

Siskiyou Singers Board meeting minutes

October 19, 2019

Present: Mary Van Wesep, Jim Gleaves, Laurie Morey, Michael Zuzel, Rich Gleitsmann, Laura Barlow, Cynthia Tank, Mark Reppert

Absent: Scott Nelson, Jay Morse, Mary Bergstrom

Minutes of Board's last meeting, Sept. 21, 2019, were approved.

Minute-taker's note: The paragraphs in quotes that follow are the written reports submitted by various board members.

Artistic Director report

"We are in very good shape at this point. I will be able to work more and more fine points.

"Our soloists for all of the pieces are in place. They will rehearse before they sing with the group

"I am still working out the Renaissance instruments for Angelus. Laurie Hunter will play her Irish harp

"I have almost completed my program for spring. Some pieces which are absolutely on the program: "Nänie" by Brahms, "Sure On This Shining Night" by Barber, "Reconciliation" from *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Vaughan Williams, "Ezekiel Saw De Wheel" by Dawson, "Stomp Your Foot" by Copland."

President's report

"The members of the Development Committee, of which I am a part, sent out donation letters to donors who have given \$50 or more within the last several years. We divided up the task of adding a personal note to each letter. Sally Peterson joined us in the process which was a very generous gesture on her part.

"I will begin writing thank-you notes to all of our donors.

"The EMEY campaign is in full gear and the donations are rolling in.

"We donated two Friday winter concert tickets to the Rogue Valley Chorale for their upcoming fundraiser. Laura Rich, the executive director, told me they would be more than happy to return the favor.

"Our ad selling campaign will get underway on Tuesday, October 22. We will have to move quickly as the deadline for turning in all ad materials comes up in early November. "

Treasurer

The choir has a balance of \$56,080 as of Sept. 30. This is lower than last year at this time because we purchased the additions to our risers and we owed

Mark a paycheck. As of Oct. 17, donations were at \$7,595. Singers can get specific details about the treasurer's report from Laura Barlow.

Development Committee report

Report was given and approved. Singers can get specific details from Laura Barlow.

Publicity and programs report

Michael reported that the plan was to have tickets ready to distribute to singers next Tuesday, but Shawn has fallen behind (unusual for him) and it's likely the choir won't have them until Oct. 29. Next up: posters and postcards, distribution starting Nov. 4.

OLD BUSINESS

Registration

Mark confirmed that during registration, a returning singer who has not sung with us since before he was director must re-audition with him.

Setting future concert dates

SOU reservations are made Jan. 1 for the following year (for example, in January 2020 we will be making reservations for our 2021 concerts). Our general goal for concert dates is the 2nd weekend in December and the last weekend in April. Scott Nelson is in charge of reservations.

Advertising

The Mail Tribune charges \$555 for advertising and will no longer guarantee that an arts group will get free coverage. Although the Chorale has suggested several of our organizations pitch in for a banner ad, Michael does not recommend it. He said newspaper ads are not targeted and may as well be messages in a bottle that we toss into the sea.

JPR/SOPTV underwriting (report from Michael)

We're currently paying slightly less than \$2,000 a year for underwriting on SOPTV. For that, we get a 15- second spot before and after 17 to 21 programs (34 to 42 plays) over an 18-day period before each concert series. We also get a print ad in the monthly SOPTV program guide.

We will pay about \$330 for each underwriting contract on JPR; if we did underwriting for each concert and audition series, that would be \$1,320 per year. For that, we get a 30-second spot played a minimum of 20 times on two to three

stations over a 7-day period before each series. We do not get a print ad (although we could purchase one in JPR's quarterly magazine for additional \$\$).

One difference between underwriting on the two outlets: JPR spots run in rotation, without regard to programming; SOPTV spots run with specific programs we choose. Shawn has been great about selecting programs that might appeal to our audience, such as arts shows (*Les Misérables*, Judy Collins) and regional programs (*Oregon Art Beat*) as well as PBS's most popular shows (*Newshour*, *Antiques Roadshow*).

Many arts organizations underwrite JPR. SOPTV underwriters include SORS, Brava Opera, and the Symphony.

Underwritings on both SOPTV and JPR are well-targeted for our audience and singer demographics— unlike, for example, a billboard or even a newspaper display ad, which are essentially a “message in a bottle” in terms of who might see it.

Aside from generating direct ticket sales or auditions, underwriting helps increase the choir's name familiarity, which may aid in securing grants and program ad sales, and yield audiences and interest in joining the choir in the future.

Michael made the following recommendations:

1. We should continue with SOPTV underwriting. Given that we are directly competing with other arts groups for audience entertainment dollars, our absence from SOPTV underwriting would be detrimental to us.
2. We should add JPR underwriting on a case-by-case basis, depending on how effective it seems to be and how secure the choir seems to be financially. We certainly should buy JPR spots for the holiday concert; underwriting for the spring auditions and concerts should also be considered.

Rich suggested we might hire SOU students to spend 45 minutes before each holiday concert, one at each door with clipboard, and ask people as they come in how they heard about the concert (for example, “SOPTV, JPR, don't remember.” Michael will explore that idea.

A motion to buy an underwriting contract with JPR for the holiday concert (\$330) was approved.

Board minutes/committee reports

Rich likes idea of pre-submitted reports; it gives board members a chance to review them ahead of time. But that means committee reports need to come sooner than the day before the meeting, so that Mary can forward them.

It was the consensus of the group that financial information should not be posted on our web site with our minutes. If there are questions about the treasurers' report, singers may see the treasurer.

Risers

Jim reported that Mary Bergstrom's husband Bruce has built a couple of plywood stacking structures for us so that some risers can be stored upright, saving space.

The replacement clamps we bought have arrived.

We still are on the waiting lists for a bigger storage unit in two sizes. Jim asked that the board permit him to take whichever size unit becomes available first. The smaller of the two would be sufficient for years; the bigger unit will be a couple hundred dollars more per year and give us room to grow.

A motion to allow Jim to use his discretion to accept whichever unit becomes available first was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Outreach

Outreach manager Sally Peterson submitted the following schedule for our March 2020 Outreach:

- Wednesday, March 11, 11:30 a.m., Scenic Middle School, Central Point
- Thursday, March 12, 12:30 p.m., Talent Middle School
- Friday, March 13, 9:08 a.m., Eagle Point Middle School
- Friday, March 13, 12:30 p.m., White Mountain Middle School, Eagle Point

Sally has yet to confirm one more event on that Wednesday, in the afternoon, at John Muir School in Ashland.

Rich said it seems like it takes more and more effort each year to find teachers/schools willing to host us. Are we forcing ourselves on them? This issue is re-visited every January with a meeting between Sally, Mark, and the president.

The board thought it would be good to have a mission statement to present to schools or other places where we would like to perform.

ACTION: Mary will talk to Sally about putting one together

Downtown caroling for the Chamber of Commerce

Mark will not be available to run the caroling on Nov. 21. Laurie has agreed to direct in his stead.

Next board meeting

Saturday, Nov. 16. No location yet.

Meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.