

**Siskiyou Singers Board Agenda**  
**November 16, 2024 9:00 am**  
**Sean Connolly's House – 250 Harvard Place, Medford, OR**

**Board Members Present:** Mark Reppert, Steve Thomas, Michele Kyle, Laura Barlow, Mary Van Wesep (ZOOM), Mary Bergstrom, Scott Nelson, Howie Seay, Sean Connolly, Jasmin Conley, Carol Lambie

**Absent:** Loretta Barker

**Meeting Called to Order at 9:07 AM**

**Approval of October 2024 Minutes - *the October Minutes are not available for approval, at this time.***

**WRITTEN REPORTS**

**Director – Mark Reppert –**

I am truly impressed by the work the group has done on this concert, especially the Chichester Psalms. That piece is challenging and yet we are in a very good place, five dedicated rehearsals ahead of the performance. It is also a challenge to prepare two separate programs, but we are doing it effectively. I am also so impressed with the "many hands light work" attitude of our group, led by our wonderful Board of Directors. I am thrilled to be able to focus on my job and know that others are handling all the other myriad jobs that make the program a success. I believe we will navigate this year's storm.

I announced our spring concert theme as "Pacific Rim" but have more recently had second thoughts. I worried about the quality of our singing if 3/4 of the program was in foreign languages. Also, many of the languages were unfamiliar to us, since we English speakers are more oriented toward Latin derived languages. I have decided to move in a different direction. I am very excited about the new theme focused on nature, especially birds (who are great singers!). The working title might be, "Birds and other things...", or something like that. We can probably come up with something better. The program will begin with a dark piece by Alberto Grau, "Kasar mie la gaji"--The Earth is Tired. The mood will change in a more positive way with pieces like "The Little Birds" by Eric Whitacre, the Irish folk song "The Lark in the Clear Air", "The Bluebird" by Sanford, "O Lovely Night" by Brahms. The program will end with an admonition to care for the earth: "Big Yellow Taxi" by Joni Mitchell and "Earth Song" by Ticheli. If you are curious, you will be able to find all of these pieces online.

**President – Steve Thomas**

Well... as you are all well aware this past month, after our October BOD meeting, was quite action packed! I will try to "briefly" recap what happened and where we stand to date.

First, Laura Rich, a Southern Oregon Repertory Singers (SORS) board member sent us an email (Oct 29) saying that they are losing their music library storage space and was wondering if there was a possibility of sharing storage space with Siskiyou Singers. After some Slack discussion by a few board members, it sounded like we were not interested in this idea for various reasons. Howie responded to her saying that we would need to discuss it as a board to make a decision. Thus far, this issue is not completely resolved and no further communication with Laura Rich or SORS has happened. We need to decide today how we want to respond and proceed.

Right on the heels of that issue came a request from the Marketing Director of the Rogue Valley Symphony (RVS) to consider advertising in their concert programs. Those of us on our board who participated in the discussion of this issue decided that we would respond as a board with a letter to RVS outlining our concerns and displeasure with them usurping our normal

December concert weekend. [Scott Nelson](#) drafted a great letter which I signed on behalf of our board and sent to the RVS Marketing Director, Andrew Zucker, and the Executive Director, Ms. Joelle Graves. Ms. Graves responded the next day outlining their reasoning on this and apologizing for the Marketing Director not being aware of what had happened to cause us displeasure as he is new to the organization.

She offered a complimentary ad for us in their December concert program (the one that conflicted with our usual weekend) and a paid ad in their November 22-24 upcoming concerts if there was enough time and space to do it. We have successfully placed both ads.

Ms. Graves also agreed to more long-term board level discussions soon on how to handle such scheduling difficulties in the future. We are hoping that SORS and the Rogue Valley Chorale (RVC) may participate in these discussions as well.

So, I feel, considering the hand we were dealt, it sort of came out a win-win situation... especially if our December Family Holiday Concert is a success.

Our December concert is shaping up to be a lot of fun for us and families with kids! Wait until you see the wonderful flier/poster that our Graphic Designer, Shawn Schaffer, has come up with for us.

Finally, as of our rehearsal with the wonderful substitute director, Laurie Anne Hunter, (in Mark's absence), it feels to me that we are on solid ground to provide two beautiful concerts in January 2025! Exciting! 🗣️🎵🗣️🎵🗣️🎵

**Publicity – Michael Zuzel – no report**

**Membership – Howie Seay – no report**

**Communications and Connections – Michele Kyle - no report**

**Technology Task Force – Andrew Klein – no report**

**Treasurer's Report – Laura Barlow**

- **Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2024**  
Balance Sheet and P&L statements are looking pretty good due to the fundraising efforts.
- **Profit and Loss Statement as of October 31, 2024**  
“Donations” include everything that was deposited by Oct. 31. Number is different than the Development Committee spreadsheet which includes everything deposited by Nov. 11.

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

- **Fundraising – Development Committee**  
EMEY – The number I announced (>\$15,000) at rehearsal included pledges. Discuss spreadsheet. Looking for feedback.  
Everyone else – Letters to non-singer donors went out the first week of Nov. We are already starting to see some returns.

**Grant Application Status**

- Oregon Arts Commission – \$2355 awarded but not yet received.
- Miller Foundation – Submitted by Laura. Will probably hear by the end of Nov.
- Oregon Community Foundation – Scott will apply in next two weeks
- Carpenter Foundation – \$3000 received.
- Pacific Power Foundation – Submitted by Scott
- Marie Lamfrom Foundation – Scott will apply in February
- Jackson County Cultural Coalition – Applied. Will probably hear in the next couple weeks.

## ACTION ITEM REVIEW

**ACTION ITEM:** *Inga will report on Water Bottles (Underwriters/bottles) vs. sleeves (House) / smaller bottles.* ADDED: We will buy 100. Cost could run \$457.00. **DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Andrew and Howie will report on the transition to Google Drive Workspace/Emails*  
ADDED: Any emails to the new address will be answered in SLACK. Howie is monitoring this.

**DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM – Inga and Mark will investigate the viability of Siskiyou Singers offering programs in Spanish for the January concerts.**

**DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM – Scott will take necessary steps to put an Inclusion Statement on our website.**  
ADDED: Steve will do this.

**DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Mark and Sally will make arrangements to have a Santa Claus at the December concert.* ADDED: Discussion on where to put Santa.

**DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Howie will put together an after-concert party for the December concert.*

**DONE** **PENDING**

**ACTION ITEM:** *Howie will secure an after-concert party location for the January concert.*

**DONE** **PENDING**

## OLD BUSINESS

**PHONE VOICE MESSAGE PASSWORD AND OTHER ISSUES** – Mary B / Mary V.W.

*Howie is on this. Working with Century Link.*

**TICKET QUESTION:** *Can we make online tickets available sooner rather than later?*

**ACTION ITEM:** *Howie, Mary V.W., Andrew, and Michael will form a Task Force to look into the possibility of making concert tickets available online well in advance of concert dates.*

**DECEMBER CONCERT AFTER PARTY** – Howie

*The choir will go out for Pizza after the December concert. Howie will take orders and place them ahead of time.*

**JANUARY CONCERT AFTER PARTY** – Howie

*Steve Thomas will host the January after concert party.*

## NEW BUSINESS

**QUESTIONS FROM CYNTHIA (Stage Manager)**

1. Do we have someone in charge of recruiting ushers and box office for the January concert?

*Carol Lambie will do this.*

2. For the Christmas concert, will we have ushers handing out the programs or do you just want to set them on tables at each house entrance?

*Yes, we will have ushers.*

3. Will you need a ticket-selling station in the lobby to sell tickets for the January concert?

*Done!*

4. Do you want to skip stage flowers for the Christmas concert or pay extra for them? Our trade ad with Manzanita only covers the stage flowers for the January concert. (Or you could flip it and use the trade ad for the Christmas concert and pay for the January concert flowers.)

*We will skip this.*

***ACTION ITEM: Steve will make an announcement at rehearsal that we are in need of ushers.***  
***ACTION ITEM: Steve will inform Cynthia of the board's answers to her questions.***

*We will distribute flyers to kid-oriented businesses. We will order 500 at \$109.00. We will order fewer posters. We will order 200 single sheet programs in black and white.*

***ACTION ITEM: Andrew will talk to Michael Z. about having a Spanish version of the flyer/program.***

### **CONCERNS FROM SALLY**

Marilyn, Mark and I met and discussed ideas for the kids. I have ordered and received 300 Christmas bells and will pick up candy canes to hand out as families leave the concert. We will need volunteers, perhaps our ushers, to be at each exit door.

Michael and I spoke. It is my understanding that we will be distributing postcards for the winter January concert over our break. I'm not sure it will be possible to ask choir members to do two distributions. We would need to make that decision really soon.

*The decision was made to distribute January concert posters and postcards at the December concert.*

***ACTION ITEM: Steve will relay the above information to Sally.***

### **MICHAEL ZUZEL'S LETTER TO BOD**

November 13, 2024

Siskiyou Singers board members,

I will step aside as coordinator of choir publicity—including programs, printing, the website, and Bandlab tech support—after our spring concerts in May 2025. I'm providing this notice far in advance to allow the board ample time to appoint a replacement and give me the opportunity to familiarize my successor with these tasks.

I want to make clear that this decision does not stem from any displeasure with the choir, the board, or the job itself. Rather, I'm simply burned out.

I have been overseeing choir publicity and the website since the fall of 2017, and printing and programs since Scott Calvert's death in March 2018. The work has expanded considerably in that time, with two international tours, the shift to online rehearsal recordings, and the addition of a special Christmas concert—not to mention the pandemic and everything that the resulting virtual rehearsals and performances demanded. I find that I am spending far more time on these tasks than I do practicing music, which is not the balance I desire.

Moreover, I believe that it is time for new blood. I earned my communications degree in 1982; I've been out of the news business for 21 years; even my professional public relations work largely ended a decade ago. A fresh vision will, I believe, help Siskiyou Singers expand its audiences and fulfill its mission.

Finally, as much as I love and remain committed to Siskiyou Singers, I need time for other things. I have a book manuscript nearing completion; I'm in the midst of narrating another audiobook, with more perhaps to come; my own musical projects have been on hold far too long. And Cynthia and I have lots of travel plans.

I want to thank the board and Mark for the opportunity to put my skills, such as they are, to good use for the choir's benefit. I look forward to working with the new publicity manager over the next several months—and to continue singing with all of you for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Michael

## **STEVE'S (PRESIDENT) RESPONSE TO MICHAEL'S LETTER**

Hey Michael,

I just saw this letter and want to acknowledge its receipt along with my total understanding of your need to "get on with your life". I have felt soooo fortunate to have had you and Cynthia carry on with all that you have done for Siskiyou Singers beyond your resignations from the board after I was elected president a couple of years ago. I will very much miss your wisdom, publicity and communication relations talents that you so willingly have continued to provide. I am sure that our board members will have the same feelings when they receive this news. I also want to give you my heartfelt thanks for your offer to help shepherd a new person into this position. I know it will be a very challenging one to fulfill.

I am glad you will continue to participate in singing with Siskiyou Singers and providing us with your lovely rich bass voice. Afterall, isn't that ultimately why we all do it? I personally find that being a part of any large group that manages to produce such wonderful live music to perform for others is one of the most enjoyable activities I'm able to do in this life!

Best wishes to you and Cynthia in pursuing all of the exciting things you both still hope to accomplish.

Most Sincerely,  
Steve Thomas

*We will have to divide up the tasks that Michael does.*

*We need to review the job descriptions.*

*Andrew volunteered to work with Michael.*

***ACTION ITEM: Andrew will contact Michael***

***ACTION ITEM: Howie will investigate how and to whom donor emails are sent.***

## **SORS REQUEST TO SHARE MUSIC LIBRARY STORAGE SPACE** (see President's written report above) – Steve

*We want to be clear and collaborative with SORS. We could look for a new, climate controlled, space to share. We could weed out some of our music to make more room for another group.*

***ACTION ITEM: Mark and Scott will talk with SORS about options.***

## **SOU'S NEW PRICING STRUCTURE** –

*The overall rental price has gone down \$400; however, the dress rehearsal will no longer be included in the rental cost. There will be a separate \$400 charge. They have tacked on some extras (for example, we can get a recording at \$40/hour. This would save us from having to hire an outside recorder. In the long run we will be saving some money.*

***ACTION ITEM: Steve will give Michael Z. the inclusion statement.***

***ACTION ITEM: Steve will tell Michael the number of posters and flyers we need.***

***ACTION ITEM: Inga will distribute flyers to the local schools.***

## **READ/REVIEW NEW ACTION ITEM COMMITMENTS** – Mary VW

*Mary Van Wesep read the Action Items generated in this board meeting.*

**MOTION TO ADJORN** - Scott moved we adjourn. Laura seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.** We adjourned at 12:03 PM.

## **NEXT BOARD MEETING:**

**January 25, 2025 - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
**Location TBD**