

Voices

WESTSIDE VOCAL MUSIC

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Celebrating 15 Years of COE!

From balmy to blizzard, weird weather helped this year's Competition of Excellence go down in history as COE marked its 15th anniversary.

Volunteers basked in unseasonably warm 50-degree weather as they set up



Tara Maulsby paints a sign welcoming one of the show choirs to COE.

Friday for the girls' groups portion of COE on Jan. 30. No coats were needed as they delivered baked goods and donated soda for concessions, prepared the parking lot for a barrage of buses and readied Westside for the 27 teams and hundreds of fans who attended.

When temperatures plummeted and a gentle Saturday afternoon snow turned to icy bluster - just in time for the finals round - those same volunteers were undaunted, dealing with the challenges to ensure COE's success. For example, parking crews stuck around for multiple shifts so that volunteers could take turns warming up inside,



according to parent volunteer, and chair of parking, John Hughes. Hughes says he hopes for the best of weather but plans for the worst so his volunteers were prepared to manage traffic flow in the slick and snowy conditions.

Concession crews - often the first to arrive and last to leave - helped push parent volunteer Cathy Haney's van up the icy kitchen driveway. Her car loaded with COE supplies couldn't get any traction when she left at midnight. COE co-chair Julie Liakos said the

moment brought laughs and jokes that are part of what makes volunteering a fun and rewarding experience.

Iowa schools competing at COE made the white-knuckle drive home with Marion finishing the trek at 3 a.m. and Linn-Mar at 5:45 a.m. Canceled flights stranded some COE judges for a day, but winter weather is an inevitable part of show choir season and Liakos said Mother Nature held



Connor O'Doherty and Jacob Thomas hang streamers to decorate a room.

off long enough to get everyone home safely and make the event another great fund-raiser for Westside's three show choirs.

Weather was the least of their concerns 15 years ago when Cathy MacInnes and her husband, Rick, chaired the very first COE. Creating the event from scratch, they helped Doran Johnson start a Nebraska contest with top-notch judges and a finals round. COE was the first in the state to include a



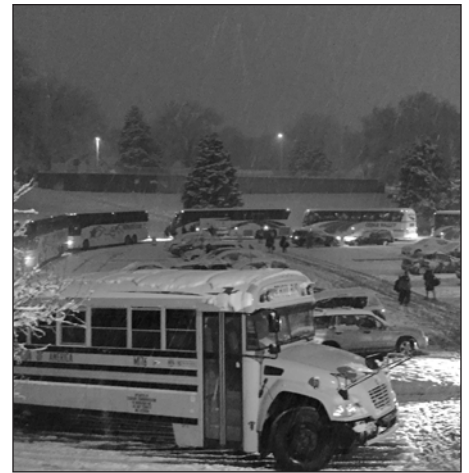
Scott Hofmann gives bus drivers a ride back to the high school after the buses are parked in a church parking lot.

finals competition with awards for the top show choirs.

MacInnes said the parents also wanted to raise money so Johnson could take his fledgling show choirs to the next level. "ATSC rarely made finals back then. We didn't even have a costume change. The boys handed the girls a rose - that was our only prop," Cathy said. "We wanted to provide Doran with funds to expand what he was doing to create show choirs that could compete with the best."

The first COE raised about \$4,000, which the MacInneses counted at their

MacInnes said they were thrilled with the money raised from the first COE and knew immediately the event would be repeated. "We saw great potential in the event as a way to raise money for the show choirs and were excited to expand it and make it better," she said. And they did. Profits doubled from the second COE. MacInnes said parents borrowed ideas from other competitions to improve Westside's. They befriended people who attended COE and looked forward to seeing them at contests they traveled to, she said.



Buses lined up to collect performers for the ride home. Show choirs came from as far away as Minnesota to participate.



SI member Paige Grogan prepares treats in a classroom for a visiting show choir team.

kitchen table after the event. COE now has its own treasurer who coordinates carefully-timed cash pickups throughout the two-day event. This ensures cashiers in ticket sales and concessions have the appropriate change and allows money to be counted and deposited along the way.

While COE has evolved into a well-oiled machine with committees and a computerized volunteer sign-up, a few

things haven't changed in 15 years, MacInnes said. Things that haven't changed:

- People complain about paying admission. They complained then and still do now. It's a fund-raiser and selling tickets is part of that. MacInnes said people complained about the \$5 charged 15 years ago. Today's ticket prices are \$12 for the day, which is the same as most state and regional competitions.
- Homerooms of teams were decorated. This tradition started with the first COE in 2001, MacInnes said. Students still team up to decorate classrooms assigned to each competing team and Westside's students are "known" for their hospitality.
- Grand Island Northwest has attended all 15 COEs. Johnson thanked Grand Island Northwest with a special shout-out during this year's



Above: 14-Karat Gold, from Grand Island Northwest, has performed in every COE for the past 15 years.

At left: Doran Johnson and Dave Sackschewsky, Northwest's show choir director, greet each other during this year's preliminary awards ceremony.

awards ceremony for preliminaries (see photo bottom of page 2).

- Parking was a challenge 15 years ago, MacInnes said, and it remains



Doran Johnson stands next to a “wall” of donated bottled water.

one of the biggest problems for COE organizers. Buses were parked offsite at the Pacific Hills Lutheran Church at the first COE and they still are parked there to keep Westside’s parking spaces open for people attending the event.



Amy Cosimano and Pam Ingraham are two of the many show choir parents past and present who volunteered countless hours to make COE a huge success.

- COE has coincided with at least one other sporting event, cramming the hallways, restrooms and parking lot. COE has always shared the school with the Warrior Invite swim meet. That’s right - these two



Then and now: At left, Megan Tantillo performs with ATSC in the 2009 COE. Today, Megan is assistant choir director and director of show choirs at Millard South. Her groups, South on Stage and Stage One competed in the 2015 COE.

events have always been on the same weekend.

Some of the ways COE has evolved over the years include:

- Concessions were simple 15 years ago—maybe some sloppy joes and sodas, MacInnes said. Now COE has an ever-changing menu that starts with breakfast burritos, changes to assorted hot and cold lunch sandwiches and switches to include pasta for supper. In addition, coffee is brewed by the cup on-site and cookies are baked fresh.
- The MacInneses chaired COE for three consecutive years, supported by groups of parents who offered their time and talent to organize the event. Now 17 committees are organized a year in advance to make sure all the bases are covered. Chairing COE is usually just a one-year commitment but some of the committee chairs volunteer for

multiple years, finding and training their own replacements when their time is up.



The preliminary awards ceremony, held in the gym, was standing room only.

- COE became a two-day event last year to accommodate more teams. Friday is “ladies night” when the

(COE continues on page 4.)



Westside Superintendent, Blane McCane presented trophies to each of the finalists at COE 2015.

Westside Performs at Ceremony for Congressman Brad Ashford

On Jan. 26th, Westside choir performed at the ceremonial swearing-in of Congressman Brad Ashford in the U.S. District Courthouse in downtown Omaha. Brad's wife, Ann Ferlic Ashford, explained that any federal congressperson or senator is given the option of holding a local ceremony as a reenactment of his or her actual swearing in. However, Judge Laurie Smith Camp who presided over the ceremony told Ashford that he was the first to take advantage of this option.

Led by Kyle Avery, the Westside Chamber Singers opened the ceremony with *America the Beautiful* and closed with *We Are the Brave*. Ferlic Ashford said, "Brad and I cannot thank Westside enough for sending the choral students to perform. It was so touching and made it so special and intimate having the Westside choir there. Their performance was beauti-



ful and particularly special for Brad because he is a Westside alum." Ashford graduated from Westside in 1967,

and the couple's son Tom will graduate from Westside High School this year.

(COE continued from page 3.)

girls-only groups compete. The grand champion girls group returns to perform during the finals competition on Saturday.

- Parents who started the first COEs are now "alumni" who return to take volunteer shifts and donate soda that is sold at the event. MacInnes and her husband returned often to help out and looked forward to seeing kids they knew perform and parents they shared memories with. For several years, Rick MacInnes tallied judges' scoring ballots.

Doran Johnson said he is thankful for the friendly parents and passionate students who have made COE a quality event for 15 years. Each year after COE he is reminded of the African proverb "it takes a whole village to raise a child."

"For the past 15 years, 'our village' of parents, students and alumni have gathered to host one of the finest show choir events in the region," he said. "We continue to host an event that attracts the top groups from near and far. None of this would be possible without YOU."

Johnson said each person's role is important. "Whether you chaired a committee, parked buses, baked cookies, counted money, patrolled the hallway, monitored a door or wrote a check, your contribution to this event is greatly appreciated," he said. "I continue to be honored to lead this program and truly appreciate the 'village' coming together to be ambassadors for the Westside show choir program."

What's on Your Playlist?

Mr. Johnson's Top 5 Playlist Songs:

1. *Louder* – Lea Michele
2. *Bui Doi* – from *Miss Saigon*
3. *Next To Normal* Soundtrack
4. *Cry Me A River* – Michael Bublé
5. *I Believe* – Tim Halperin

Mr. Avery's Top 5 Playlist Songs:

1. *Moves Like Jagger* – Maroon 5
2. *Everything* – Michael Bublé
3. *Time Stops* – from *Big Fish*, the musical
4. *The I Love You Song* – from *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*
5. *Giants in the Sky* – from *Into the Woods*

Mrs. Millard's Top 5 Playlist Songs:

1. *Desperado* - Eagles
2. *Have A Little Faith in Me* - Joe Cocker
3. *For Good* - from *Wicked*
4. *You're Still the One* - Shania Twain
5. *I Think It's Going to Rain Today* - performed by Bette Midler

Rising Stars Show Choir Camp is Repeat Hit



Members of ATSC help camp members learn some moves.

Over 100 students participated in the second revival of Westside's Rising Stars Show Choir Camp this past December. Jackie Kroeger, who co-chaired the event with Lori Farwell, said the fourth- through eighth-graders who participated, "were an enthusiastic and talented group of kids."

Westside teachers Doran Johnson, Kyle Avery and Nick Djernes volunteered their time to coach the camp; and Megan Tantillo, a WHS and ATSC alum, once again provided the choreography. Also, several members of ATSC

helped teach the choreography. Kroeger was especially thankful that they volunteered, recognizing that "elementary kids have a lot of energy that wears out even the most energetic high school students."

Michael Zimmerman, a fourth-grader at Rockbrook, enjoyed learning some of the more challenging choreography. He said, "There were some hard moves that we had to do, but the ATSC kids were very helpful in breaking down the



Michael Zimmerman enjoyed learning the choreography.

moves so that we could learn them and not get too overwhelmed." Michael also remembered how fun it was when he slid up to the front of the stage at the end of the show and got to eat lunch with some friends he had in the older group.

Kroeger said, "What makes Rising Stars such a great fundraiser is that it introduces Westside's younger generations to the fun of participating in show choir."



A Rising Stars camper concentrates on combining vocals and choreography.

Meet Kat Ohm

Katherine (Kat) Ohm

recently joined Westside's vocal and instrumental departments as a student teacher. Currently a senior at Midland University, she will graduate in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education. Kat graduated from Elkhorn High School in 2009 and was a member of the performing arts organization, "The Young Americans." As a member of this renowned group, she made five international and national tours performing, teaching and advocating to keep music in schools. Kat is excited to be helping out at Westside, and said, "It is such an honor for me to be student teaching at Westside



High School this semester, and I could not ask for a better group of teachers, parents, and students to learn from and work with!"

On the Road with Westside's Show Choirs

Ramageddon: Ralston High School



Leaving early for Ralston High School.



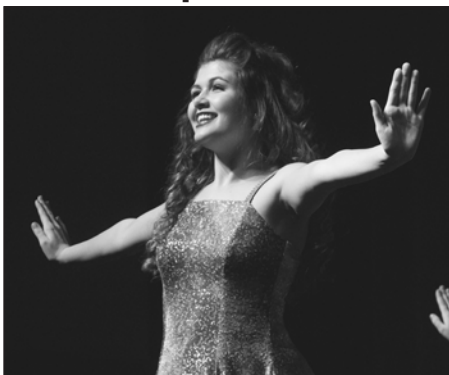
The ladies put on their makeup and work on each other's hair to prepare...



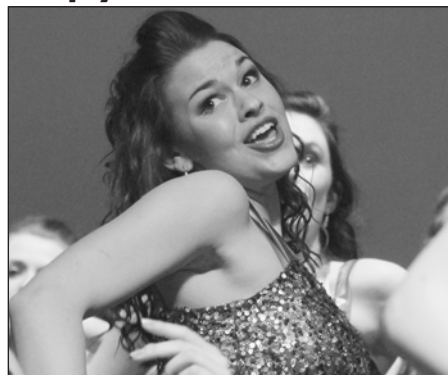
...while the guys...umm...what do the guys do to get ready for their performances?



Warrior Express



Simply Irresistible



ATSC



Thank You to the 2014 - 2015 Hall of F.A.M.E.* Members (as of 1/14/2015)

Underwriter \$1,500 or more

Fred & Melanie Clark
Scott & Ann Hofmann
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In Honor of Joanna Young
Shubart & Andrew Young

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Joe & Helen Wardian
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Brent & Tricia Wonder

Top-Ten Hits Member \$1-\$74

Stacie Brodkey
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Amy & John Hruska
Connie Johnson
Deanna Langworthy

Tom & Buffy Ricceri
Kari Kratky Salem
Jeff & Julie Shields

Steve and Judy Timmons
Mary Wallace
Joe & Zsa Zsa Willett

*Fund for Attaining Musical Excellence.

The names listed above are current as of December 2, 2014. We apologize for the omission of any donor names due to publication deadlines. An updated list will be included in the next issue of this newsletter.

About Westside's Hall of F.A.M.E.

Since 2002, the Vocal Music Hall of F.A.M.E. (Fund for Attaining Musical Excellence) has provided funds to help Westside's show choir program become one of the best in the country. Join today and help continue the tradition!

Make Checks Payable to Westside Foundation. Mail to: Vocal Music Parents Association, Westside High School, 87th & Pacific Streets, Omaha, NE 68114.

2014-2015 Vocal Music Calendar

| Date | Event | Choirs |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| February 20/21/22 (Fri-Sun) | Hastings Show Choir Invitational (Hastings, MN) Depart at 2 PM on Fri/Return 9 PM on Sun | ATSC/SI |
| March 7 (Sat) | Lewis Central “Clash of the Titans” | ATSC/SI/WE |
| March 12-17 (Thur-Tues) | FAME Orlando Show Choir Competition | ATSC |
| March 21 (Sat) | Mitchell Show Choir Invitational (South Dakota) | WE |
| March 24 (Tues) | 6-12 Choral Festival 7 PM (Main Gym) | Warrior/ATSC |
| March 26 (Thur) | Show Choir Auditions 3:30-10 PM (Vocal Room) | |
| April 19 (Sun) | Metro Magic Show Choir Marathon (Holland Center) | ATSC |
| April 21 (Tues) | Pre-Contest Concert 7:30 PM (Main Gym) | Warrior/Band/Orchestra |
| April 22-25 (Wed-Sat) | District Music Contest (@OPS) | Warrior/soloists |
| April 24-25 (Fri/Sat) | FAME National Show Choir Finals (Chicago, IL) | ATSC |
| May 6 (Wed) | Spring Choral Concert 7:30 PM (Auditorium) | Warrior/Concert/Freshman |
| May 8 (Fri) | ATSC Picnic 6:30 PM (Courtyard/Little Theater) | ATSC |
| May 9 (Sat) | An Evening of Show Choirs 7 PM (Aud.) | ATSC/SI/WE |

For up-to-date information, event schedules and photos, visit westsidechoirs.com.

Acknowledgments

The editors of Westside's *Voices* newsletter, Paul & Julie Trivilino, Danna Barnhart and Natalie Petersen, thank:

- ***Jackie Kroeger*** for contributing the COE 15th anniversary story.
- ***John Hughes*** for contributing the snowy bus photo for the COE 15th anniversary story.
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- ***Paul Trivilino Design*** for the newsletter design and layout.
- ***Barnhart Press*** for the newsletter printing and production costs.

And as always, we thank Westside Vocal Music staff for their dedication to the ongoing growth and development of our students, not only as vocalists, but also as team members and upstanding representatives of Westside High School.

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Advisor..... Jackie Kroeger

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| Voices Newsletter | Julie and Paul Trivilino |
| | Danna Barnhart |
| | Natalie Petersen |
| Hall of F·A·M·E· | Julie McMullen |
| Rising Stars Camp | Jackie Kroeger |
| | Lori Farwell |
| Bulletin Boards | Sue Frerichs |
| ATSC Retreat (2014)..... | Susan Rothe |
| | Sandi Sawyer |
| ATSC Picnic | Judy Timmons |
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| Cabaret | Chris Hughes |
| COE..... | Jackie and Terry Kroeger |
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| Backstage | Tom Ricceri |
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| Evening of Show Choirs | Shannon Hoy |
| Scholarships..... | Natalie Petersen |
| Parent Bus | Sue Seline |