

# *Sacred Harp Colorado*

*August 2008*

## **Who We Are and What We Do**

The Rocky Mountain Shape Note Singers exist to preserve and promote the music and the traditions of American shape note harmony along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. 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 Norembega Harmony depending upon the spirit and the occasion. 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. 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.

## **Editorially Speaking**

Here we are in mid-summer and it is some kind of hot at our house. As reported last month we are finally moved into our new old house and now in our second month we are starting to put away the construction tools and give some thought to gussying up the place so jaws don't drop over the mess when folks come calling. Now the great two year struggle can be declared over [if such things are ever really over] and we can get on about the other things that matter in life such as singing. Reservations and plans have been made to attend the West Texas Convention at Crosbyton - third weekend in August. Then also you will note further down the page the formal announcement of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Rocky Mountain Convention held this year in Albuquerque, NM. Great venue and an easy drive to sing with a good bunch of folks. There are a couple TBD/TBA notes in their flyer, but we should have all of that clarified by the time you get the September newsletter.

## **History, Traditions And Culture – Psalms in Gaelic**

From Robert Vaughn out in Eastern Texas comes a glorious little snippet from the writings of Robert Burns. For those among the readers who trace their ancestry to Scotland in any era, Bobby Burns is a cultural touchstone. For those of us who leap over the edge completely, the annual celebration of his birthday could not be complete without a plate [large or small] of steaming haggis while glorying in a soulful recitation his most artful Ode To A Haggis. Here from The Cotter's Saturday Night, Burns addresses Presbyterian acappella psalm singing of his day:

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,  
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;  
Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,  
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;

Or noble Elgin beets the heaven-ward flame,  
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:  
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;  
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;  
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

From v. 13 *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, by Robert Burns

Robert's, presentation of this poem contained a link to the psalm tune Dundee mentioned in the lyric. Go here for an mp3 clip of the Gaelic psalm singing of which he spake:

<http://www.gaelicpsalmsinging.com/audio/mp3s/Dundee.mp3>

While you are there, take the time to surf thru their home page which lists related articles and albums of the hymns collected from the Isle of Lewis complete with mp3 clips for some of the music on their first CD.

These are the days when you wish that you had learned to speak and sing in Gaelic.

## **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Rocky Mountain Sacred Harp Convention**

You are cordially invited to attend the 19th Annual Rocky Mountain Sacred Harp Singing Convention, Sept. 27th and 28th, 2008 in Albuquerque, NM. We will be singing once again at the Anderson-Abbruzzo International Balloon Museum, 9201 Balloon Museum Drive, west of I-25, off Alameda Blvd. Singing will be from 9:00-3:00 both days, with a singing school on Friday evening, Sept. 26th, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We will be singing from the Denson book, 1991 edition. Dinner on the grounds both days. Local singers please bring a dish or two to share. Rooms will be available at The Holiday Inn Express, 5401 Alameda Blvd. Ask for the "Rocky Mountain Sacred Harp Convention" rate (starting at \$90, which includes a full breakfast – and a swimming pool and Jacuzzi. A handicap suite is also reserved). Reservations must be made by Sept. 20th. For housing with a local person please contact Martina Mesmer (505) 237-1033, email [martina@hubwest.com](mailto:martina@hubwest.com). For general info, contact Nancy Nortz (505)281-0267, email [n.nortz@att.net](mailto:n.nortz@att.net).

## **Looking Ahead**

East Texas Convention 9 – 10 August (Cooper Book) Henderson Community Center, 302 Fair Park, Henderson, Texas. More info: Robert Vaughn, (903) 863-5379.

West Texas Singing 16 August (Denson Book) Crosbyton Primitive Baptist Church, 401 S. Emerald St., Crosbyton, Texas. More info: Kathy Taylor, (806) 789-2493.

Southwest Texas Convention - Fall Session 30 - 31 August (Cooper Book) Austin Waldorf School, 8700 S. View Rd., Austin, Texas. More info: [Alexa Gilmore](#), (512) 963-6932, or [Gaylon Powell](#), (512) 249-8931.

Rocky Mountain Convention 27 - 28 September (Denson Book) Balloon Museum, Albuquerque, NM. See the attached flyer for additional information.

## *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](mailto:vmarylou@indra.com)

**DENVER** Sings weekly each Monday except the first Monday from 6:40 – 8:40PM at St. Andrew's Church, 2015 Glenarm Street or St. Mark's Orthodox, 1409 S. Vine when St. Andrew's is not available. This group also sings monthly on the fourth Sunday, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM in one of these two locations. Bring a dollar as a contribution to the book fund. For the location of any specific singing, please contact Pat Dolan at 303-778-6297 or e-mail him at [ruralplain@aol.com](mailto:ruralplain@aol.com) or Sharon Kermiet at [skermiet@goodwilldenver.org](mailto:skermiet@goodwilldenver.org).

**COLORADO SPRINGS** - Sings regularly on the 2nd Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Pikes Peak Primitive Baptist Church 12<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:71mgbgt41@gmail.com).

**FORT COLLINS** - The singing is normally the first Monday of each month 7-8:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2000 Stover Street. Contact Hill Grimmer for specifics at 970-231-1197 or e-mail him at [hill@sacredharpcolorado.org](mailto:hill@sacredharpcolorado.org)

### **Sacred Harp On The Web**

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

### **Sacred Harp Colorado Newsletter Editor:**

Pete Mathewson  
417 Carson Ave.  
La Junta, CO 81050  
719/469-5241 cell  
[71mgbgt41@gmail.com](mailto:71mgbgt41@gmail.com)

# *19<sup>th</sup> Annual Rocky Mountain High Sacred Harp Singing Convention*

*Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

**Anderson-Abbruzzo International Balloon Museum  
9201 Balloon Museum Drive, Albuquerque, NM**

## *What is Sacred Harp Singing?*

Sacred Harp, or **Shape Note**, singing is an American musical tradition practiced continuously from our country's founding to the present day. Its roots go back to colonial New England and it is preserved most strongly today in the southern US. The songs are hymns, anthems and odes, and are sung a capella (without instruments). We will be singing from *The Sacred Harp*, a song book that's been in continuous publication since 1844. There's no "leader" and no audience. Everyone is welcome to come sing or just to listen.

*A Singing School* will be held on Friday, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm, location and teacher TBA. Admission \$5.

*Singing*: Saturday and Sunday, 9:30 am-3:00 pm.

Registration starts at 9:00 am

Anderson-Abbruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum

9201 Balloon Museum Drive, Albuquerque (west of I-25, off Alameda Blvd.)

No charge for admission. All are welcome--beginners, experienced singers and listeners. Copies of *The Sacred Harp* tunebook will be available for loan or purchase at the registration table. Dinner on the grounds both days. Local singers please bring a dish or two to share both days.

*Housing*: Rooms will be available at Holiday Inn Express, 5401 Alameda Blvd. Phone: (505)797-2291. Ask for the "Rocky Mountain Sacred Harp" discount rate (starting at \$90, which includes full breakfast.) Reservations must be made by Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. For housing with a local singer please contact Martina Mesmer (505) 237-1033, email [martina@hubwest.com](mailto:martina@hubwest.com).

*Information*: Nancy Nortz (505)281-0267, email: [n.nortz@att.net](mailto:n.nortz@att.net)