

SACRED HARP COLORADO

May 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. Hill will cover through May, Pete Mathewson in June and after that we really do need someone to step up.

This month's question

Each month I'll ask a question of general interest (or so it seems to me). Send me an answer and we'll use them for the next newsletter.

Who in the Sacred Harp singing community has been a big influence on your life?

Pitch in and *help us keep this newsletter going*. Send your comments to Hill at Hill@sacredharpcolorado.org NO LATER THAN June 1.

Special All-Day Singing: Saturday June 6, 2009

Aspen Park Community Center, 9:30 am – 3:30 am. Dinner on the grounds! Bring a dish to share.

Directions: Go south on US 285 about 12 miles from C-470 to mile marker 238. Park in the RTD Park-n-Ride and walk up the stairs at the back to the green one-room schoolhouse.

Google or MapQuest maps: 26225 Sutton Road, Aspen Park, CO

More info: Karl Dise, 303-670-8945

Last month's question:

How does singing Sacred Harp fit into the rest of your spiritual life – or just the rest of your life?

The second part of that question is simple to answer, the first is very complex.

Shape note singing is and has been the one non-required outside-the-house activity that I have maintained regardless of what else is going on. No matter what my work or parenting responsibilities have thrown at me, no matter how tired I have been, I've made or found time to sing, and that's been true for twenty-two years (since my daughter was six, although I had an introduction to seven-shape a few years before she was born).

Shape note singing has been the one thing I could do for myself when I couldn't manage anything else. (And "Martin" is the song that has kept me glued together during the hardest times.) Of course, it's also a great way for me to feel celebratory when life is going well. But the fact that I can, and want to, do it no matter what is the most important part of how it fits, year after year, into the rest of my life.

Let's see if I can get a quick response to the "spiritual life" part of the question without getting bogged down.

I'm a Quaker. I began singing steadily after an introduction to shape note music at the annual national gathering of unprogrammed Quakers (i.e., those who sit in silent worship without a minister or any program: no sermon, no hymns). It was 1987. Life was rocky. I looked at the program of possible activities—varied and extensive—and made the choice to sign up for all singing. That workshop singing was of hymns, yet during non-scheduled times other singing activities happened in an extracurricular way: including a shape note group and a lot of folk music. (Robin Fox of Minnesota coordinated the spontaneous shape note group, and the authors of Rise Up Singing were catalysts for much of the folk music . . . Quakers SING, just not as part of regular worship.) I ended up singing about ten hours a day for a week. It was exactly what I needed.

So my introduction to shape note is very firmly grounded in the core of my spiritual life, which is Quakerism.

Yet it's true that even when I'm too tired to get to meeting on Sunday mornings, I am almost always not too tired to get to a singing on a weekday evening.

And it's also true that much of the theology expressed in many shape note tunes is at odds with the theology of my personal spiritual home within the Quaker faith. Somehow that doesn't matter.

And here is where I'll bow out, or I'll be writing for weeks.

--Deb Robson

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 .

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