

Siskiyou Singers Board Retreat Minutes
August 15, 2020 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Zoom conference

Board Members Present: Mark Reppert, Mary Van Wesep, Howie Seay, Katharine Lang, Laura Barlow Cynthia Tank, Mary Bergstrom, Michael Zuzel, Scott Nelson, Rich Gleitsmann, Jay Morse

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM and started with breakfast and an icebreaker.

Board Structure

Michael Zuzel, Cynthia Tank, Mary Bergstrom and Katharine Lang have all agreed to extend their board terms another two years (2022). Howie Seay is our new president-elect!!

Approve Minutes

June minutes were approved with the following corrections: Scott will officially cancel holiday concert, with SOU, after this meeting.

Contracts: These are Scott's responsibility. The Executive Committee needs to decide on amounts before the contracts can be finalized.

Treasurer's report

* We will pay Mark & Mikiko for a normal term. (Mikiko:14 rehearsals and 3 concerts).

- It is prudent to maintain our liability insurance, according to Scott.
- Medford BMW has not cashed a \$200 refund for an ad. Let's let it ride, see if they contact us.
- Raffle: All ticket buyers will receive a gift certificate good for 4 tickets to our next live concert.

ACTION ITEM: Jay Morse will send the list of winners to Mary V.W. who will then send out the certificates to be redeemed at a later date.

To access the full profit and loss (P&L) report, contact treasurer Laura Barlow

Written Reports

Artistic Director - My Siskiyou Singer activities since we last met...

- Sure on This Shining Night video
 - Rehearsal with Zoom was unsuccessful
 - The varying latency from many computers made it impossible to sing anything together/coherently
 - Soundtrap problems
 - Eventually we were not able to use it at all
 - I suspect that some people recorded over others' recordings, however
 - We also eventually could not save any recordings
 - I constructed the video using the audio/video recording from phones and the like
 - I think it was successful, overall
- Jamulus

- I discovered a program designed to make it possible for musicians to rehearse with much less latency
- A small group of us were successful with our "rehearsal."
 - "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" was sung successfully as a round. We could not have dreamed of doing that with Zoom
 - However, my own system was not able to handle the stress of the and made my contribution unsuccessful
 - The inclusion of a Jamulus Server and hosting Zoom meeting on my computer seemed to be too much
 - I have started the process of upgrading my system, but I am still running into problems
 - I had to cancel another "rehearsal" Wednesday because my own system was not working well enough.
 - I still think I will solve these problems
- Chorus America Conference
 - In June I attended a virtual conference of Chorus America. The best sessions, as far as I was concerned were...
 - Recruiting, Retaining, & Maximizing Members - Craig Coogan
 - An extensive session with tons of great ideas!
 - Sonic Integrity
 - Very helpful explanation of the use of mics
 - The King Singers Finding Harmony
 - Inspirational hour about why choral directors do what we do along with encouragement to keep at it
- Oregon ACDA One Day Summer Workshop
 - At the beginning of August . The best...
 - Tesfa Wondemagegnehu: Social Justice Choir Movement
 - How can we be good allies?
 - Ethan Sperry: Virtual Choral Rehearsal Techniques
 - Not a ton of new info for me. I've been through it
 - He is thrilled with Soundtrap though, so he encouraged me to try it again.

Many sleepless (OK sleep-disturbed) nights

President – This month concludes my first term as president and what a very interesting year it has been. Certainly not one that I, let alone anyone, could have predicted. Past presidents have shared with me experiences they had while holding the position that tested their mettle so I knew that anything is possible but...a pandemic?? I did not see that one coming. Fortunately I did not have to make any decisions regarding COVID-19's impact on our choir alone. We, as a board, made those decisions together. We do not have a "score" to follow but together we are composing a plan that will allow us to continue to make music together.

Remember fall 2019? I do and I think you will agree with me that we had a wonderful winter concert followed by a fabulous after-concert party. We were all looking forward to singing some of Mark's favorite pieces in May 2020. And, the 10-year anniversary party for

Mark was shaping up to be an epic event. But, alas, that was not meant to be. What I so admire about our board and our director, Mark is that in spite of being disappointed at the turn of events, we did not dwell on it. Rather, we turned our energies toward coming up with alternative ways to do choir. Much thanks to Mark's leadership during this time and his relentless quest to make singing "together" a reality.

So, now I have a story to tell future presidents. I will be able to tell them that in spite of a difficult challenge our choir did not give up. I will be able to tell them that I was a witness to creativity in action. I will be able to tell them that when the chips are down, the Siskiyou Singers board of directors in there is strength and does not give up.

Serving as your president is a privilege and an honor. There is always room for improvement and I am grateful that I have another year in my term in which I can do just that. Stay tuned (get it?)...

Membership – No report

Publicity and Programs – The video recording of *Sure on This Shining Night* has been posted on YouTube and the Siskiyou Singer homepage.

New Business

Virtual Rehearsals –

Mark is upgrading his technology and has had some successes with virtual rehearsals. To be continued.....

Some members will not be able to run Jamulus, how do we handle this? Having some people join on Zoom will not work if everyone else is on Jamulus. People may be willing to share machines at their homes, if done with precautions.

Mark has attended Chorus America, Jamulus and Facebook for choir directors. He has learned a lot, has spent 100+ hours investigating. Zoom is the best for meetings, Jamulus is best for music.

His home technology was less than optimal, and he is working on it. Mark had a small group practice and it was disappointing that the problems were not resolved until later. We might all need to upgrade our computers to ensure capability and need to find out what each member has and if it will be sufficient. Jamulus can be merged with Zoom, via an app, and Howie knows how to do it.

Also important is each members' tech capabilities and sufficient connectivity. We need to hear from each person- what do they need to participate in rehearsals and recordings? This will be a trial and error process. People may not know what their upload speed is. High speed Internet connection is necessary. Jamulus can operate on 10 mps at minimum. To do a virtual rehearsal, we need to contact every member to see what their situation/capabilities are.

Cynthia: The going theory is that virtual rehearsals are impossible. Mark disagreed but cannot be sure. He has participated in online rehearsals, and thinks they are viable. 200K megabits per second is what is needed, or else there will be too many time delays.

September 8 will be our first virtual rehearsal. Who is interested, who can participate? Who can be tech support? We will need a tutorial.

Scott: We need to know that this is in the works, and the choir members need to be notified, via email.

ACTION: Mark will do this.

Mark will lead another small group rehearsal before this rehearsal, to work out glitches, and this needs to be done before the letter goes out. Date of rehearsal is Monday, August 17 at 2:00. PM.

The large rehearsals need a Zoom co-host. Mary V.W. will be the host, to let people in, or, perhaps it can be set up without the need to be let in. We also need a person to answer tech questions. This will be determined at another time, maybe Howie, who could run a simultaneous Zoom for that purpose. Or Jamulus + a webinar running simultaneously.

ACTION: Mary and Howie will get together to figure out the best way to do this.

MOTION: Mary moved that Siskiyou Singers' provides Mark with a paid Zoom account (\$15. per month). **Motion approved.** It was recommended that the banker reimburse Mark for 6 months of ZOOM rather than have to write a check every month.

It was suggested that we consider providing Mark with a technology budget. Mark does not wish to be compensated for his upgrades, at this point but will let us know if this changes.

Should we break the choir up into sections, for more efficient rehearsals? It depends on how many people sign up. The section leaders will be involved.

The pieces we are singing for our winter concert are all pieces we have done previously as a choir, but it's doubtful that all choir members have sung all of them. The pieces will be distributed via pdf, and the number distributed will match with how many hard copies we own which is necessary by law.

Recording –

Mark will retry Sound Trap. We had a big problem with the program. Mark realized that he should have deleted the entire thing and started over. He has been encouraged to try again, and has been in dialog with Sound Trap, in how to proceed without the problems we encountered previously.

Dues –

We will waive registration fee for this upcoming term. Some people will need to invest in ethernet cords e.g. so their money will be spent there. We will be asking for donations. We will also be asking for a commitment from people, for planning purposes.

Performances –

We can discuss this at a later date.

Auditions –

It's hard to know how many, if any, new people we will have, and auditions can be done via Zoom. Rich will figure out how to make this opportunity known.

Membership Retention –

Rich's focus will be on retention vs. recruitment (80% vs 20%). He has borrowed some information from Chorus America. He wants to institute a plan wherein each board member will contact 6 current members to inquire as to their welfare and inquire whether or not they are intending to remain in the new virtual group. Boston's Gay Men's Choir has a buddy system that starts at audition. That choir's retention went from 50% - 90%.

They also gave prospective new members more information about the audition. (ahead of time), and more information on how the choir works, how rehearsals are run, and more opportunity for personal interaction. Rich will get together with Mark to take a look at how we might change our audition process to make it more user-friendly.

Do a survey of members at the end of the next in-person term. The main challenge of virtual choir is motivation (or lack thereof) involved in not singing in a group (in the presence of others).

Mark does want to encourage new members via auditions. This involves advertising, and Mark will get together with Rich and Michael to discuss the best way to do this. Ads could be run on JPR, for \$350.

RVC went to Hanley Farms and recorded simple pieces, through masks. Mark feels this is too risky for us to attempt.

Contacting With Our Audience –

re: this fall. Should we ask for donations? Mary will send a letter in September, updating our audience on our current situation, that we will be putting together a virtual concert. Whether this will be free or involve a charge is TBD. Also, we should ask for their email addresses. We have 1,900 people on the mailing list vs. 388 on email.

Board Meeting Calendar 2020/2021

- September 19
- October 17
- November 21
- January 9, 2021
- February 20
- March 20
- April 17
- May 15

Location of next board meeting: ZOOM

Meeting adjourned at 11:34 AM.