

SACRED HARP COLORADO

March 2009

Who We Are and What We Do

We are the Rocky Mountain Shape Note Singers and we exist to preserve and promote the music and the traditions of American shape note harmony along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. And to have fun singing together!

We welcome any and all to join us at our monthly singings held in the cities along the Front Range. Loaner books are available for use or purchase. Our monthly singings are usually held to the schedule supplied at the end of this newsletter, but holidays or special circumstance may dictate that we move a singing date.

We sing principally from the 1991 Denson revision of the Sacred Harp (Red Book), but use some songs from the Cooper Book (Blue Book). From time to time we will sing from other traditional books such as the Missouri Harmony and Norumbega Harmony. If you are new to us, please contact one of our members listed below for current location, day/date and time of a singing in your area.

Editor needed

We need someone to edit and produce this monthly newsletter on an on-going basis. It could be something you do alone, or find a couple of singing friends to join in. Contact Hill Grimmett, hill@sacredharpcolorado.org

Special singing opportunity

The Denver Sacred Harp singers and *all* Sacred Harp singers from the Front Range are invited to join attendees at the conference of the Society for American Music for this one-time singing event. If you have loaner books, please bring them! Please join us – this is open to anyone who wants to attend—no prior experience necessary. And afterwards, you can go sing 7-shape gospel if you want to, with the convention people back at their hotel. The Sacred Harp singing is at Trinity Methodist Church, 1820 Broadway, Denver 80202; Thursday, March 19, 5:45-7:15 pm.

4th Annual Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing

Please mark your calendars and reserve Saturday March 21 to sing with us at the *4th Annual Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing* in Colorado Springs. There is no conflict with Easter this year and absolutely no better way to celebrate the birthday of Benito Juarez. Find details here: http://www.sacredharpcolorado.org/All_Day_Springs_2008.html

Arkansas Valley Sacred Harp – Pete Mathewson

After a protracted period of stumbling around, it looks like we may have a start on a Sacred Harp group here in the Arkansas Valley. At present, the singers are meeting at our home in La Junta on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30PM. Guests are always welcome and if

you have family or friends living between Fowler and Lamar on US50, please mention us to them and remind them that no experience is necessary.

Editorially Speaking

Each month I'll ask a question of general interest (or so it seems to me). Send me an answer and I'll put together those answers for the next newsletter. This month's question is: ***Tell us about a time at a sing or a convention that you found particularly moving or memorable.***

My favorite tune is 236 Easter Anthem. My first exposure was in 1986 when we went to our first ever convention, the National in Birmingham. Judy Hauff was called to lead and said "we have a great bass section so lets sing 236". The magnificence of the sound was simply awesome - there were about 30 of us singing bass and at least 200 singers there. You can bet that we got the Denver, Boulder folks working on that piece as soon as possible. I still think it is the best tune in the book even though I'm reluctant to make comparisons.

--John Schaffer

In the Spring of 2005 Susie and I took a trip to sing in Georgia and Alabama. At a memorial singing held at Shady Grove Church in Dutton, AL, Elder Mark Brown and members of the Wootten family sang Beulah Land a gospel song not found in any of the four shape tune books that I am familiar with. It does, however, exist in seven shapes in the 12th edition of the Old School Hymnal. Mark led the song with a solo introduction of each verse followed by the extended family and others in the church completing the verse and singing the chorus. Powerful lyric and a powerful approach to the singing. I later asked Shane Wootten where I could find the music and he said that they had never seen it written down in shapes. That it had just become a family tradition which they loved to maintain. Its impact was such that this singing in Dutton will be one of the first stops in our trip South this Spring.

--Pete Matthewson

Okay, I have not had the opportunity to attend many conventions, but here are some memorable singing experiences:

This February's singing in Boulder, where we had a good group of people but none of the experienced basses. So one of us from each of the other parts--tenor, alto, and treble--moved into the empty chairs on the bass side of the square, where we focused on nailing the entries and other most critical bass passages. . . . We pulled it off! I'll never be a great bass, but I can fake it for a couple of hours.

And then there were the times when Sandy Hill and I would be the only folks who would show up for a singing, now and then, and we'd choose a song and then decide which were the most important two parts and then sing away.

All of which shows that when you really want to sing, you can sing.

--Deb Robson

The first time was my second National Convention and my father's name was on the memorial list. Hugh McGraw led "All is well" and I think it was then that I fully realized the importance of that lesson and how we are all family in both times of grief and joy. The next time was when Tolly Lee sang/chanted the closing prayer at the Hoboken convention. I had never heard that style of prayer before and was truly amazed.

Another time was when I sang the memorial lesson the year we lost Jeff Christianson, a ranger for Rocky Mountain National Park while he was on duty in the back country. Yes, we are all family!

--Ginnie Ely

Many times when I didn't think I could make it to a Tuesday night singing in Massachusetts, I'd end up going and despite being tired and exhausted and having tons of school work to do, inevitably at some point during the sing I would just let go of everything and let myself fall into the music, exhausted, rejuvenated, carried onwards by the music and community.

--AnneMarie Casper

Camp Fasola

Registration is now open for Camp Fasola 2009 at <http://fasola.org/camp>

Session 1: Adult Emphasis
Sunday, June 14th/5pm – Thursday, June 18th/8:30am
Camp McDowell (<http://campmcdowell.com>) – Between Jasper and Double Springs, Alabama off Ala 195

Session 2: Youth (Age 10 and up) Emphasis
Monday, June 29th/4pm – Friday, July 3rd/9am
Camp Lee (<http://camplee.org>) – Anniston, Alabama

The Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association will hold Camp Fasola in 2009 for the seventh consecutive year. Camp Fasola provides an immersive experience for learning and singing Sacred Harp music as well as fellowship with other singers. Registration is available on a first come / first served basis.

The camp is open to youth and adults with instruction provided for both beginning and experienced singers. Multiple tracks of classes suited to different experience levels will be taught. Traditional summer camp activities will be provided that will be focused to building and extending friendships of singers.

For additional information, see <http://fasola.org/camp>, email camp@fasola.org or telephone Jeannette DePoy at 404.237.1246 or David Ivey at 256.881.5291.

So here is April's question: Tell us something about a Sacred Harp personality or composer that you find interesting.

Pitch in and *help us keep this newsletter going*. Send your comments to Hill at Hill@sacredharpcolorado.org NO LATER THAN March 28.

Where We Sing and How to Find Us

BOULDER Regular singings are 2nd Friday of each month 7-9 pm, at the home of Peter and Mary Lou Van Laanen. Contact Mary Lou for details at 303-447-9379 or e-mail her at vmarylou@indra.com

DENVER Singings weekly each Monday *except the first Monday* from 6:40 – 8:40 pm at St. Mark's Orthodox, 1409 South Vine. This group also sings monthly on the fourth Sunday, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM in the same location. Please bring a dollar donation to the book fund. For location confirmation or other info, please contact Pat Dolan at 303-778-6297 or e-mail him at ruralplain@aol.com or Sharon Kermiet at skermiet@goodwilldenver.org .

COLORADO SPRINGS Singings regularly on the 2nd Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Pikes Peak Primitive Baptist Church 12th and Pikes Peak on the Westside. Please bring a dollar donation to the book fund. Pete Mathewson is the contact at 719-469-5241 or e-mail him at 71mgbgt41@gmail.com .

FORT COLLINS The singing is the first Monday of each month 7-8:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2000 Stover Street. Exceptions are Labor Day (September) and sometimes July – see the web site for info. Or contact Hill Grimmett for specifics at 970-231-1197 or e-mail him at hill@sacredharpcolorado.org .

ARKANSAS VALLEY Singing on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the home of Pete and Susie Mathewson in La Junta. Contact them at 719/383-9056 or e-mail them at busterbrown417@gmail.com for information and directions.

Sacred Harp On The Web

Our local websites are **Sacred Harp Colorado** at www.sacredharpcolorado.org and the **Rocky Mountain Shapenote Singers** at <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~dakspk> . The national web site is www.fasola.org .

Sacred Harp Colorado Newsletter (interim) Editor:

Hill Grimmett
Fort Collins
970-231-1197
hill@sacredharpcolorado.org