its rightful owners. Thanks to those of you who contacted me with suggestions. FYI: "The Seattle Symphony Chorale, the official chorus of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, was founded as the Seattle Chorale in 1953 by Leonard Moore. The Chorale began its formal affiliation with the Symphony in 1976 and now consists of approximately 120 volunteer singers chosen by audition." (from their website).*