

## **Siskiyou Singers Annual Board Retreat Agenda**

**August 19, 2023. 9:00 am – 2:00 pm**

**Mary Bergstrom's Home - 705 Roca, Ashland**

**Board Members Present:** Mark Reppert, Steve Thomas, Laura Barlow, Mary Van Wesep, Mary Bergstrom, Loretta Barker **Absent:** Michele Kyle, Scott Nelson, Howie Seay

**9:00 AM** - The retreat began with a delicious breakfast hosted by Mary Bergstrom. After breakfast, we were joined, via ZOOM, by Howie Seay (past president) for the Peaceful Passing of Power ceremony. The ceremony consisted of a thank you to Howie for serving as president (complete with a PowerPoint tribute and a gift), and the passing of the gavel from Howie to Steve Thomas (current president).

Steve then led us in an ice breaker activity.

**Meeting Called to Order – 10:30 AM** by Steve Thomas, President

### **Approval of May 2023 Minutes**

**MOTION:** *Loretta Barker moved that the Board Minutes of May 2023, be approved. Motion seconded. MOTION PASSED*

## **WRITTEN REPORTS**

### **Director – Mark Reppert**

I have already received a great deal of positive feedback regarding a relatively traditional Siskiyou Singers holiday concert this time. There are many who are looking forward to the Renaissance pieces and Lauridsen always seems to be a favorite! As usual, some of the music is challenging, but worth the effort. I appreciate that singers always work hard to be prepared.

I have already heard panicky reactions to the plans that we are going to change our rehearsal recording website. We will be switching from Soundtrap to Bandlab. Not to worry, though. Bandlab is an on-line DAW in the same way that Soundtrap is with the same features. The advantage of Bandlab is that their approach to director/singer communication is much less complicated. As with Soundtrap, singers who would like to use Bandlab can join for free. After that it is a simple matter of clicking on a link to access each piece. This is much easier than what we have been through with Soundtrap. In addition, the site seems much less "buggy." After some testing this summer, we have determined that this is definitely the way to go. Michael and Howie will be available to help with the transition, although I am sure that almost everyone will find it a very easy move.

I look forward to an exciting and rewarding choir term!

### **President – Steve Thomas**

Welcome to all Siskiyou Singers Members!

It is with great honor that I have been asked to fill the position of the Siskiyou Singers Presidency for the 2023 - 2025 term and I whole heartedly accept and pledge to do my very best to carry out the duties assigned in our bylaws in order that we may continue to be a successful and quality local community choir.

Last year we celebrated our 40th year anniversary with two amazing fall and spring programs that I feel were highly successful and very enthusiastically received by our audiences. I have been a participating member/singer since around 1992 with then director, Dave Marston, and have witnessed firsthand the continuous yearly increase in the quality of our singers and concert performances. I believe this is largely due to our current Artistic Director, Mark Reppert, who began programing and directing Siskiyou Singers in 2009.

I am confident that Siskiyou Singers will continue this upward trajectory with the help of Mark and our highly skilled Board of Directors at the helm. Siskiyou Singers has so much to offer to the well-being and enjoyment of fine arts for our beloved community here in rural southern Oregon and I am proud to be an active participant in that endeavor.

Thank you all for your dedication and hard work to ensure the continuation and success of Siskiyou Singers!

Yours in Music, Steven C. Thomas - President

### **Publicity – Michael Zuzel**

- **ADVERTISING:** I'm thrilled that Sarah Wright has agreed to serve as Program Advertising Coordinator for the coming year. As in previous years, she'll be enlisting help from choir members to recruit new and previous advertisers. Board members, in particular, can help by approaching potential clients. The new ad contract will be ready in a few weeks.

- **PRINTING:** Once we have confirmed new board members, I'll be ordering revised letterhead. We'll also need new notecards for the incoming president. We have plenty of No. 10 envelopes and donation envelopes, so we won't need to order more of those for a while.
- **EMAIL LIST:** In an effort to encourage audience members to give us their email addresses, I'd like to post a note on the website offering a chance at two free concert tickets each season, chosen at random from those who sign up. I'll handle the drawing, contacting the winner, etc.

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA.**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETING:** *This item did bring up an issue that Mary Bergstrom, our banker, has been dealing with. The issue being that postcards are mailed to persons no longer at that residence. When this happens, we have to pay the post office twice. Once when the postcard is sent and again when it is returned.*

**ACTION ITEM:** *Steve will ask Howie if there is a way to get email addresses from PayPal and add them to our database.*

**ACTION ITEM:** *Howie will remove from the database all the addresses that were undeliverable.*

- **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** I think it is important for our choir to publicly recognize that we perform on ancestral lands, but I found that SOU's recorded announcement, which we played before our Spring 2023 concerts, was unnecessarily long. Instead of using the SOU recording, I propose adding this one-sentence statement to our program each season:

*Siskiyou Singers respectfully acknowledges that the place where we gather and perform is located on the ancestral homelands of the Shasta, Takelma, and Latgawa peoples.*

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA.**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Steve will ask our SOU liaison if the above suggestion is feasible.*

- **DIGITAL PROGRAMS:** I'd also like to begin posting our programs online, with a QR code in the printed program that will link to the digital program. This would allow people to follow along with the songs and the translations on their phones, which is difficult to do with the printed program when the house lights are down.

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA**

**Membership – Howie Seay - no report**

**Choir Tour – Cynthia Tank**

**Participants -** We are at 37 participants. This includes Mark and Mikiko and 21 singers (6 sopranos, 6 altos, 6 tenors, 3 basses). We are doing something new this year, allowing singers who do not live in the area to participate in the tour without traveling to participate in the spring term. Mark can fill you in on the guidelines we came up for this.

**Tour rehearsals -** Mark has set the rehearsal dates for the tour:

- May 30, 7 - 9pm
- June 2, 2 - 4pm
- June 4, 7 - 8pm
- June 4, 8 - 9 pm Pre-tour performance for friends and family at the church (free, of course)

Mark will eventually be communicating these dates to the tour participants.

**Payments -** Next payment is due Sept. 27. Payment schedule is as follows:

\*3rd Payment: \$900 Due: Sept. 27, 2023

\*4th Payment: \$900 Due: Dec. 22, 2023 (At this point each individual will have paid \$2975)

\*5th Payment: Remaining balance and airfare Due: March 26, 2024

**Festival application -** We do have to formally apply for acceptance, but it's a no-brainer. It does involve some work on Mark's and my part. Mark will be submitting in the fall some preliminaries requested by ACFEA. These include a "provisional" repertoire list, bios for the group and for Mark, 2-3 high quality photos of the group and a director's headshot.

Regarding the repertoire, Rachel at ACFEA says we'll eventually need to submit title, composer, running time, and sometimes publisher, for each piece. And we need to designate which pieces are accompanied and which pieces are sacred.

## Executive Committee Report – Mary Van Wesep

The Executive Committee met on May 30, 2023, to review Mark Reppert's current rate of pay. The executive committee voted to increase Mark's yearly pay 27% as of September 1, 2023. Mark has been informed of the committee's decision.

## Treasurer's Report – Laura Barlow

- **Balance Sheet as of July 31, 2023** - When the \$6,236 in the Italy fund is subtracted, choir cash assets total \$67,165 which is a reduction of 11.4% as compared to the same time last year. Choir funds in the checking account total \$24,774.89 which is sufficient for starting the next fiscal year without tapping the Reserve Fund.
- **Profit and Loss Statement as of July 31, 2023** - Expenses do not include Shawn's bill which was paid earlier in August.
- **Credit Card Processing Systems** - The PayPal Zettle POS card reader looks like the best option for us. Funds would go into our existing PayPal account.
- **Ticket Prices**
  - **Rogue Valley Chorale** – Approx. \$40 including fees
  - **SORS**- \$18-\$45 including order fee
  - **RV Symphony** - \$28-\$78
  - **Jefferson State Choral Coalition** – \$25?
  - **Chamber Music** - \$39-\$59
- **Development Committee Spreadsheet for FY 2023/2024**

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

## Development Committee Report – Laura Barlow

- **Development Committee Spreadsheet as of August 7, 2023**

**Expenditures** - When the last insurance bill comes in along with a couple small bills, I think we will end up at a little over \$48,000 for the year in operational expenses.

**Revenue** - We did a little better than I had projected for ticket sales but I was overly optimistic for ad sales so those two cancelled each other out and we are at 101% of the total revenue I had projected.

**Donations** - We have had as good a fund-raising year as we have ever had. The Carpenter grant was a big reason.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETING:** *Loretta Barker (previous ticket manager) expressed concern that not all choir members sell their allotment of tickets. Laura Barlow has submitted a grant to the Oregon Cultural Trust, payment of which will be \$1,000 to \$2,000. She expects a response in October 2023. Laura also shared that we do not need to add any more money to our Reserve Fund.*

**ACTION ITEM:** *Loretta will ask Sally Peterson to share with the choir her techniques for selling a lot of tickets.*

## DOCUMENTS: REVIEW AND UPDATE

**Board of Directors (BOD) meeting dates & locations** – Mary Van Wesep, secretary, shared with the board a document titled, **Board Meetings Schedule** that lists the following: Board Meeting dates for the 2023-24 board year; Location of board meetings (yet to be determined [board members will volunteer to host a board meeting]); Other important dates and locations (choir workshops, Drech rehearsals, Concerts, Mountain Meadows concerts, Extra rehearsals).

**ACTION ITEM:** *Mary will update the document and share it with board members.*

**Board of Directors (BOD) demographic spreadsheet** - Mary VW shared a document titled, **Staff Data Sheet** showing all the people involved with Siskiyou Singers in a volunteer or paid capacity and their contact information. It also shows Board Members term information. The document was passed around and board members who were present made any necessary corrections. Said document will be shared again at the

September board meeting to give other board members an opportunity to make corrections to their contact information.

**ACTION ITEM:** *When everyone has had a chance to make corrections on the Demographic Spreadsheet, Mary will update the document and store it for future reference.*

**12:00 PM – LUNCH BREAK**

**12:50 PM – Meeting was called BACK TO ORDER**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS STRUCTURE**

**RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS** – The board is encouraged to keep ears and eyes open to potential board members. Four names were thrown in “the hat.” 1. Ro Tutland; 2. Sally Peterson; 3. Sarah Wright; 4. Inga Leed

**ACTION ITEMS:** *Howie Seay will invite Ro Tutland, Sarah Wright, and Inga Leed to serve on the board. Mary Bergstrom will invite Sally Peterson to serve on the board.*

**REVIEW BOARD AND NON-BOARD POSITIONS** – Mary VW shared a document titled, Siskiyou Singers Structure that lists all positions (paid and unpaid) within the choir and the people that fill those positions. Corrections were made.

**ACTION ITEM:** *Cynthia Tank will ask Char or Beate to take on the House Manager position.*

**QUESTION:** Who is going to ask Cynthia to do the above ACTION ITEM?

**ACTION ITEM:** *Mark will talk to Sally Peterson and Katharine Lang regarding the Social Media Manager position.*

**ACTION ITEM:** *Mary will update the Siskiyou Singers Structure document and share it with the board.*

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

**BYLAWS** – The board looked at the Bylaws with the intent of making revisions. The last revision to the Bylaws was June 2018. Attention was called to *Article IV – Officers, Section 3 – Elections* wherein it is stated that *Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors*. It was pointed out that we are not in compliance on this. The action was then taken to nominate and vote in the following officers:

President, Steve Thomas; Treasurer, Laura Barlow; Secretary, Mary Van Wesep

It was suggested to rewrite *Article V-Committees, Section 1-Executive Committee* to mention specifically the committee’s duty to discuss and decide changes in pay for the Artistic Director and Accompanist.

**ACTION ITEM:** *Mary VW will rewrite Article V, Section 1. Mary will ask for Scott Nelson’s input. Revised Article will be shared at the September board meeting for approval.*

**VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS** – Steve shared an article with the board titled, Coronavirus FAQ: Is it wiser to get a booster now or wait for the new fall booster? Steve summarized the article as follows: *Cases of COVID are overall low but there is an uptick. However, the suggestion is to wait for the new vaccine that will be available in September.* Steve suggests that we should no longer require that choir members be vaccinated.

**MOTION:** Laura moved that Siskiyou Singers will not require proof of vaccinations. **MOTION seconded. MOTION passed.**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Steve will inform the choir of the above decision and he will tell Michael Zuzel directly so that Michael can go forward with posting audition information.*

**DOCUMENT STORAGE – DROPBOX VS. GOOGLE DRIVE** – Records need to be available to board members. To date, we use DropBox for record storage. During his tenure as president, Howie Seay diverted from using DropBox to using Google Drive. Steve supports Google Drive because it allows collaboration on documents. It was suggested that board members receive a tutorial on Google Drive.

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA**

**BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – SLACK VS. EMAIL** – It was suggested that the board use Slack only for all board communications. It was determined that a tutorial on the use of Slack is in order.

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA**

**RAISING TICKET PRICES** – It is suggested that we raise our ticket price. The last time Siskiyou Singers raised its prices was in 2016 when we went from \$15 - \$20. Laura Barlow, treasurer, shared a spreadsheet showing what other choirs in the valley charge for admission. The recommendation is to raise our ticket price by \$5.00. The increase would help to cover the fees generated by using a credit card reader (2.29% + \$.09). (*Note: See below for a MOTION regarding the use of a credit card reader.*)

**MOTION: Laura moved that we increase ticket prices from \$20 - \$25. MOTION seconded.**  
**MOTION passed**

**SWITCHING ON-LINE PRACTICE PLATFORM FROM SOUNDTRAP TO BANDLAB** – Mark Reppert informed the board that we are switching from Soundtrap to Bandlab. He assured the board that all aspects of Bandlab will be easier to navigate. There was no discussion.

***ACTION ITEM: Mark will send the Bandlab link to the choir***

**CHOIR BLOG** – Mark would like to have a choir blog. The board, along with Mark, did some brainstorming around this idea. Some of the ideas/questions/concerns were:

- The blog could offer...
  - links to articles on the web
  - background information on upcoming concerts
  - choir newsletter
  - concert dates
  - personal stories of choir experience
  - ???
- Where do we put the blog?
  - Facebook
  - Email
- How often? 2x/term?
- Mark does not want to be the editor. If not Mark, who?
  - Katharine Lang?
  - Sally Peterson?

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA**

**QUESTIONS FROM MARK -**

1. Should we provide more concert info during concert – NO
2. Should we provide superscripts for music performed in a foreign language – YES

***ACTION ITEM: Mark will be on the lookout for a person who can run the superscript.***

**CREDIT CARD READER** – Based on Laura Barlow's research, Zettle is the best credit card reader for the choir.

**MOTION: The board authorizes the purchase of a Zettle credit card reader. MOTION seconded.**  
**MOTION passed.**

***ACTION ITEM: Laura will purchase the Zettle credit card reader.***

**THE BOARD WILL TALK ABOUT THE USES OF ZETTLE AT THE SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING.**

**CONCERT DRESS GUIDELINES** – The board looked over the concert dress code document that Cynthia Tank revised to make it gender free. The board had some questions and possible edits/revisions.

**THE ABOVE ITEM IS TABLED AND WILL BE PLACED ON THE SEPTEMBER AGENDA**

**SEPTEMBER REGISTRATION PLAN** – Registration is Tuesday, September 5, starting at 7:00 pm. The duties are listed below along with the board member (s) who will cover said duty.

- **Greeter** – Steve Thomas
- **Escort** – Loretta Barker
- **Registration Table** – Mary V.W. will ask Michele Kyle and Scott Nelson to cover this duty
- **Payment Table** – Laura Barlow and Mary Bergstrom

**NOTE:**

- Members need to fill out their registration form before getting to the payment table.
- Steve will direct members to download the online registration form.
- Mary V.W. will provide the hard copy registration forms.
- Mary V.W. will resupply the registration box.
- Mark will encourage section leaders to be present to greet any new singers to their section.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** – 2:52 PM

**NEXT MEETING** – September 16

**Steve Thomas' Home, 588 Beach Street, Ashland**

**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**