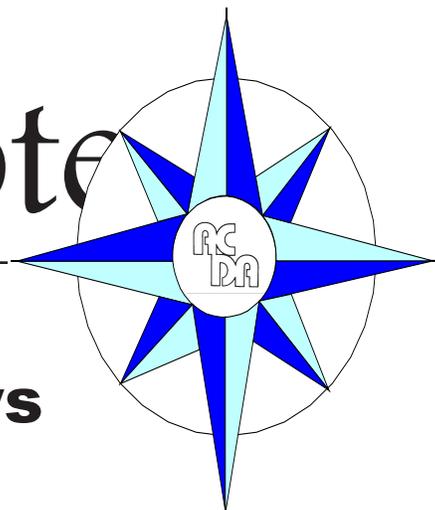


# Northwest Note

Newsletter for the NW Division - The American Choral Directors Association  
Volume VIII, No. 2

Winter - 2000



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## NW-ACDA News Summary

10-February - 2000

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### Convention 2000, coming right up!

This issue has numerous references to our NW convention scheduled for March 8-11, 2000 in Seattle. You'll find a registration form on page 18 and information on hotels on page 8. Please don't miss this great chance for renewal and the sheer joy of hearing superb choirs perform in outstanding acoustical settings.

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### New internet site for NW-ACDA

You can now find what you need to know about NW-ACDA activities, contact leadership, as well as locate links to other important choral sites at [www.nwacda.com](http://www.nwacda.com), the new net address for this division of ACDA. (page 4)

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### Confession and repentance

This article which speaks of the huge impact teachers have on public perception of education was postponed from last issue to accommodate a vital full page ad which came in at the last moment. (page 19)

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### Organizing your organization

President Connie Branton offers some personal observations on how to organize a church choir into a well oiled machine. Some good ideas here. Take a look. (page 3)

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### Just intonation, a new, old, way to tune

Paul French (page 6)

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### A Washington welcome to Convention 2000

Richard Nance (page 9)

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### What "goes" on your stage? Rosemary Bird (page 10)

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### Montana's International Choral Festival

Dean Peterson (page 13)

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### Basic conducting revisited - Kevin Brower (page 16)

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### The key is passion - Pat Patton (page 17)

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### Scott Dean's sacred music picks (Page 14)

Once again Scott Dean gives us some absolute gems, timely and tasteful sacred literature that may meet your needs for the season.

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Peery Co. Ad

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Connie Branton

# Organizing an organization

*An idea or two on helping your choir operate more efficiently*

*by Connie Branton, NW President*

Last week I had a meeting with several selected people in my adult church choir. We are calling this group a Steering Committee. In the past, this choir has functioned with officers and sectionheads but without an oversight committee such as this. The Steering Committee will be a leadership group, a sounding board for all that we do.

These types of groups can be invaluable or can, in fact, be a nightmare. I've experienced both scenarios. My choir president and I met to discuss this reorganization prior to the first Steering Committee meeting. We talked of the attributes that such leaders should have if they were to be effective.

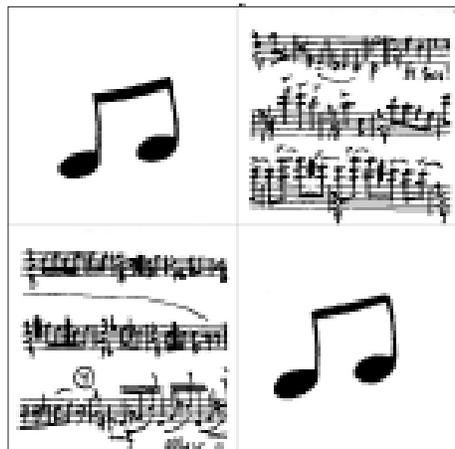
1. The dedication of the member to the choir. Is this person committed to the best interest of the choir?
2. The "respect-quotient" held by that person by other members of the choir. Do others listen to and value the opinions of this person? Will choir members find this individual easy to talk to?
3. The ability of the individual to keep himself/herself organized to get a job done. Movers and shakers get things done.
4. The ability to communicate calmly and rationally.
5. The ability to stay cool under pressure. Choir tours, fund raisers, and the meeting of deadlines can be stressful for some people.
6. The ability to delegate jobs and to choose the right people to help.
7. The ability of this leader to work as part of a team and to accept the decision of the majority.

My choir now has a Steering Committee of ten people who, we think, fit this profile. They are a cross-section of the choir, both in age and in years of choral experience.

We're also working on a choir manual for all the activities we undertake. (Yes, I'm talking about a church choir!)

**Our Northwestern ACDA leadership** is also representative of these traits of leadership. I have been able to count on the officers, R&S chairs, committee chairs of honor choirs, and convention activity chairs. These people have worked tirelessly in making this convention beneficial to all who attend. Seattle 2000 will be a great convention! You'll hear superb performing groups in superior performance venues. You'll find informative interest sessions. That leadership team will be available at all times as a source of information for you.

Many thanks to all who have been involved in putting this convention together. These people join me in the hope you will enjoy all that Seattle and the NW-ACDA has to offer. See you March 8-11 for a great time of music and fellowship!



## NW-ACDA has a new internet website

Check it out! It's located at [www.nwacda.com](http://www.nwacda.com). Should be an easy address to find and remember. Bookmark it for future reference. It's also reachable by link from the national ACDA homepage.

So far the content includes pages on leadership and how to contact these people, information on the Seattle 2000 convention, including how to book your hotel and even a registration form which you can print out and mail to David Anderson (if it's not too late for pre-registration by the time you read this), a page with a couple of articles from last issue of NW-Notes, and a page with links to other important choral sites.

All members should check the site for accuracy. You will note that all leaders and R&S chairpeople have an e-mail address which is clickable for ease in contacting them. Another service redirects mail to the correct address. For example, if you wanted to reach Connie Branton, our NW President, you could simply type: [branton@nwacda.com](mailto:branton@nwacda.com). This method uses a redirection service to send the message to Connie's actual e-mail address.

Members should feel free to contact "webmaster" Karen/Howard Meharg with URL's you feel should be added to the links page. The only NW state site listed, or that we know of that has a site, is Washington. Any conventional choral related site is welcome. We urge colleges, for example, to give us link information so that prospective choral students might take a look. *Send your name and e-mail address if you would like to be listed in the membership directory now "under construction."* We also welcome your suggestions on making the site even more useful to you.



### Look it Up Books for the Choral Director

by Debra Spurgeon, Oklahoma ACDA,  
(reprinted from  
*Sooner Style*, January, 2000)

As choral directors we are expected to be authorities on a broad range of topics. No one can know everything, but we should have a variety of resources at our fingertips on topics such as voice pedagogy, literature, performance practices, pronunciation, translations, and choral administration. Books are still my preferred medium. I would rather hold a book than look at a computer screen any day, even though I find myself searching through online resources like [www.choralnet.org](http://www.choralnet.org) more and more. The following books are ones that I use for reference and highly recommend to you:

**Cooksey, J. M. (1992).** *Working with the Adolescent Voice*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

*This book is a must-have for anyone who teaches middle school or junior high. Cooksey describes the male change process, discusses ranges in each stage of the change process, and suggests literature and exercises for voice development.*

**Collins, Don. (1993).** *Teaching Choral Music*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

*This is a good resource for choral administration. Collins addresses very practical issues such as discipline in the music classroom, teaching music literacy, and preparing a music budget. The book contains a listing of suggested choral literature for middle school/junior high and senior high.*

**Jeffers, Ron. (1988).** *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume 1: Sacred Latin Texts*

*An excellent resource for translations of most of the sacred Latin texts we sing. Jeffers gives a literal and poetic translation for each text of the Ordinary and Proper of the mass, the Requiem Mass, and many other texts.*



Central Holidays Ad-  
vertisement (Full page)

# Feeling the numbers

by Paul French, OR-ACDA President

A couple of years ago I attended a weekend conference of former students of Rod Eichenberger at which Dr. Don Brinegar presented a lecture/demonstration on just intonation which has dramatically changed my perception of harmony and led to the single biggest improvement in my choir's performance in many years. Although I had known the term just intonation since my undergraduate days at Berkeley, it had always seemed to me to be more of a mathematical, theoretical construct than a real-life musical system, the kind of thing that only heartless academics cared about - a sort of "music for the acoustically inquisitive." And if my understanding of the theories of the system was, shall we say, hazy, I had absolutely no clue of how to apply them to my own music making. Perhaps a few of you have felt the same way. If so, help has arrived in the form of a wonderfully practical book by W. A. Mathieu, called "Harmonic Experience" (Inner Traditions International, ISBN 0-89281-560-4). Although Mathieu has obviously done the math, the beauty of the book for me is that it takes an experiential, basically feelings-driven approach to tuning which allows the acoustically challenged of us to develop hard answers to our choir's intonation problems.

Mathieu believes that the fastest way to improve intonation is to concentrate on the physical sensation of being in tune, which he refers to as "feeling the numbers." Sing, listen, and feel at the same time. Begin by singing a unison with a fixed pitch. He recommends using a droning string instrument, but I have found that the piano works just as well. Slip into the sound of the the fixed pitch and make it your own. Next, move on to octaves, singing the octave "as if you were the overtone of the fundamental" (this suggestion to my choir produced immediate results). Try to hear and feel the octave's 2:1 ratio. You can actually hear it in the air if you listen hard enough. So far we are on fairly familiar ground, as the octaves on the piano are mostly in tune; in fact, everything else has been sacrificed for this. Where just intonation begins to dramatically change from the piano's tempered scale is in the tuning of fifths and thirds.

Tuning the perfect fifth is the basis of just intonation. Do it by feel; however, it may be useful for you to know that you will be acoustically in tune when you are two cents sharp of the same pitch on the piano (each half-step on the piano is divided into 100 cents, with two cents the smallest perceivable unit). Although two cents would appear to be an almost indistinguishable unit, the difference in feel is immense. When sung correctly, this interval seems quite tall and the resultant sound has a shimmer of energy. If that is too subjective for you, try going for a perfect 3:2 ratio. It might be worth mentioning here that much of the pre-Baroque repertoire benefits greatly from these taller fifths, as do the many quartal compositions of this century.

After tuning unisons, octaves and fifths, tune major thirds. Those of you who have been taught to keep the thirds high are in for a bit of a shock. Major thirds, in relation to the piano, are fourteen cents low! (Minor thirds are sixteen cents sharp.) Resist the temptation to immediately feel that the just intonation third is too low. You have accumulated a considerable amount of tempered intonation memory. Concentrate on feeling the "in-tuneness" of the lower third. When it finally feels right, and it may take some time, juxtapose it with the piano's third and you will be shocked with how harsh and out-of-tune the piano sounds.

(continued on page 7)



## Minor changes and additions to convention program announced

Karen Fulmer, Convention Program Chairperson, reports to NW-Notes the following changes in the convention program from the information given in the October edition of the newsletter:

Sue Williamson will be replacing her "Strategies for Presenting Collaborative Performances" interest session with one entitled "Positively Adolescent." This will be Friday at 1:30 in the Chapel at First Presbyterian Church, the convention site.

Saturday morning's session with Maurice Skones and the Arizona Choir, as mentioned on page 7, is an addition to the previously announced program.

Elektra and Northwest Girlchoir will present a recital on Saturday afternoon, 5:00-6:00 p.m., in the Nordstrom Recital Hall in Benaroya Hall. Each group will sing a 30 minute program, showcasing the individual talents of each choir. Both of these groups are still scheduled to appear in the Saturday evening final concert at Benaroya along with the Seattle Men's Chorus, directed by Dennis Coleman.

Malecki Music  
Ad here



# Just intonation (Paul French)

(continued from page 6)

Consider the following ramifications in the circle of fifths: G-flat, D-flat, A-flat, B-flat, F, C, G, D, A, E, B, F#. If we take C as our central pitch, every move to the right of C increases by two cents; thus, G is two cents sharp; D, tuned now to G, the note immediately to its left, is four cents sharp. Going the opposite direction, every pitch is two cents flat. Thus, we find that G-flat is twelve cents flat of C, and F# is twelve cents sharp. The accumulated differences between G-flat and F# is twenty-two cents.

Now here is where it starts to get really interesting. Let's add a second circle of fifths a third above the first. I'll call this the circle of thirds. As before, movements to the immediate right and left remain movements of two cents sharp and flat respectively, and movements up are fourteen cents flat.

B-flat, F,	C,	G,	D,	A, E, B, F#, C#, G#, D#, A#
G-flat, D-flat, A-flat, E-flat, B-flat, F, C, G, D, A, E, B, F#				

Here is how to use the above chart to tune a C major scale in just intonation: First, tune by fifths (movement to the right) and when necessary, tune to thirds (movement above). When more than one tuning is possible, choose the simplest tuning note within the C major scale. Following this system, the pitch D is tuned as the second fifth above C and is, therefore, four cents sharp. The E is tuned from the circle of thirds above C and is fourteen cents flat. The F we take from the left of C and is two cents flat. The G is one fifth above C and is therefore two cents sharp. The A is tuned as the third of F and is sixteen cents flat. The B is tuned as the third of G and is fourteen cents flat. Immediately you will notice that the two pitches that most of us were trained to sing high, the major third and the leading tone, should really both be low in relation to the piano! And the resultant scale is full of detail and sensations unknown to the tempered scale, which now seems a bit dull and washed out.

Turning our scale back into chords produces a new surprise. Since perfect fifths ride high and major thirds ride low (relative to the piano), the same individual pitch will tune differently depending on its chord function. For example, the pitch D will be two cents sharp when it is the fifth of a G major chord but fourteen cents flat when it is the third of a B-flat major chord. Knowledge of your individual place in the chord (root, third, or fifth) now becomes an important teaching and tuning tool. What a fun, creative knowledge for our singers to have.

There is much more we can do with this chart of just tunings. We can add other circles of thirds above the C axis, each dropping an additional fourteen cents, or we could add circles of thirds below the C axis, each of these going fourteen cents sharp. Seeing the relationship of pitches on such a chart has been especially helpful to me with compositions in an expanded harmonic vocabulary (Lauridsen's ninth and eleventh chords tune brilliantly in this system). Instead of simply looking for the harmonic root of a chord, I now look for the tuning note, which will be the lowest pitch to the left on the chart. Try it, it works. Why does it work? The mathematics of acoustics. How does it sound? Beautiful.

Which leads me to a final comment. It is not about complexity; rather, it is a return to the often untapped beauty within simple intervals. A major triad, sung absolutely in tune, is a wondrous and powerful thing. We have all experienced this now and then. Just intonation is a tool towards creating that feeling more consistently. Have a good winter, and I hope that your choirs grow ever more

## Maurice Skones in session at convention



Maurice Skones to conduct session at the NW-ACDA convention in Seattle, Saturday, March 11, 2000

Maurice Skones, from the University of Arizona, is a recent addition to the NW-ACDA Convention program. Dr. Skones will present a session called "Healthy Singing Habits for an Expressive Choir" at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 11.

Skones, who is well known in the Northwest for his work at Pacific Lutheran University in the 70's, retired for a short period of time from the U of A, but in the fall of 1997, returned to resume his former responsibilities for graduate choral conducting and to conduct the Arizona Choir.

During his forty-seven years as an administrator, teacher, and conductor in higher education and the public schools, Dr. Skones has been mentor to scores of conductors who serve the profession today. During the same time his choirs have received international recognition for excellence in performance.

**Support our Advertisers. They are supporting ACDA!**

**Northwest Notes** 

The official newsletter of the NW-ACDA is published three times a year, October, February, and May. Comments or suggestions, contact: Howard Meharg, Editor  
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# Convention Hotel Information

## **Pacific Plaza Hotel**

400 Spring Street

Price: \$86.00 (ACDA rate)

Phone: (800) 426-1165 or  
(206) 623-2059

(Older, downtown hotel only 3 blocks from convention site (First Presbyterian Church). Small but clean rooms, newly remodeled)

## **Warwick Hotel**

401 Lenora Street

Price: \$115 single/double, \$20 each additional person  
Phone: (800) 426-9280 or (206) 443-4300

(Hotel for junior high and high school honor choirs and conventioners. High-rise, completely remodeled, very nice. Fifteen walking minutes from convention site.)

## **Ramada Downtown**

2200 5th Ave.

Price: \$85 one bed, \$89 two beds

Phone: (800) 272-6232 or  
(206) 441-9789

(Sixteen blocks from convention site. Hotel for Children's Honor Choir and directors.)

Reminder: There is free city bus service in the downtown core for ACDA members. Honor choir members will be transported by charter bus to and from their rehearsal sites.

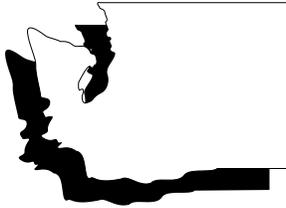
Sheet Music Service

DJ Records



# Washington welcomes NW ACDA to Seattle

by Richard Nance, WA-ACDA President



On behalf of my Washington colleagues, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you who will be attending the Seattle convention March 8-11. We are proud to be the hosts for this conference, and hope that you will enjoy your stay in the Emerald City. Connie Branton and Karen Fulmer have worked very hard to put together what I feel is

the finest NWACDA convention in many years. There will be numerous memorable performances by some of the finest choirs our nation has to offer.

Seattle, of course, offers every amenity one could desire from a major city - great restaurants, excellent hotel accommodations and shopping, but is also offers the beauty of the Puget Sound region, and not everyone can lay claim to that feature. (We promise it won't rain, but even if it does, remember that it's just part of the "Seattle experience!")

I want to mention another aspect of this convention that may have not been given its proper due, and that is the outstanding performance venues that have been selected. The new Benaroya Hall has already gained national acclaim as one of the country's finest concert facilities, but I believe that First Presbyterian Church is an equally impressive venue for choral music. At Pacific Lutheran University we do six performances of our Christmas Festival each year, the last of which has been held at "First Pres" for many years. It is always my favorite for that program. The building features a long nave with a very high ceiling and enough hard surfaces to provide a nice, warm acoustic - live, but not overtly so. It is also a very attractive room, pleasing aesthetically. Since coming to the Northwest in 1992, it is the finest church facility my choir has sung in. I am sure that conductors, choirs and audiences alike will enjoy the performances that will be held there. Another facility on the program that is not to be missed is the beautiful St. James Cathedral. This building underwent a major facelift a few years ago, and the result is truly stunning. The musical staff of St. James always presents liturgical music at its highest level, and the room serves to enhance the senses aurally, visually, and spiritually.

What an exciting time lies ahead of us! I hope you'll make time while your are here to take in the jazz night cruise, hit Niketown, and catch a salmon at the fishmonger down at Pike Place Market. Again, welcome to Seattle. Enjoy!

## Jazz Night Concerts on Board

*Soundsation, Olympic H. S. Vocal Jazz, and Just 4 Kicks featured Wednesday night on Argosy Puget Sound Cruise*

The first *Convention 2000* event occurs Wednesday evening, March 8 on board Argosy cruises of Puget Sound and Lake Washington. You'll have a fine night of jazz music with *Soundsation, the Olympic H. S. Vocal Jazz Ensemble,* and the professional group *Just 4 Kicks.*

Olympic's sixteen vocalists and rhythm section is an auditioned group that rehearses four times a week at 7 a.m. and one night a week for two hours. The group is directed by Tom McVicker. Olympic is one of three high schools in the S. Kitsap school district and is located in Silverdale, Washington.

*Soundsation* is the pride of Edmonds Community College, dedicated to

(continued on page 11)

It's not too late to register and to arrange for hotel accommodations for the Convention 2000 in Seattle.

Note the registration form on page 18.

You can also find a registration form on the NW-ACDA internet site at: [www.nwacda.com](http://www.nwacda.com).

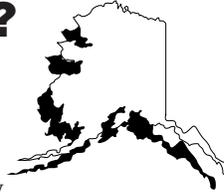
Hotel rooms are available at the hotels listed on the previous page, or you may wish to arrange your own housing at other hotels or motels in the Seattle area and commute to the convention venues.

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## What “goes” and what doesn’t on your performance stage?

by Rosemary Bird, AK-ACDA President



When I was a school kid in the early 60’s, piano lessons seemed a fairly common thing among my classmates. Even in a small rural community in Minnesota, there were two or three piano teachers who had long lists of students every day after school. My guess is that, normally, twenty to twenty-five percent of my classmates were engaged in private lessons in dance and music.

Last week was the annual week of auditions for our talent show. The show features students from the local elementary school, grades 3-5, and our middle school, grades 6-8. Traditionally, the program is whittled down to ten acts from each school, and along with student emcees and adult guest entertainment, it has been a growing success. This will be our eleventh year.

Each day I raced to the nearby school to hold auditions during the lunch hour. I hoped for a good turnout and new faces to delight me. In this regard, I was not disappointed. Thirty-six acts auditioned and the kids are always cute. Here’s the rest of the story: 23 acts were lip-synchs. With the exception of two, these were either ill-chosen or lacking in choreography interesting enough to maintain the audiences’ attention.

As for the other thirteen, well, let’s see. . .there were two girls who sang “America,” a trio of beginning band instrumentalists who played “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore,” and a boy who did Pokemon imitations. Want to buy a ticket?



Seriously, the remainder did show originality and creativity. There was the boy who came in with his costume and piano accompaniment book to “You’ve Got to Pick a Pocket or Two,” and sang the closing high F like a Broadway star; and the girl who recited from memory three Shel Silverstein poems, bringing them to life with her expressions and gestures; and the boy who wrote and sang the unbelievably clever parody about Garfield to a rock song, which his dad accompanied on guitar.

What’s my point? First, kids aren’t coming to us with the benefit of outside guidance and enrichment in the arts like they once were. The reasons are many. Parents both work, there aren’t enough private teachers, or there is simply an unwillingness to invest the time it takes to grow into a musician. We also have the competition of video games and a sports overload. Nevertheless, we are still called to be teachers, and to see in the individual  
(continued on page 11)



## What “goes” on your stage?

(continued from page 10)

that spark of imagination no one else may see.

Second, we have to set the guidelines about what goes and what doesn't in performances for which we are responsible. Students who are on stage in this year's talent show will be my “surrogate models,” and give a kind but clear signal as to the type of selection and the degree of preparation necessary to be on stage.

Do these concepts apply to the soloists we select for our concerts, too? Of course. Any student who is highlighted needs to communicate musicianship and dedication (preparedness) to his peers, exemplifying a standard of performance which ultimately is our own. These standards will go far beyond the moment for aspiring students, and far beyond the walls for the support of our program.

P. S.: Don't worry about all those little lip-synchers. They all get a free ticket to the show for trying out; that way, they'll know how to prepare for next year.

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## Look it Up!

(continued from page 4)

**McKinney, J. (1982).** *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*, Nashville: The Broadman Press.

*Based on the physician's model of observe, diagnose, and prescribe, this book is well-organized and easy to use. For example: look up “breathy tone” and you will find several suggestions for correcting excessive breathiness.*

**Miller, Richard. (1986).** *The Structure of Singing*, New York: Schirmer Books.

*One of the most comprehensive books available on the physiology, technique, and artistry of singing. With complete anatomical diagrams, this book contains information every vocal music teacher should know.*

## Jazz night at the convention

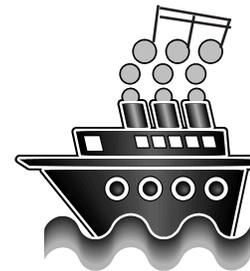
(continued from page 9)

the advancement of America's only true artform - jazz! This group was founded in 1974 by Frank DeMiero and has a long heritage of preserving the integrity of vocal jazz education. It is composed of 16 singers, piano, drums and support personnel. Sound-sation has toured extensively, including show-stopping performances at the prestigious *Concord Jazz Festival* and both the *Montreax* and *North Sea Jazz Festivals* in Europe. Kirk Marcy is the director. Kirk is in his eleventh year as the Director of Jazz Studies at Edmonds Community College.

Kirk Marcy is also a member of *Just 4 Kicks*, the zany jazz quartet based here on the west coast. Other members include Vijay Singh, director of jazz studies at Central Washington University, Randy Crenshaw, who has been described as a “premier utility infielder in the ballgame of music,”

but whose credentials prove him to be all-star caliber, and Kirby Shaw, scholar, teacher, conductor, composer and arranger. Kirby's arrangements and compositions are in virtually every library in the country, having sold millions of copies. All four singers are widely published and all four contribute to the “cutting edge” vocal work of this superb quartet.

Be sure to mark your registration form for tickets for this convention event.



SDG AD



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Full page



## PBS host and conductor, Bill McGlaughlin, to be featured at Missoula's International Festival

by Dean Peterson, MT-ACDA President

In July of 2000, Missoula, MT will again host an event which has become famous; the fifth *International Choral Festival*. This will take place July 12-16. As in the past, choirs from around the world will participate in four days of concerts and in cultural exchange. The festival culminates in a final performance featuring all singers on Saturday, July 15 in the Adams Center at the University of Montana.

As of this date, choirs from Denmark, Botswana, Bulgaria, Austria, Cuba, South Africa, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, China, and the Canary Islands are planning to participate. The Cuban choir is the award winning group, *Exaudi*. This is the group which was scheduled to appear at the national ACDA convention in Washington, D. C. Much to everyone's disappointment, *Exaudi* was unable to sing in that venue because the singers were unable to obtain visas. A number of choirs from the USA will also be performing.

Local organizers are gearing up for this community-wide event. Hundreds of volunteers are involved. Without the support of the Missoula community a festival of this magnitude would not be possible.

Adding to the excitement of the 2000 Festival is the premier performance of a new work composed especially for the final festival concert. The *International Choral Festival*, in collaboration with the *American Composers Forum* and the *National Endowment for the Arts*, has commissioned the work as a participant in the *Continental Harmony* project. This project seeks to unite communities and composers in a nationwide celebration of the Millennium through music. *Continental Harmony* chose on host organization from each state for this, the first 50 state commissioning project in our nation's history. Selection of the *International Choral Festival* as Montana's host organization signifies the national recognition and status of Missoula's festival.

Composer and conductor, Bill McGlaughlin, host of the award-winning public radio program, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, will compose a piece for choir and orchestra which will be performed by over 700 participating singers at the final concert. McGlaughlin was chosen from 27 applicants. McGlaughlin said, "I just finished viewing the video (of a previous Missoula festival) and am even more excited about the project, if that were possible. What a tremendously inspiring concept this all is. . .this program has such wonderful heart!" McGlaughlin plans to spend a week in Missoula in March. During that time he will participate in community outreach activities including visits to public schools and the University of Montana. He has scheduled an interview about the festival with Montana Public Radio which will be broadcast nationally.

The University of Montana will offer a graduate level course during the festival which will include interaction with foreign conductors and their choirs. This will make it possible to enjoy the festival and receive university credit as well.

For further information, visit the *International Choral Festival* web site at: [www.choralfestival.org](http://www.choralfestival.org). The festival e-mail address is: [choral@montana.com](mailto:choral@montana.com). You may also write for information to:

International Choral Festival  
P. O. Box 9228  
Missoula, MT 59807  
Telephone: 406-721-7985



## Robert Shaw - a role model for us all

by Solveig Holmquist,  
R&S Chair for Community Choirs

My dear community choir colleagues: it's now been a year since the passing of Robert Shaw. I'm beginning to believe we should observe a yearly commemorative day, a little like we do for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or others who have made such an impression on our lives. Well, OK, so it would probably have to be observed only by musicians, but there's no harm in that. After all, we often work at many of the big occasions (Christmas, Easter, weddings, funerals) when all others are free to put the turkey in the over or sit and cry nostalgic tears.

The thing is, Robert Shaw was a rare kind of musical role model. I'm not referring to his legendary ears, or rhythmic clarity, or magical grace with unfolding melody and harmony. No, I mean his way with words and ideas. He was just so economical and direct. That surely is the mark of a master teacher!

A compendium of random Shaw quotes, collected over the years, was printed in last spring's *Melisma*, North Central ACDA newsletter. Every one is worth considering for community choir, especially number 25 on the list! What I found particularly gratifying is that I'd actually said several of these things myself. That doesn't make me smart, it just means that there are universal issues we all face in bringing music to life. With that knowledge, I'm empowered to keep plugging stubbornly away.

So here is some of the article called "The Wit and Wisdom of Robert Shaw," reprinted from Vol. 17 of *Melisma*:

1. I am amazed again and again how the mastery of successive minute technical details release floods

(continued on page 20)



## Scott Dean's Sacred Music Suggestions

### For Smaller Choir

*Beautiful Savior* - arr. William Hunt, two part mixed voices, piano; Alliance AMP-R023.

This setting of *Crusader's Hymn* is from "Rejoice," a new popular style series published by Alliance. This simple setting is actually in a traditional style. The easy accompaniment, extensive unison (octaves) writing and use of parallel sixths for the two part harmony make this a piece that could be learned moments before worship, with the most modest of resources.

*Rich in Promise* - arr. Mark Sedio, two part mixed voices, keyboard; Augsburg 11-10924.

Howard Swan always encouraged his students to look first at the text of a new composition. This text, based on the writings of Hildegard von Bingen, speaks of God bringing new life through death, with creative imagery, and makes this a great selection for Lent or Easter. Set in e minor, the first and last stanzas of the folk-like melody are sung in unison, while the second stanza is in canon at the octave, and the third receives a simple harmony. The accompaniment is quite attractive and harmonic language is fresh and creative. A striking new piece.

*Balm in Gilead* - arr. Mark Shepherd, SATB, keyboard; Augsburg 11-10923

For smaller choirs this is a great alternative to the a cappella, William Dawson, setting of the African American classic. Use of a simple, descending chromatic harmony creates an immediate sense of poignancy. Four part writing is reserved. The piece is in two parts or unison except for two of the three refrains. Shepherd's style is a tasteful blend of popular and traditional. The piece ends quietly, repeating the first five notes of the melody on an "oo." A lovely and effective arrangement that is perfect for Lent.

### Tested, tried and true

When asking for references, conductors always ask, "What's new?," but rarely ask, "What's good?" Let's not allow the classics, including the "new classics" to become unknown in this new century. Restock your library,

(continued on page 15)

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## Dean's list of sacred music for this issue

(continued from page 14)

if you don't know the following songs, order a single copy and consider them this season.

*Every Valley* - John Ness Beck, SATB, organ or piano; Behrman Horts BP1040.

*Now Sing We Joyfully Unto God* - Gordon Young, SATB; Shawnee Press A-651.

*With a Voice of Singing* - Martin Shaw, SATB, organ; G. Schirmer 8103.

Replace your old copies with these critical editions:

*Ave verum* - Mozart, ed. Collins SATB, organ, strings (opt.); Hinshaw HMC490.

*God So Love the World* - John Stainer, ed. Collins, SATB a cappella; Hinshaw HMC659.

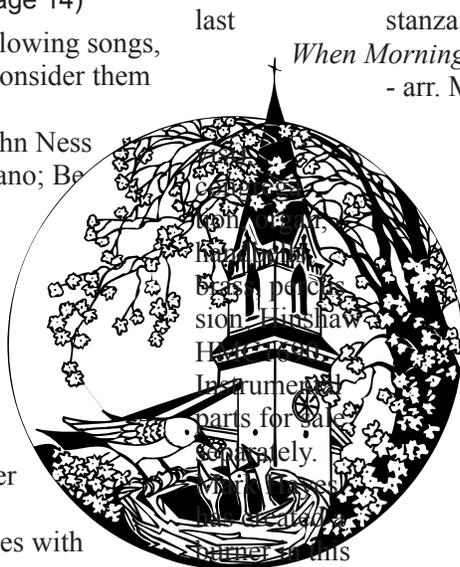
*O for a Closer walk with God* - C. V. Stanford, ed. Rutter, SATB, organ; Collegium.

Try a new transcription of the classic communion anthem, *Panis Angelicus* by Franck, arr. Rutter, SATB, organ; Oxford OCCO17.

### For larger choir, Easter hymns with brass

*Fanfare and Hymn for Easter Morning* - arr. Paul Sjolund, SATB, congregation, organ, brass (3 tpt., 2 tbn.), percussion, Fred Bock, BG0490. This is a thrilling opening for Easter Sunday. The fanfare allows time for the choir to begin processing into the sanctuary to the double-dotted and 32nd rhythms of the brass, congregation sings all stanzas and a descant caps the final stanza.

*Thine Be the Glory* - arr. Paul Leddington Wright, SATB, congregation, organ, brass (3 tpt., 3 tbn.), percussion; Hinshaw HMC 1323. A straightforward setting of Handel's tune. Full sounding but easy to learn. Includes the ubiquitous descant on the

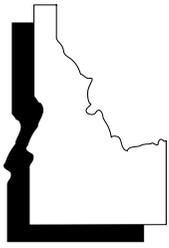


last stanza.  
*When Morning Gilds the Sky*  
- arr. Mark Hayes,  
SATB (di-  
opt.

barn  
"pull-out-the-stops" four stanza setting of Laudes Domini. The piece begins quietly with an undulating 32nd note ostinato and

concludes with a broad, fourth stanza which includes a descant that soars to a high "C." You may guess what happens in between. Modulations occur before stanzas 2 and 3, stanza 3 begins a cappella and crescendos to a bridge of repeated "alleluias" that lead to the finale. For the church with the "horses," this is a galloping candidate for Easter Sunday, even though the text doesn't say "Jesus Christ is ris'n today."

ACFEA ad



# Basic conducting conventions have a purpose

*Kevin Brower, ID-ACDA President*

**E**ons ago, at the end of my first year of teaching in the public schools, a good friend from college called. He was just completing his student teaching experience. It was fun to compare his stories of academia with what I felt, in my newly found wisdom, was the real world. As our conversation continued, my friend asked me how my conducting technique was developing. I was puzzled, laughed, and asked "What conducting technique?"

In that first year of teaching I had no recollection of a conscious effort to develop conducting technique. Among a thousand other things, I was involved in getting students to pay attention and come to class. I spent endless hours on such things as trying to help budding musicians understand that working on their solo was, perhaps, more important than decorating for the dance in the gym, being a lunchroom monitor, serving as a line judge at volleyball games, setting up equipment for the pep band at sports events and assemblies, and trying to help counselors and registration secretaries understand the difference between auditioned and non-auditioned choirs. Developing conducting technique was low on my list of things to do.

Some years later, working with a group of college students, I was astounded by their inability to respond to simple conducting gestures indicating loud and soft singing. I watched video tapes of my rehearsals and performances to see why they couldn't differentiate, in my conducting, between legato and marcato singing. I sought out and studied with the most proficient conductors I knew to help me develop techniques that would clarify and match my gestures to what I intended to bring out in the music. While I appreciate all of this help, I still experience frustration as I find a lack of ensemble members' ability to interpret conducting technique.

Recently, I was a vocalist in an event for combined choirs and orchestra. Each of the ensembles had rehearsed separately to prepare for the performance. We had one combined "run-through" with the conductor. The performance followed on the next day. Two things were evident, both in rehearsal and in performance. First, those who had worked with the featured conductor on prior occasions had no difficulty in following him. Those with no experience with this conductor found it difficult, at times impossible, to understand his intent. He was animated, energetic, and fun to watch. The beat pattern was illusive and gave us little in terms of entrances and cut-offs. At one point in the performance, the entire tenor section missed an entrance, causing considerable problems for several measures. Overall, the performance was fine and the audience appreciative. I left the concert feeling that there are many questions that we need to be asking ourselves.

What are we doing to insure that our technique matches the conducting conventions that have become standard? In our search for creativity and individuality we may be overlooking important conventions that make rehearsals efficient and prepare our students for future choral work with other directors. Our rehearsals and

performances may be "once in a lifetime" experiences, but, on the other hand, the hope is that our students will wish to repeat this choral activity in future years. Conducting that is so individualized that it takes weeks for our singers to learn our style is probably conducting that neglects basic conventions. This will impede the success of our singers as they work with other directors and in other ensembles.

I'm a proponent of individuality in conducting, for it is through our creativity and expressiveness of gesture that we are able to bring ourselves to the music and encourage the same of our ensembles. However, we must review standard conducting conventions such as beat pattern, ictus, and rebound. The literature abounds with descriptions of these techniques. The benefits of adopting these conventions will be demonstrated as the ability of the ensemble members' immediate recognition of basic elements increases. If less time is spent on deciphering the beat pattern of a conductor, more time can be available for advanced exploration. A singer, for example, who can't tell the difference between beat one and beat four is probably going to be equally confused by cutoffs and entrance cues.

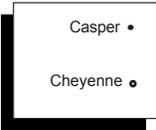
Further reflection on my friend's question of long ago causes me some regret. I wonder if I was, or am, the type of conductor who confuses ensembles. I regret that my middle or high school choirs may have been robbed of the best experience possible because I neglected standardized conducting techniques. As professionals, I hope you will join me in asking and responding to the question, "How is your conducting technique?" Fixing our deficiencies may well contribute to the success of our ensembles and the desire of our singers to repeat the activity.





# Passion, Performance and Perfection

by Pat Patton, President WY-ACDA



I was in Thailand in November of 1998. Several of our colleagues in the NW Division of ACDA have had the opportunity to conduct festival choirs overseas, including those in Bangkok, but this was my first such experience in Asia. An article under the *Rehearsal Breaks* heading in *The Choral Journal* of April, 1999, called *Passion and the Conductor*, by Terry York, reminded me of that experience.

We travelled two and one half hours by car to work with a choir in a school I knew to be 95% Thai. I wondered how I would establish the relationship to “bond” immediately with a group of people whose culture and “passions” were most probably different from mine. The director of the choir greeted me graciously and took me into the choir room. When their director approached the class, someone in the choir chanted something in Thai.

*“What makes a performance great is passion.”*

Each member of the choir folded their hands with fingers pointed to the sky, bowed to the director and honored him by singing an appropriate response. It was a bit like the “call and response” I knew of through the study of American spirituals and jazz. Now I was seeing something like it in reality. I was then introduced to the choir by the director and they did exactly the same thing - to me! Now what was I going to do? Sensing that my usual “warmup” schtick might be inappropriate, I began by speaking an acceptance of the welcome and expressing how honored I was to be there. I then asked if they would sing their national anthem, since I had never heard it. They responded with a fine arrangement which boasted good voice leading, nice phrasing, and, above all, a *passion* in their singing.

Terry York speaks of passion in music when he says, “What makes a performance great? Is it perfection? No. As much as conductor and choir strive for perfection, there is the understanding that it will never be achieved.” “. . .what makes a performance great is passion.”

Passion begets passion. When we show enthusiasm, our singers show it back. When we show knowledge, they want to be a part of it. When we create rehearsal settings that are “participant safe,” our singers participate. When we show passion, passion is returned. Terry York was right when he said, “What makes a performance great is passion.”

To maintain our love and passion for our art we often rely on our colleagues and friends. I write this on January 15, the day before I leave for the Wyoming All-State Conference in Powell. I’m looking forward to renewing my passion for this art. Scott Anderson from Idaho State University will be the guest conductor for the Intercollegiate All-State College Honor Choir. I’ll have the opportunity to conduct what we hope will be the first annual “Director’s Chorus,” sponsored by ACDA. These experiences, combined with all the other convention highlights including a fine array of interest sessions, performances by the high school Honor Choir, Orchestra, and Band, will serve as starting places to refurbish the passion we have for our music.

The culminating event this year will be the NW ACDA Convention in Seattle, March 8-11. I’m looking forward to hearing fine choirs (two from Wyoming), attending interest sessions, and sharing joys and woes with friends and colleagues from across the Northwest. It’s these things that help us keep our passion alive and the love for art vital. We’re expecting to report a great MENC All-State in Wyoming and also expect to see you in Seattle!

National Repertoire and Standards Committee for Women’s Choirs Website

[www.acdaonline.org/ncwc](http://www.acdaonline.org/ncwc)

- Excellent resource for:
- division and state R&S Chairs
  - downloadable repertoire list
  - repertoire exchange
  - directory of community-based women’s choirs
  - bibliography of women in music





Registration  
form for  
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further informa-



# Confession and Repentance Perceptions and Realities

*How teachers influence what people think about the schools*

by Howard Meharg, Editor, NW-Notes

A few days ago I was brought up short by the revelation that some close friends of mine, not in the teaching profession, had the impression that I apparently disliked my job and, even worse, didn't like the kids I taught. I was shocked! I really do love my work. I truly believe I would choose this profession again if given the opportunity to start over. Not only that, but I love the kids I teach. Every year so many of them become like a part of my family for a period of time.

I think I know how the perception of my friends was developed. They've heard me gripe and moan about student behavior. I've complained about paperwork. I hated it when the bond issue failed. I've recited a litany of silly things kids have done and complained about lack of responsibility, kids not showing up for performances and my frustrations with all of this. I'll bet I've played into the popular press stories implying we work in a jungle, that gunplay is a daily occurrence, that our halls are fraught with danger. Mostly, we teachers are the last bastions of decency and order in this society on its way to hell. I'm some kind of hero, unsung! (No pun intended.) The more I played the role of hero, the better I liked it. I'm a regular John Wayne saving his world.

Unfortunately, I was like the guy who said he loved mankind, it was just individuals he couldn't stand. I was defending public education on one hand and railing about the foibles of individuals and local frustrations on the other. No

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## A commitment to Athenian values

by Howard Meharg, Editor, NW-Notes

*(An article based on ideas of Neil Postman, from his book "Conscientious Objections.")*

Neil Postman talks of our ancestors; not our biological ones, but of two groups of people who lived many years ago. The first group lived in a city they called Athens. They were noted for considerable accomplishment such as the alphabet, literacy, political democracy, philosophy, logic, and rhetoric. They came very close to inventing what we call science. They composed great epic poems, wonderful songs, and created plays still used today.

The Athenians started what we called today the Olympics. None of their values stood higher than that in all things we should strive for excellence. They believed in reason and in beauty. They believed in moderation. It's hardly possible to speak on any subject today without repeating what some Athenian said on the matter 2,500 years ago.

The second group lived in Western Europe about 1,700 years ago. We call them the Visigoths. They were great horsemen. This may be the most positive thing one could say about them. The Visigoths were marauders, ruthless and brutal. Their language was coarse, what little art they had, grotesque. They overran the Roman Empire, destroying all in their path. They burned books, desecrated buildings and smashed works of art. From them we have no poetry, no theater, no logic, no science, no humane politics. They ushered in the Dark Ages and it took a very long time to recover.

An Athenian is an idea. A Visigoth is an idea. We choose either to live a set of values based on the Athenian or based on the Visigoth.

An Athenian cherishes language, holds knowledge in esteem. An Athenian reasons, experiments, questions, is moderate in temperament and in his dealings with others. An

(continued on page 23)

wonder my friends had the perception I was unhappy with it all!

A report written by the Association for Public Relations for schools in Washington state said that *students, teachers, and other staff members provide the largest part of the information people use as they develop their views about schools.*

OK, the war stories are fun. Our kids do a stupid thing or two now and then. Negative attitudes have a virtual gravitational pull on us, it seems. But a bit of perspective tells me that I need to tell more than my frustrations to those outside the profession. For one thing, we better be darn careful about confidentiality issues as it relates to anything we say about kids. Even with that issue aside, for our own sake we must combat the teacher lunch-room gripe mentality and look to and tell of the fantastic good things that happen every day.

I had a talented kid in my choir who was as scatterbrained and irresponsible as any I had ever taught. I loved him one minute and wanted to boot him out of the choir the next. For some reason he fixated on singing a Mozart aria at music contest. He worked so hard on this that he won a state solo contest and got a scholarship to study music in college. In the process he became a strong and positive leader in choir. His foibles were so many (and at times so irritating)! Which story do I tell? My choice adds to all the others I've made in helping form the perceptions my friends hold. Teacher and school staff views are a powerful force.

I have confessed. I have repented. No, seriously! This is serious stuff. We have got to become positive advocates for schools in a day when "crisis mentality" is common. That's my pledge and I'm sticking to it. If I'm going to be obnoxious, it's going to be because people will get tired of hear-

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This article first appeared in UNISON (WA-ACDA, 1995), the year I retired from full time work in the schools. I assure you I have kept my pledge. My superintendent, Dr. Nick Seaver (Longview, WA), read this when it first came out and has used my story extensively in talking with local school staffs. I wouldn't dare be caught speaking negatively now! HM

**Shaw Quotes (Holmquist)**

(continued from page 13)

of spiritual understanding.

2. Bad rhythm is as bad as bad pitch. No amount of good will can substitute for good sense

3. Singers must play. Instruments must sing.

4. Have the sensation that everyone is singing but you.

5. Forte singing wipes out work on details.

6. Get as much sleep, orange juice, and love as you can handle.

7. There is no such thing as being 5% flat. You are either right or wrong. It's like a pregnancy test.

8. A diminuendo should include a marked increase in psychological tension.

9. When you see crescendo, begin quietly. Learn to crescendo without change of color. Change the dynamic without changing the tempo.

10. The most communicative in music is metrics. Stravinsky: First there is tempo.

11. Make every departure from tempo conscious and unanimous.

12. Sing as the beat moves back from the downbeat.

13. Crescendo the phrase, not just the note. You must either crescendo or diminuendo; never remain static.

14. There is nothing but fundamentals, so we all learn to block and tackle.

15. The notes are difficult, but no more so than the ones you are singing.

16. Blend is a matter of intonation and dynamics and diction.

17. If we can get sensitive to pitch and color, the musical difference is wholly influenced.

18. Togetherness begins with listening. Listening begins with quiet singing.

19. Be careful of intonation on a descending line.

20. For marcato you must stop between notes.

21. Use the text not in a Shakespearean sense but as units of musical articulation.

22. Ritardando never sounds right unless the pulse sounds faster.

23. All of a sudden it sounds like you care. You should experience it when it is right. Maybe we will do it right twice.

24. There are no weak syllables when singing with a symphony orchestra.

25. The arts, like sex, are far too important to leave to the professionals.

26. You can cure a lot of faulty intonation just by working on vowel purity.

27. In a time when religious and political institutions have denied themselves or lost the capacity to motivate people to mankind's advancement, the arts remain the greatest heritage and stimulus to an advancement of the human species, to further generations of evolution.

28. We sing too damned much for the fun of it - not near enough for the must of it!

29. It is the nature of music, unlike painting and most of literature, that its final creation is not its original creation. Music needs to be heard. In this sense the composer literally must leave his work to be finished by others. Namely us.

It probably strikes you, as it did me, that each of these "wisdoms" would easily merit long discussion, or could be turned into a clinic session. What a gift that man was to us! He was legendary for his attention to detail. If the devil is in the details, the beauty is, too!



**NW-ACDA Repertoire and Standards Chairpersons**

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Childrens Choirs Roberta Jackson 15749 NW Clubhse Dr. Portland, OR 97229 (503) 645-7220	Jazz/Show Choirs Linda Schmidt 2702 Holden Ln Boise, ID 83706 (208) 345-2319
Jr. High Choirs Barbara Miller 1488 Northern Hts. Lp. Keizer, OR 97303 (503) 463-1787	Music and Worship Scott Dean 1717 Bellevue Way NE Bellevue, WA 98004 (425) 827-3448
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Mens Chorus Stuart Hunt 18915 96th Ave. NW Stanwood, WA 98292 (360) 652-4942	Community Choruses Solveig Holmquist 995 Morningside Dr. SE Salem, OR 97302 (503) 363-5884
Junior College Clyde Luke 334 Harvard Rexburg, ID 83440 (208) 356-5563	Honor Choir Chair Bill Mayclin 520 NW 3rd Pendleton, OR 97801 (541) 276-4540
College/University Geoffrey Boers, UW Box 353450 Seattle, WA 98195 (206)543-9212	Women's Honor Choir Sarah Hilden 915 Princeton St. Fircrest, WA 98466 (253) 566-1721
Student Activities Lori Wiest 323 NW Parr Dr. Pullman, WA 99163 (509) 334-6127	Men's Honor Choir Dan Jackson 907 Gehr Wenatchee, WA 98801 (509) 622-2102

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many others.

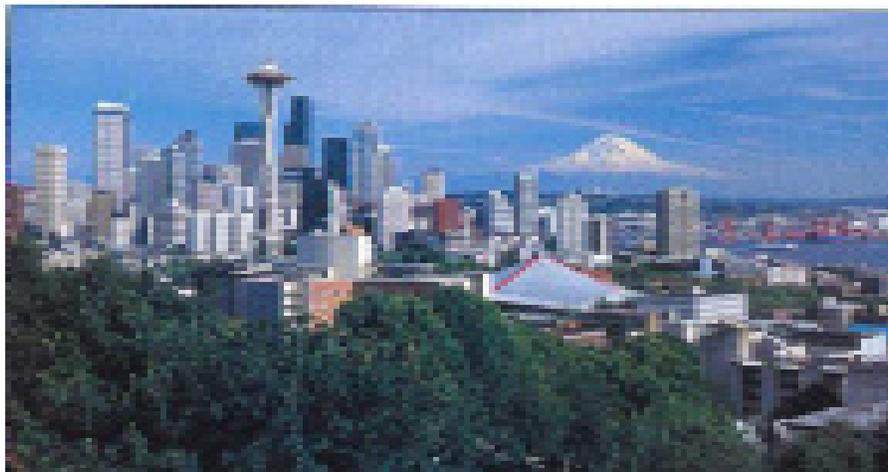
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MARCH 8-11, 2000

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Seattle Men's Chorus

Pacific Lutheran University Choir of the West  
Oregon Young Men's Ensemble  
Wenatchee High School Chamber Singers  
Seattle Pro Musica  
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Opus 7  
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We look forward to seeing you in Seattle, March 8-11, 2000



## Athenian Values

(continued from page 19)

Athenian admires beauty, exalts life, and finds joy in learning and accomplishment of all kinds. Manners and courtesy are vital. Violence is an act against the very social order.

To a Visigoth, one word is as good as another. A Visigoth's language is satisfied with the cliché. A Visigoth centers his life around himself. Good manners are stupid. History is yesterday's newspaper. Popularity is all that counts for there is no other measure of excellence.

Most of us rush to claim allegiance to the Athenian way, for there is little to be said favorably for the Visigoth. The very analogy, however, sets us up for placing people into categories, them vs. us. The problem is that the Visigoth and the Athenian live side by side in each of us. We all struggle with self interest (our tax bill, for example) and the public good. We struggle with a personal schedule rooted in self-interest as opposed to involvement in public service. We're caught in the web of the popularity scam, serving up only "what people will like."

Communication media and entertainment provide some prime examples of a total sellout to popularity (Visigothian). TV shows of police work, the more violent the better, "The Jerry Springer Show," "professional" wrestling, the tabloids at the checkout stand, all illustrate the tasteless, the banal, the violent, the Visigoth.

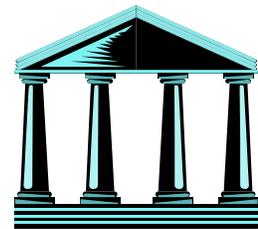
Over and over, despite the banal, we can find examples of giving, of serving, of courtesy, and of holding others in high esteem. I heard of a great example lately at a Rotary Club meeting at which a Rotary team told of their work in rural Mexico helping in the construction of a public building serving hundreds in an area of poverty. Other examples abound. And the very nature of the business in which we work draws us to an Athenian view. We fight a battle on the fine line of appearing snobbish and yet holding to the highest of standards. Oh, there is a battle! I don't know what it would take to make the Athenian within us and our society overcome the Visigoth. I can only hope

each of us continue to renew our commitment to those higher values which place honor and beauty, service, moderation and love of learning at the top of those forces which guide our actions.

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*I'm well aware that in including this article in NW-Notes, I'm preaching to the choir. On the other hand, why stop now, I've been preaching to the choir all my life! HM*

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