

Siskiyou Singers Board Retreat Minutes
September 19, 2020 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Zoom conference

Board Members Present: Laura, Mary V., Mary B., Michael, Cynthia, Mark, Rich, Katharine, Scott, Howie (by phone).

Meeting was called to order at 10:07AM.

August minutes were approved (motioned, approved).

Written Reports

Artistic Director – Mark

Things are rolling along pretty well and we had more people attend our first rehearsal than I expected, so I am happy! We are on the road to success!

President – Mary

I was pleased to see that 36 singers joined in for our first virtual rehearsal last Tuesday. We are off to a good start.

The Development Committee met recently to survey our financial situation. We initially decided to start our annual fundraising campaign this fall, as we have in the past; however, due to the devastation in our valley from recent wildfires, we are going to postpone asking for donations until January 2021.

Even though we do not, yet, have a fundraising campaign in place, we have received a handful of donations over the last couple of months and I have happily written thank you notes to those individuals.

The Siskiyou Singers Handbook has been updated for the 2020-2021 season and will soon be posted to the website.

I have yet to send gift certificates to the people who participated in the raffle. Once I get the names from Jay, I will put the certificates together and send them out.

Membership – Rich (oral report)

Rich will be sending out the suggested list of contacts, for telephone/email contacting. Former singers who are not participating on this online outreach are of particular interest. A tenor buddy is needed for a new member Steve, and Rich will work on it.

Publicity/Programs/Public Relations – Michael

1. Fall Season and Auditions Publicity

Announcement of the fall season and auditions was done in most of the usual ways: a news release to local print and broadcast media, postings on online calendars, and notices on local Facebook groups and pages. I also spoke live with Geoffrey Riley on JPR's "Jefferson Exchange" on Friday, Sept. 4.

(An aside for amusement purposes only: The number of local Facebook groups/pages where choir publicity is appropriate continues to mushroom. Three years ago, there were fewer than two dozen; this fall, I posted notices to 48 groups or pages. Part of the reason for this

growth seems to be dissatisfaction with existing groups, largely due either to the strict rules for participation laid down by group moderators or the lack of same. Thus, refugees from the original Ashland Peeps group have now migrated to the groups Ashland Peeps 2.0, Ashland Peeps (Redux), Ashland Peeps Free Speech, Ashland Peeps Uncensored, Ashland Peeps Funcensored, Ashland People, Ashland Unfiltered, Ashland Community, Ashland Village, and two groups called simply Ashland. Complicating things, the original Ashland Peeps has changed its name to Riverstone Commons (?), leading to the creation of no fewer than four new groups all named Ashland Peeps. The same thing is happening in other communities: There are now five groups in Talent and three groups in Phoenix.)

We did not, however, buy the usual publicity/underwriting spot on JPR, which would not have been an effective use of our limited financial resources given current circumstances. The board may wish to consider underwriting to promote the virtual holiday concert.

2. Chorus America Membership

Our annual membership comes due on Sept. 24. The organization is offering a 50% discount due to the financial pressures that choirs are feeling due to the pandemic. Our renewal would be \$77.50 instead of the usual \$155.00 for a choir of our size. I have found the membership to be valuable in getting information on a range of subjects, from cultural appropriation to virtual singing, and recommend that we renew.

Action items: Jay will send list of names of raffle participants to Mary. Jay has left the board due to personal reasons. Mary will contact him to obtain this list.

Virtual rehearsal announcement email was sent by Mark.

Mary & Howie will figure out Jamulus webinar for Monday, ahead of the rehearsal. This has not happened yet.

Mary V. will be the Zoom host for the rehearsals.

Zoom account- Mary B. will pay in advance for 6 months, for Mark.

Whether or not to break up the choir into sections will be addressed at a later date.

We have two new members, who auditioned with Mark via Zoom. One soprano and one tenor (male), Julie and Steve.

Treasurer's report

Our balance looks pretty good, includes a 1K donation intended for 2020-21

\$5200 in unpaid bills (graphic design, SOU rental)

Donations to date at \$2120.

P&L statement: Net income \$9396.24. Pat helped Laura with estimating expenses.

BMW Medford finally cashed our check (refund for ad in program).

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

Development committee report

Meeting occurred on 9/3. Overhead will be \$18K for this fiscal year, maybe 20K if we include printing & mailing. Ads for website? Businesses can donate and get a logo & a link. Laura will be looking into this. Last year we sent 1,700 letters, most of which had no personal note. 32% of those with personal notes resulted in a donation (these were previous donors). This year we will only send letters to previous donors, as the return was not enough to cover the expense of letters to those who are not proven donors.

A new fundraising plan will be devised next year, as at this time (post-fire) it is not a good time to ask people for donations.

Old Business

Chorus America: \$77.50 yearly membership, this has become a standing expense, as this site has a lot of valuable information. It is directed at choir organizations and covers topics running a choir, recruiting, etc. Michael gave them board members' email addresses so we can each set up an account.

Michael will send the receipt to Mary B. to get reimbursed for payment.

Schedule changes: Mark sent out an email. December 5th will be the last date to submit our recordings to him, for him to create a performance. A subcommittee for a choir party via Zoom will be formed, let Mary know if interested. Scott said there are other platforms out there that may be better than Zoom for parties, that specialize in this. Zoom limits individual participation, and if 40 people join in, this may be an issue.

Chat room helpers: Howie (PC), Michael (Mac). Howie said that this process was problematic, communication has been difficult, so far. Best way to go would be to get everyone on Jamulus mainly, and not Jamulus AND Zoom, which created sound problems (Mark sends Jamulus through OBS, which sends it to Zoom. Zoom does not play well with others, but Mark is experimenting with this).

There was a tremendous variety in the audio levels, which was problematic.

Howie, Michael & Mark will host a Jamulus installation/orientation meeting will occur on Monday night. An invitation has been sent out to all.

Breakout rooms: during break time at rehearsal, for chatting. Should we do this? Rehearsal will only be one hour + announcements. It would be complicated, with muting/unmuting on Zoom. Those with PC's will find this process complicated.

Plug headphones in first, then open Jamulus, and the sound should be diverted.

Soundtrap (ST) update: ST will be used for making the recording for the concert, although the problems were massive. Mark is still optimistic that we can make this work.

Mark will receive an audio and video recording from each person. Some of the pieces need a conductor, due to change of tempo, but using a metronome instead of a baton, is helpful for maintaining a steady tempo. October 10th will be the first recording due date. An ST tutorial is necessary and will be discussed at the next rehearsal. Repetition will be important. Mark made a video, will send it to Laura & Scott for their review. First project should be something like "Row Row Row Your Boat", as a test.

New Business

Concert: Members need to know what our end product will be and will be motivated by it. Mark's vision is unclear- he's seen virtual concerts, like The Silicon Valley choir doing "Butterfly", and found it dull. There are several ways to package the songs- all together sequentially, as a YouTube video, or as separate songs. There could be commentary in between pieces, and Mark will determine this. Mary will send out an announcement to our audience, that Dec. 11 will be the performance date. This could be a postcard, as we do not have enough email addresses for our audiences. Graphic design would be involved, and costs would ensue. There would be a request on these postcards for email addresses, so they can receive a link to the concert. Mark would rather advertise on JPR, FaceBook, online calendars of various organizations, local papers, SOTV, etc. This would save the cost of a mailing. We need to be

aggressive on paid & free media (per Michael). There seemed to be a consensus among board members that we will not do a mailing. Should we hire Shawn to come up with an image for the concert (\$1,000 approx.) or use an image we already have? We will wait to send out a postcard, **to be revisited later.**

We are in agreement not to spend money on paid advertising. JPR would be the exception, \$350 for a week of spots. **This will be revisited in October.** We will not print posters.

Board of directors membership: we are down to 9 (10 with Mark) . It is time to recruit at least one new member. The job (advertising) going undone, with Jay leaving, is irrelevant at this time. It would be ideal to have at least ten members. We looked at the roster and discussed various options. Mary will send out the list of people we discussed, and she will ask them, one at a time, because only one is really needed at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM
Next meeting October 17th