

Spring 2014

Volume 6

Rogue Valley Chorale

Celebrating the
joy of singing

The mission of Rogue Valley Chorale is to inspire and enrich our communities through
great choral music performed by choruses of all ages.

Rogue Valley Chorale Association Newsletter

What's Coming in 2014



Wow! "Christmas with the Chorale" was very exciting. I have received much positive feedback from choristers and audience members alike. Most of the comments were about the Britten "Saint Nicolas," which was daunting at first, but came together marvelously, particularly with the addition of our wonderful orchestra and tenor soloist Brian Thorsett. We were fortunate to have

John McGrosso from the Arianna String Quartet fly out from Saint Louis to be our concertmaster. It was a good experience for him, and he said he would be happy to perform with us again! I'm so pleased to have been able to introduce this wonderful work to both the Chorale and to the Rogue Valley.

We are quickly closing in on our next concert, "Live at the Crate." In addition to showcasing the talents of individual Chorale members, our audience will be treated to familiar melodies from *The Merry Widow*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Carmen*, *Carousel*, *Phantom of the Opera* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, among others.

We may be in the throes of winter now, but Spring is just around the corner. We will usher in the season with our "Spring Splendor" concert in April. One of the featured works will be Eric Whitacre's, *Cloudburst*, which is sure to conjure up some much-needed April showers. We will also be introducing the work of local composer, Jodi French, a longtime friend of the Chorale. Her setting of the poem *To-Night* by Sara Teasdale will be paired with another Teasdale poem set by David Childs. Other Spring-themed pieces will be John Rutter's *For the Beauty of the Earth*, and *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, as well as anthems from two royal weddings and three luscious a capella pieces. Opening and closing the program will be two of the three "B's"... That's Bach and the Beatles of course!

Rogue Valley Chorale's 41st Season

The Rogue Valley Chorale's 41st season marks the first with new Artistic Director Laurie Anne Hunter.



Come enjoy the season with us.



Live at the Crate - Nothing stirs the soul quite like live music. The Crate stage will reverberate with sound as the Rogue Valley Chorale presents show-stopping numbers, opera to Broadway, that will kindle your spirit and leave you wanting more!. Saturday, Feb. 15, 7:30 PM and Sunday, Feb. 16, 3:00 PM, 2014.



Spring Splendor - Life and love are in full bloom as the Rogue Valley Chorale embraces the season with songs inspired by the beauty that surrounds and captivates us. Performance times are Saturday, Apr. 26, 7:30 PM and Sunday, Apr. 27, 3:00 PM, 2014.

To purchase tickets call the Craterian Theater at the Collier Center for the Performing Arts Box Office at 541-779-3000. or go to www.roguevalleychorale.org.

Executive Director's Report



Four years ago I had a dream of running a race at the Walt Disney theme park. There was just one problem. I couldn't even run a quarter of a mile without serious breathing issues.

As my 40th birthday approached last fall, I created a list of 40 goals to accomplish this year. At the top of the list was "The Run." 2014 was the year and I was going to do it. I

picked January 18th, 2014 as the date to run the Tinkerbell 10k at Disneyland. Despite my slender build, running does not come easily to me. I live at the top of a hill. No matter where I run I always have to come home uphill. Questions and doubts flitted through my head; "Is my commitment sufficient to the task?" "How do I get past mile 3?" "Will I ever get my knee to stop hurting?" Only a few months ago it was difficult to see past these roadblocks. I worked a little harder, pushed a little more and approached things a little differently until the roadblocks vanished. Last week I hit 7 miles. I feel prepared for my race.

The Rogue Valley Chorale had a Strategic Planning session five years ago. The completion date boxes were all blank. It was hard to feel encouraged. Thoughts filled my head; "Is an endowment fund even possible when it is difficult to find funds needed to support a season?" "How will we ever replace Lynn Sjolund?" Exceptional donors, persistent board members, and caring volunteers stepped into the void and began filling the blanks.

Five years later we have overcome myriad hurdles. We have created the Sjolund Endowment Fund that is today carefully managed by the Oregon Community Foundation. The position of Artistic Director was awarded to the very talented and capable Laurie Anne Hunter. Those original obstacles that, at one time, seemed insurmountable were accomplished through the work of dedicated volunteers who believed that bringing quality choral music to our community and to our children was worth preserving.

As I look towards 2014 and the goals that lie ahead for the Rogue Valley Chorale I think about my Disney fish-friend, Dory, who optimistically repeats, "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming..."

Happy New Year.
 – Jacquie Schmidt, Executive Director



A Message From Our Board President



Serving as president these past two years has been an amazing experience. During my tenure as president of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association the organization has seen tremendous growth and change. Guiding the Board of Directors through many projects and

transitions - the first fundraising training, the first stakeholder appreciation dinner, the first search for a new Artistic Director, and the retirement *Roast and Toast* for Lynn Sjolund, our Artistic Director of forty years - has been both challenging and rewarding.

During the past two years our Board of Directors has also provided a bi-annual newsletter for our community, strengthened our governing infrastructure with new policies and procedures, updated job descriptions, shared ideas and generated plans with the Youth Choruses leadership team, and began work on establishing an Advisory Board. Committees continue to work on creating a new logo, seeking out new support from within our corporate community, writing grants for the organization, supporting our Youth Choruses through leadership and finances, and planning another European singing tour.

Our many accomplishments are due to a committed Board of Directors who are passionate about celebrating the joy of singing. They freely volunteer their many gifts and talents and understand that non-profit corporations must be financially responsible and organizationally sound. The 'team' has worked well together and I'm proud and humbled to have been a part of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association leadership.

In just a few more months I will be handing over the reins to President-Elect Kenne Horton, who will lead the Rogue Valley Chorale Association for the next year. I anticipate a continuation of an exciting future under his dedicated and skillful guidance.

As you read this Newsletter, I trust that you will be inspired to continue supporting the Rogue Valley Chorale Association through your attendance at the Chorale and Youth Choruses concerts and through your financial donations. Without you there would be no Rogue Valley Chorale Association.

~ Beth Gibson, Board President

**Rogue Valley Chorale Singing Couple
Bill Matthews and Phyllis Skinner**



Phyllis Skinner (2nd soprano) and Bill Matthews (2nd tenor) are one of Rogue Valley Chorale's singing couples. Bill has been with the Chorale since its inception in 1973 and Phyllis joined in 1993. Both say that the Chorale has been a highlight of their lives!

Bill was born in Medford and was raised in Klamath Falls. It was dinnertime when he was brought into the world, and he says he's eaten too much ever since. He went to Stanford for both undergraduate and medical school, and it was at Stanford that he met his former wife, Jackie. Bill began singing in 4th grade and continued while at Stanford, performing twice with the San Francisco Symphony. He has three children: Pam (Sacramento), Bob (Medford) and Tom (Cleveland, OH). Carrying on the musical traditions of their father, Pam plays the flute and Bob plays a variety of instruments. Bill is proud of his role as Tiny Tim on the radio while in grade school, and of his Doctor's Quartet, which appeared many times on Adventures in Medicine, a local TV program.

After completion of medical school and his internship Bill was drafted into the military. He spent two years in the Air force at Key West, FLA, during which time he experienced the Cuban Missile Crisis. Bill returned to the Rogue Valley following his military service. He set up a solo practice but soon decided to join an existing one upon consideration of the difficulty of being on call! That group has since become Southern Oregon Orthopedics. For many years Bill commuted to and from Portland where he worked as an orthopedic surgeon for the Veterans Administration. He also spent many years with the VA Hospital in White City.

Bill is now fully retired. He spends considerable time on his collection of vintage cars. He has six currently at a house that Bill and Phyllis own on Cambridge Circle. His interest in cars began when he was a young teenager. He tells of picking up his first car, driving it to Medford for an event, and driving it back to Klamath Falls at night over the Greensprings without a generator. He used his

headlights only when another car approached, then turned them off again.

Phyllis Wendt Skinner was born in Medford at the Purucker Maternity Hospital. Her family lived two miles north of Jacksonville where her father was a dairy farmer. Her grandfather homesteaded the land, and when he retired from farming, he divided the property to accommodate his seven children, Phyllis's mother amongst them. Phyllis says she lived in a kind of commune because family surrounded her. Their properties stretched west from Old Stage Rd., south to Jacksonville Hwy, north to slightly beyond the old Westside School, and east to Hanley Farms. She attended Westside School, the founding of which was facilitated by her grandfather's donation of land.

The school had two rooms and went up to the 8th grade. After 8th grade she attended McLoughlin Middle School, followed by Medford High School. She rode to school in an old, noisy farm pickup truck with her father when he made his milk deliveries. Phyllis made him stop far away from the school so nobody would see her in that truck!

Phyllis was surrounded by music in her home as both parents sang. The family spent many years singing together. One of her fondest memories is of her father playing Beethoven on a windup Victrola in the milking barn. He told everyone that the cows enjoyed the music as much as he did. Phyllis was one of the only children in the area who received music lessons: piano and accordion. Phyllis attended Oregon State University where she sang in a madrigal choir.

Phyllis married her neighbor, Lon Skinner. The couple had three children: John (Medford), Steve (Portland), and daughter Marcia (Medford). Phyllis managed clothing companies, did some modeling in high school at Burleson's and Parker Woods and also during college. After returning to the Rogue Valley she orchestrated fashion shows and served as co-host for Woman's World, a local TV program, where she conducted many interesting interviews. Two of her most memorable were with Meadowlark Lemon of the Harlem Globetrotters, and the Fifth Dimension. She also met Bobby Kennedy a few weeks before he was killed.

Phyllis and Bill found they were single at the same time and got together 30 years ago at Lake of the Woods. They say that they are in one of the longest engagements ever! They bought the house on Cambridge Circle and moved in together in 1991. They also have a cottage at the Rogue Valley Manor and Phyllis is in the process of moving there while Bill plans to stay in the Cambridge Circle house so he can keep up with his cars and shop.

These days both Phyllis and Bill are involved with various musical interests besides Chorale. Bill plays clarinet in a nationally-affiliated band called "New Horizons" that performs at retirement and nursing homes, and both sing in "Joyful Noise", a Manor choir.

Welcome Dee dee Morgan



The Rogue Valley Chorale Association welcomes Dee dee Morgan, Youth Choruses Administrative Assistant, to its staff. Dee dee has been involved with the Youth Choruses for quite some time as both a parent and a chorus manager. Two of her children are Youth Choruses graduates, an experience that helped to shape their lives.

Dee dee was born in Chicago and grew up in both

Michigan and Florida. She has always loved music and was surrounded with the arts as a child. Her step-father was head of the Modern Dance department at the Interlochen School of the Arts in Michigan. Music lessons were offered to Dee dee by her parents, but she preferred climbing trees to practicing, and kicks herself now for not taking advantage of abundant arts opportunities. Nevertheless, the arts remained an integral part of her life.

Dee dee met her husband, Ezra Morgan, while living in Florida. Ezra was an Oregonian, so the couple moved back to the Rogue Valley to be closer to his family in 1978. Dee dee and Ezra have 7 children. Their sixth child, David, joined the Youth Ensemble three years after its formation. Their youngest son, Shaun, joined Cantare the year it was formed. Dee dee served as the chorus manager for the Youth Ensemble for five years while her boys were participants.

Dee dee recalls that her boys shied away from sports, but were drawn toward music. She was pleased with their choices as music tended to provide students with positive role models and good values. As a result, her sons were exposed to all that was uplifting while in school. Their positive experiences continued in Youth Choruses. Pam Nordquist, Youth Ensemble Director, had a wonderfully powerful influence on her boys. Son David is beginning his freshman year at Brigham Young University in Idaho and majoring in music. Shaun is on a mission in Fiji and will pursue a career in education and writing. Dee dee couldn't be prouder.

Dee dee brings many talents to the Youth Choruses. She has strong computer skills and a background in bookkeeping, cultivated from years of running her family's business. When she was approached about serving as the Rogue Valley Youth Choruses Administrative Assistant she jumped at the chance. Dee dee Morgan is pleased to be able to offer her perspective as a business woman and parent to the Youth Choruses. Her skills, along with her love of music and appreciation of the arts, makes her a welcome addition to the Rogue Valley Chorale Association family.

Lynn Sjolund Receives Conductor Emeritus Title



In October of 2013 the Rogue Valley Chorale Association Board of Directors bestowed upon Lynn Sjolund the title of Conductor Emeritus, honoring his 40 years as Artistic Director.

Lynn Sjolund served as the Rogue Valley Chorale Artistic director for four decades. During his tenure the Chorale presented

seasonal concerts to the community several times a year, toured Europe 7 times, performed at Carnegie Hall and made a lasting impact on the Southern Oregon community. Under Mr. Sjolund's artistic direction the Rogue Valley Chorale performed many of the great works including Handel's *Messiah*, Brahms's *Requiem*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and *St. Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Bernstein's *Mass*.

Lynn was a choral instructor in the Medford Schools. He was a mentor to his students and remains a treasured friend to many of them. He was instrumental in the musical lives of myriad individuals, many of whom continue to sing in the Chorale today. Lynn Sjolund is viewed as an elder statesman and an esteemed teacher, someone the Chorale and community deeply respects and reveres.

Lynn remains a vital part of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association, which he co-founded over four decades ago. Lynn will be honored at the Rogue Valley Choral's Spring concert on April 27th, when he will receive his award and be recognized as Conductor Emeritus.

For more about Lynn Sjolund visit roguevalleychorale.org/about-rogue-valley-chorale



Phyllis Skinner's T-shirt Slogan

Robert Stark, Dancing Through Life



Tenor Robert Stark was born to dance. He began lessons at age 6 at Joan's Dance Studio in Chester PA, where he studied jazz, modern dance, tap and ballet. Robert's father was less than excited about his son's passion for dance, but he received loving support from his

mother. His dance teachers encouraged him to come to class, even when his family couldn't pay for lessons.

Robert excelled at dance, and as a young teenager he was selected to dance for several weeks on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour. He was chosen to perform a tap routine on the Arthur Godfrey Show, and while in high school he performed with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and at veteran's hospitals for the USO.

Following high school Robert moved to New York City to study with Jack Stanley and Vincenzo Celli, and to pursue a career as a dancer. He landed a job at New York's famous Latin Quarter Club where he played the role of a child, being rather small in stature. He was chosen to dance in the USA tour of *West Side Story*. Subsequent national tours of Broadway productions included *Damn Yankees*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Song of Norway*. During *Song of Norway* Robert was involved in a backstage accident that injured his knee and ended his dancing career.

Robert moved back to Chester to find another means of support. He commenced a career as a court reporter. He worked for a firm that recorded the Eisenhower press conferences and US Senate sessions. He spent 50 years working at both state and federal levels. He reported the John DeLorean trial and the anti-trust action that brought the Oakland Raiders to Los Angeles. During his career he was the court reporter on twenty-one death penalty trials. He also served as an advisor for the Order of DeMolay, a Masonic youth group for boys. The Chester, PA chapter, where he worked for twenty years, was ranked number one in the world.

In 1980, Robert's work as a court reporter eventually took him to California where he decided once again to pursue his love of the stage, this time as an actor/singer. He auditioned for a role at the Moonlight Ampitheater in San Diego. The director asked if he had any tap experience. He said he did, then ran home to get his tap shoes out of retirement. When Robert removed them from his old dance bag they fell apart in his hands. He bought a new pair and thankfully was able to dance without any knee trouble.

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Discovery Chorus

The Rogue Valley Youth Choruses (RVYC) is one of the region's most comprehensive youth singing programs. RVYC is divided into four age groups, offering vocal opportunities for students in grades 3-12. The choruses sing regularly with the adult chorus, in local theaters, in the Medford schools and for various community groups.

The youngest singers take part in the Discovery Chorus, which serves children in 3rd and 4th grades. Sandy Roney has directed the Discovery Chorus since 2006. She is a music educator with experience teaching kindergarten through high school. She has served as a guest clinician and adjudicator in the Northwest, and founded a children's choir in Colville, Washington called *Angel Voices of the North*. She also founded the *Bighorn Singers*, in Montana.

Ms Roney works with the Discovery Chorus children on the rudiments of singing: pitch, rhythmic accuracy, ear training, and elementary musicianship—all with the goal of cultivating a love of music. Sandy guides the children toward the development of a beautiful, tuneful, and vibrant sound, while nurturing self-esteem and a sense of pride. Sandy's job is to make musical learning fun, to assist the children in discovering what it is like to be part of a musical family, to blend and sound as one. She offers opportunities for soloists to shine as individuals as well.

Students are admitted to the Discovery Chorus through a simple audition process. Prior experience is not required, but students are expected to demonstrate a rudimentary grasp of singing skills and an appropriate level of maturity.

With the decline of musical opportunities in schools, Discovery Chorus provides children with an opportunity to develop a life-long love of singing.



The Rogue Valley Chorale Association's Youth Choruses provide opportunities for talented young singers to participate in choral organizations of the highest quality. For more information contact deedee.rvyc@gmail.com or visit www.roguevalleychorale.org/rvyouthchoruses.

Shaun Garner, Cantare Chorus Director



Shaun Garner joined the Rogue Valley Chorale Association family in January, 2014, as the Musical Director of Cantare Chorus (grades 7-9).

Shaun hails from Southern California, where she began studying music at age 6. Her older sister was her first piano teacher. She added organ lessons to her studies at age 10, and became the

organist at her church shortly after turning age 11. Shaun says that the congregation must have been very forgiving! Shaun went on to study music at the University of Redlands, where she received degrees in organ performance, choral conducting and church music. It was during her college years that she began playing the harp.

Shaun's mentor at Redlands, Professor Jeffrey Rickard, served as her inspiration to study choral conducting. He directed the University Choir and the church music studies program, a field that is rarely offered today outside of seminaries. Shaun describes organizing the sounds of human voices in a coherent, harmonious presentation as one of the most sublime experiences possible. She says singing is a basic, primal expression, yet at the same time, one of humanity's most significant achievements.

Shaun has directed choirs in all age groups and interest categories. She lived in Northwest Montana for 20 years, where she was Founding Director of the Glacier Symphony Chorale and the Glacier Children's Choir. She also directed an adult chamber choir, accompanied the high school choirs, and played multiple instruments in the Glacier Symphony. Churches in which she has served include Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Christian Science.

Along with her role as Cantare Director, Shaun is currently the Music Director of the Rogue Valley Unitarian-Universalist

Fellowship in Ashland and Music Director of Rogue World Ensemble, a local chorus that specializes in world folk music.

As incoming Cantare Director Shaun plans to introduce a wide range of world music, and augment the experience whenever possible with insights into specific cultures and traditions, including instruments and dance. She comes to the Rogue Valley Chorale Association with lots of experience in many aspects of choral music: community, youth, church and chamber choirs, orchestral experience, non-profit board leadership, fundraising, touring, composing and arranging. "Whew!" she says. "Let's not do the math to add up all those years!"

Words from Shaun Garner... "I'm very impressed by the courage these middle school singers display in choosing to sing. This is an activity that is not generally affirmed or acknowledged within their peer group, and I want to encourage the community bond within the group that we all know music can provide. I am grateful for my lengthy eclectic background, however, because it has given me a broad range of perspectives as well as professional tools that I am excited to share in my work with Cantare."

Robert Stark

(Continued from page 5)

He spent the next 16 seasons singing, dancing and acting with the Moonlight Ampitheater, and 11 seasons with the Starlight Ampitheater. He maintained his work as a court reporter to pay the bills, then rehearsed and performed at night. He was exhausted and sleep-deprived and loved every minute of it.

When Robert retired he began to look for a community in which he could retire. He visited Ashland with a friend and loved the area, so he called it home. Robert attended a Chorale concert in February of 2012, which moved him deeply. He joined shortly thereafter and sang in the Spring, 2012 performance.

The many arts organizations in Southern Oregon appeal to Robert's dancer soul and feed his need for creative expression. The Rogue Valley Chorale Association is delighted to welcome him as a member.

2012/2013 Concert DVD's Are Here!



The Rogue Valley Chorale has produced DVD's of each of last season's concerts. The DVD's are a wonderful memento of Lynn Sjolund's final year as the Chorale's Artistic Director. DVD's are \$20 for a single concert, or \$50 for a set of all three concerts. They can be purchased by visiting our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org and clicking on merchandise.

Harpicord For Sale - Neupert Spinnet with Method Book containing many old tunes. \$950.00. Call Connie Crooks at 541-476-6564.



Support the Rogue Valley Chorale Association

For over 40 years, the Rogue Valley Chorale has been at the heart of the arts scene and has enjoyed the support of our community, without whom we could not have reached our current level of excellence. Financial support is essential to the Chorale's ability to entertain and enrich the lives of Rogue Valley audiences.

Would you like to make a donation to the Rogue Valley Chorale? To make a charitable contribution simply visit our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org and click on *Donate*. On-line contributions are routed through *PayPal* and are safe and secure. You can also mail your donation to Rogue Valley Chorale, 724 S Central, Suite 102, Medford, OR 97501. We thank you

The Sjolund Endowment Fund

In 2013 the Rogue Valley Chorale launched the *Sjolund Endowment Fund*. The fund has as its goal continuing, long-term support for the Chorale in order to provide our community with the gift of fine choral music in perpetuity.

The Oregon Community Foundation manages the Sjolund Endowment Fund. The principal of the endowed fund is never touched. The income and increase in value is used to support the mission and activities of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association for generations to come. Gifts can take the form of a cash contribution, a bequest in your will, or ongoing annual donations.

If you would like to consider making a gift to the Rogue Valley Chorale Association, OCF can help you turn your wish into a reality. To contact the Oregon Community Foundation call Christina Sanz at 541-773-8987.

Everyone's situation is different. We encourage you to talk with your financial planner or lawyer when making your estate plans.

Southern Oregon Subaru Sponsors Concert



The Rogue Valley Chorale welcomes Southern Oregon Subaru as its newest corporate sponsor. Subaru has generously offered their

sponsorship for the April 26 and 27 *Spring Splendor* concerts at the Craterian Theater at the Collier Center for the Performing Arts.

Southern Oregon Subaru has an extensive history of philanthropy in the Southern Oregon Community. We are grateful for their interest in the Chorale and look forward to many years of valuable support from our friends at Southern Oregon Subaru.

We are grateful to our many supporters who make it possible for us to celebrate the joy of singing with our community.





Celebrating the joy of singing

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Dee dee Morgan, Youth Choruses Administrative Assistant
Laurie Anne Hunter, Artistic Director
Sandy Roney, Discovery Chorus Director
Gerry Flock, Children's Chorus Director
Pam Nordquist, Youth Ensemble Director
Shaun Garner, Cantare Chorus Director
Marcia Lafond, Discovery Chorus Rehearsal Assistant
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Pat Daly, Accompanist, Youth Ensemble
Jim Stickrod, Accompanist, Children's Chorus
Barbara Hetzel, Accompanist, Discovery Chorus

To contact the Rogue Valley Chorale visit our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org.



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