



InChoir

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Meet your board of directors

Arnold Earl is our “elder statesman.” Arnold was a founder, conductor and director of the Ottawa Central Children’s Choir, during his time as Superintendent of Music with the former Ottawa Public School Board and later with the Ottawa Board of Education. Arnold is a violinist and played with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra for ten years before coming to Ottawa. He now plays with the 62-member Parkdale Orchestra. Arnold is a lay preacher with the United Church, and a volunteer care worker at the Royal Ottawa hospital. His knowledge and experience are valued and appreciated.

Shirley Cummings remembers when the Central Children’s Choir was formed. She was teaching Grades 3 & 4 at Manor Park School, and many of her pupils were “founding” choristers.

Shirley has an abiding interest in music, and she and her late husband, Harley, were early and strong supporters of the Central Choir; when her husband died, Shirley asked that a small group of Central choristers sing at the funeral service. In memory of her husband, and because of her own love of the Choir, Shirley has made frequent generous donations as well as setting up a Trust, which yields annual income to the Choir. She has also devoted hours of her time to listing all Choir alumni, so that they may be approached for donations.

Dr. Marianna McVey, Vice-President, is the founder and President of Network for Educational Leaders, Resident



Lynda Lear, above, isn't on the board but she is a “volunteer extraordinaire,” says Linda Griffiths.

Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Educational Leadership, McGill University. Dr. McVey has had a distinguished career with the Ottawa Board of Education (now the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board) as English teacher and consultant, and as curriculum and program specialist. She is the Choir Board’s expert in applying for potential grants, and is responsible for those we have received from the Trillium Foundation of Ontario, and the Community Foundation of Ottawa, among others.

David Kirkwood, Treasurer, came from Toronto to Ottawa in 1950 to join what was then the Department of External Affairs, and except for some ten years of

foreign postings, has lived here ever since. David later served with the Privy Council office and with five other federal government departments. He sang for several years with the Ottawa Choral Society. David and his wife have four children and seven grandchildren: “none of whom,” writes David, “to my regret, has shown any interest in singing.”

Philip Cheetham, Secretary, is a Parent Representative on the Board: his daughter, Jenny, is enjoying her first year as an alto in the Chamber Choir, after two years with the Concert Choir. “She is,” says her father, “paving the way for her two younger brothers.” In addition to his Secretarial duties, Philip has been helping organizing

the lists of Choir alumni. He has spent his working life in the high tech industry; music is a major part of the Cheetham family life and all three children enjoy playing piano.

Elaine Stephens, Assistant Treasurer, is also a Parent Representative: her daughter, Laura, sings second soprano in the Concert Choir. Elaine is Manager of the Ottawa-Carleton Educational Credit Union. She was born in Nova Scotia, and worked for some years with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in the Northwest Territories. Elaine enjoys skiing and cycling. She is very knowledgeable about our finances, and works hard to ensure that other Board members understand them.

Maurice (Moe) Beere, Parent Representative, is the father of Courtney, in her first year in Chamber Choir after three in Concert. Moe is a long serving (32+ years) officer of the Royal Canadian Navy, and has been posted in many interesting places: Queen Charlotte Islands, British West Indies, State of Virginia, U.S. He also spent a 7-month tour of duty at CFS Alert, the most northern habitation in the world (485 nautical miles from the North Pole.) Moe has been stationed in Ottawa for ten years, the last six at CFS Leitrim, where he is Operations Administrative Chief. Moe and his wife, Lynda Lear, are enthusiastic and efficient fundraisers. Moe is Board liaison with the Performance committee.

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Making a difference in our Community

Sing out your Stories Community Development Partnership Project

By Marianna K. McVey,
Vice-President

Board of Directors
The Central Children's Choir of Ottawa

The Central Children's Choir of Ottawa gratefully acknowledges the financial support (\$37,200) of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

With \$100 million in annual funding from the province's charitable gaming initiative, the Foundation provides grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in the arts, culture, sports, recreation, environment and social services.

Sing Out Your Stories features one-hour concerts on May 8 and 9, 2001 by the Central Children's Choir of Ottawa in the auditorium of McArthur High School. One thousand students in grades three to six and their teachers from 15 Ottawa-Carleton District School Board BEACON Elementary Schools will attend. Follow-up concerts will be held in December 2001 and May 2002.

The purpose of *Sing Out Your Stories* Partnership Project is to:

- examine a community children's choir and the impact of its performance on children
- analyze the views of participating children and their teachers concerning the concerts and their related activities
- document the opinions of choristers concerning such experiences
- prepare children to be educated audiences so that they can benefit in a more positive way from future music and artistic performances in the community

Through this initiative, the quality of life within BEACON classrooms, schools and the Ottawa community will be enriched.

As a result, many more children will have a different view of choral music and will be encouraged to sing and to audition to become future choristers thereby contributing to the inclusiveness of the the Choir and the vitality and quality of life in the community.

An Ontario Trillium Foundation Plaque will be presented to the Choir as recognition of the excellent work done in our community.

Fundraising to bring in \$19,000 for choir

By Marianne Van Oosten

Blueberry pancakes on Sunday mornings. Pointsettas on the mantle at Christmas.

Groceries at Loblaws all year long.

These are just some of the benefits we, as choir families, get from the Central Children's Choir fundraising campaigns throughout the year – not to mention the thrill of hearing our children sing at performances!

Over the years, the choir has relied heavily on the fundraising efforts of parents in order to provide experiences for the choristers, such as trips, uniforms and performances.

This year, fundraising efforts will bring an estimated \$19,000 to the choir's coffers, including:

- Loblaws certificates (ongoing, has raised \$3,000 so far);
- Raffle (\$6,000)
- Berry sale (\$2,500)
- Pointsetta sale (2,000)
- Walkathon (projected to raise \$4,500)
- CDs, shirts, etc. (\$500)

Many thanks to the team of more than 30 dedicated parents who spent countless hours helping with these fundraising campaigns. The success of this year's fundraising campaigns is a testament to their hard work!

Winter flurries bring spring stories!

By Michelle Parks

After a long cold winter we all look forward to tulips, daffodils and brightly coloured birds – the signs of spring returning to Ottawa.

Friends, families, choristers and all music lovers, however, look forward to a unique part of Ottawa's Spring Display – the Spring Concert held annually at Brookfield High School. The joint Chamber and Concert Choirs of the Central Children's Choir of Ottawa-Carleton are busily preparing a rich tapestry of songs and stories for the 2001 event entitled *Sing Out Your Stories*.

A special guest this year is Sheree Fitch a dynamic and award winning writer of children's books. Some of you may remember laughing through her classic rollicking rhymes in *Toes in My Nose* and *There Were Monkeys In My Kitchen*.

The evening promises to have entertainment for all ages.

Choristers are "looking forward



to performing and having fun".

Linda Griffiths, Concert Choir manager, sees it as "a wonderful opportunity for the concert choir to show how much they have grown over the year." Music has been selected to support the theme of "Stories" with all songs either telling a story or based on a story. The chamber choir's large repertoire will include musical selections related to L. M.

Montgomery's classic *Anne of Green Gables* with collaborative and choral support from the now-

seasoned Concert Choir members.

We hope you, your friends and fellow music lovers will join us as we celebrate a year of hard work by all the choristers, choir leaders and volunteers who make these events seem so effortless. The concert *Sing Out Your Stories* takes place on Thursday May 10th at 7:30 p.m. at Brookfield High School. Tickets are available at the door on May 10th, in advance from choristers or by contacting the choir office at 233-4440. See you there!

Grocery certificates benefit choir

The choir receives up to five per cent of whatever you spend on groceries each week, thanks to an effortless fundraising program.

Certificates are redeemable at any Loblaws or Independent Grocers. Certificates are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at regular choir practices and can be purchased in \$50, \$25 or \$20 denominations.

Choir serves 'musical feast'

By Grace and Karl Mann

The Central Children's Concert Choir of Ottawa-Carleton sang beautifully for their entry in the Kiwanis Music Festival on April 19 at Dominion-Chalmers Church, and were rewarded with first place honours.

Every year, the choir members work hard preparing for this competition and director Yvonne Navratil encouraged them to do their best. In the warmup before their performance, she asked them to think about what they were singing.

In the piece, *The Water is Wide*, arranged by Jane Ellen, she wanted them to "feel the sadness of unrequited love" and to "set the mood" for the audience.

The church was bathed in soft golden light from the stained glass window and domed ceiling, and was filled with family and friends, as the choir members filed in.

The Concert Choir was entered in two classes, the first for choral ensemble, folk song chorus, for elementary schools. After the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board Children's Choir performed two lovely pieces, the Concert Choir performed *The Water is wide* and *S'Vivon*, a lively Hannukah song sung in Hebrew. The adjudicator, Jeff Joudrey, began his comments by telling us he had been told "to expect a real feast of choral music...and they (these choirs) really gave us a feast." He complimented the Concert Choir on their beautiful legato tone in *The Water is Wide* and that they "painted the words with such clarity" that we could "feel the chill of the word cold." Mrs. Navratil's earlier encouragement was obviously taken to heart by the choristers. Mr. Joudrey pronounced the singing of *S'Vivon* as "energetic, enthusiastic, rhythmic and spirited." Both choirs sang with lovely musicality and it was a difficult decision for the adjudicator, but the Concert Choir received a high mark of 87.5 and was awarded the Luella Barriger Trophy.



The second class that the Concert Choir was entered in was for choral ensemble, secondary school board. The choir performed very well in a class with two choirs with more mature singers, the Merivale Junior Girls Ensemble and the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board Chamber Choir. The audience really enjoyed Merivale's *Little Miss Muffet* by Hopson and *Roll of the Sea* sung by the Catholic Chamber Choir. The Concert Choir sang the hauntingly beautiful *Evening Prayer* by Humperdinck, and the lively and technically difficult *I went to the Market* by Patriquin. One of the choristers, Simone Hildebrand, remarked later, "I liked *I went to the Market* best and that we didn't sing in any rests!" The adjudicator awarded all three choirs gold awards for their wonderful singing.

Several of the choristers commented on the pleasure of singing with other choirs. Sarah Pinnington said, "It was a lot of fun. I liked hearing the other choirs too." Ryan Mann was pleased that "we tied with the other choirs even though they were all older than us."

The audience was treated to a wonderful "feast" of music-making. Congratulations to the members of the Concert Choir, Mrs. Navratil and accompanist Allison Prowse on your excellent performance.

Meet the Board

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Leslie Scott, Parent Representative, is the mother of first year chorister, Jeremy Andison, with whom she shares a love of music. Leslie has studied piano and clarinet, and during her school days sang in various choirs. Leslie has undergraduate degrees in science and commerce, as well as an MBA from the University of Western Ontario. She currently works at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency as Director of Program Development in the Assessment and Collections Branch. She has also been a board member of several community associations, and last year chaired the organizing committee for the Canada Shanghai 2000 Dance Troupe. Leslie is Board representative on the Archives committee.

Terry Marcotte, Parent Representative, is senior Sports Editor at the television station CJOH, where he has worked for 13 years. Before that, Terry worked at radio and television stations in Ottawa, Kingston and Saint John, New Brunswick. Terry is an Ottawa native, married to Lyne Fortin. They have two daughters, Natalie, seven, and 12-year-old Gabrielle, who is a Chamber chorister. Terry is Board liaison with Public Relations and Communications committee.

Eileen Scotton, President, is a former journalist and social worker, and a former trustee and chair of the Ottawa Board of Education. She is also (more importantly, she says) the mother of a former chorister (Anne, 1964-66) and the grandmother of present chorister Robin Brock, who sings second soprano with the Concert Choir. Eileen, who plays piano and has sung alto in choirs in England and Canada, "loves" choral music, "especially young voices," and is determined that Ottawa, where she has live since 1960, will always have a Central Children's Choir.

Wendy Old has had two boys in the Choir, each for 5 years.. During that time she served on the Parents' Committee in numerous capacities, including two years as president. Wendy became the Choir Manager of the Concert Choir at its inception in 1987, and also served as a vocal assistant. Wendy was a teacher of vocal music in elementary schools in Mississauga and in Ottawa. She has sung in church choirs, the Toronto Orpheus Choir, the Cantata Singers of Ottawa and is presently a member of the Nepean Choir. Wendy has always had a keen interest in promoting excellence in children's choirs and considers it an honour to be able to represent this outstanding organization on the Board of Directors.

City Living thanks 'great opening act'

By Amanda Weinstock

Concert Choir members took the buses downtown to the Rotunda of the City Hall on Elgin Street in the early evening of March 22. City Living had invited the choir to sing for its anniversary party, celebrating 25 years of providing affordable housing to families and individuals in the area.

Karen Sexsmith, East Operations Manager for City Living was very impressed with the performance of the choir. "They have such harmony, and they can really hit those high notes. Staff received many compliments after on the program." She enthused, "They were a great opening act."

City luminaries in attendance were: Elisabeth Arnold, Alex Cullen, Diane Deans, Alex Munter and Len Potechin. An estimated 250 people, tenants, staff and well wishers were there for the show. Stéphane Emard-Chabot, Chair of City Living, was the master of ceremonies.

An organizing committee from City Living put together the program which included a multicultural theatre presentation, presentations of 25-year certificates to long-time tenants and staff, and a history of affordable housing in Ottawa. Some formidable city names were instrumental in the

birth of affordable housing – Grete Hale spoke of how her father was involved in the building of the first of these housing units in the Overbrook area.

Originally begun by private businesses, the units were eventually purchased by City Living. It has grown to 6,000 homes, however there are 14,000 households on the central waiting list today. The last new City Living building was opened in 1995. New units are once again under construction in the west end, thanks to creative proposals, but it is not enough, according to Sexsmith. She points out there is an ever growing need for affordable housing in the region, with Ottawa having the lowest vacancy rate in the province.

For choir members who attend schools in quiet residential neighborhoods, it was an exciting diversion to spend the early evening hours of spring in celebration of one of Ottawa's most worthwhile organizations.

Choir members wore dress casual, vests, white shirts, dark trousers and black dress shoes. They sang: *Irish Blessing*, *Side by Side*, *Sing me a Song* and *Heavenly Airplane*. This was an uplifting, inspirational and delightful selection. It reflected a sense of co-operation, humanity and compassion that is the essence of City Living.

A Midsummer's Night Dream

By Susan Jellett

On May 30th and 31st, the Chamber Choir and approximately thirty members of the Concert Choir will be singing Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the National Arts Centre.

Michael Lankester will be the conductor for this performance, which will feature Christopher Plummer as narrator, sopranos Sharleen Joynt and Sarah Shropshire, the NAC Orchestra, and the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir. Mrs. Clark has been working with the "extended" Chamber Choir, and the youth involved have been enjoying the emphasis on dynamics and musicality.

Jenny Cheetham of the Chamber Choir, when asked if the music is harder or easier than the selections usually done by the group, said, "I think that it isn't really harder or easier – it's just normal." She likes "... adding the dynamics and making it sound musical and really nice." Jenny also said, "It's really cool to perform with Christopher Plummer as narrator." I asked Jenny if she thought that Mrs. Clark was enjoying the work for the show: her response was, "I think that Mrs. Clark is looking forward to it."

Kristen Freeman, also of the Chamber Choir, said that the music, like all of the Chamber Choir music, is a more difficult level of music than the music that was done when she was in the Concert Choir. She mentioned that they now "... pay more attention to mistakes ..." and try to "get it almost perfect" and "do the dynamics better." And yes, she is looking forward to performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

When Hilary Cole of the Concert Choir was asked what she has learned from preparing for this important concert, she said that she sight reads a lot better now. She added that it's "... a bit more challenging than the Concert Choir – it's harder music, challenging, and you really have to sing your best and practise."

Erin Condran, also of the Concert Choir, says that "The music is harder than what we do in



Concert Choir: it's more advanced." She's a little nervous about singing at the NAC, but finds that the extra rehearsals (the rehearsals with the Chamber Choir) are "tough, but fun". Erin explained that usually the Concert Choir kids are sitting between two Chamber Choir members, and that "... singing with people who sing better, makes you sing better." When asked what she has learned, she responded, "You have to get off notes really quickly; it's a lot faster."

Despite having sung at the NAC on previous occasions, this concert is still special to the participants. When you hear the enthusiasm in Chamber Choir member Caitlin Mathews' voice, you understand why the young people are willing to work so hard: "It's a lot more fun: it's fun to do, and getting to do it with a mass choir, and the professional orchestra at the NAC, makes the whole experience fun. The guest conductor could decide to have us sing it a different way (than the way that Mrs. Clark has had us prepare it)."

Caitlin has the confidence of many of the choir members – they know that they are up to the challenge of this performance, and welcome it.

As always, the rest of us are confident that you will all do an excellent job.

Let's all enjoy the show!



Emma Krakower and Sarah Hurcomb are two members of the Chamber Choir travelling to Tuscany, Italy, on July 1 to attend an international music festival. Choir members are thrilled to be singing at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City before heading back to Canada on July 10.