oices	Inside This IssueLetter from the President2Meet the Westside Vocal Music Staff3All-State Chorus Auditions4Where are They Now?4Cabaret 2017 Visits Broadway Today5
WESTSIDE VOCAL MUSIC	About Westside's Hall of F.A.M.E 6 Hall of F.A.M.E. Members

September 26, 2017 Vol. VIII, No. 1

Fireworks Sale a "Boom" for Music Program

Selling fireworks was such a blast—and raised \$6,850—that a repeat performance of Westside vocal music's newest fundraiser is in the works.

That means someone needs to step up to help organize it. Leneé Petri and Cathy Haney organized the fundraiser and



Unloading boxes of fireworks from the Wild Willy's truck...

both will be back, but a third person is needed to transition into the leadership because Petri's daughters graduate this year.

"It's not difficult and, for sure, you don't need to know anything about fireworks - I sure didn't," said Petri. "I did have an amazing time. I got to meet so many families. Raising money was important but even more important was how so many parents and kids got to know each other. It was a real team builder."

Petri works a full-time job in Bellevue so she oversaw evening shifts of volunteers while Haney did daytime. They managed 180 volunteers who staffed the fireworks stand 24 hours a day for 12 days in Westgate Shopping Center's parking lot. While that might seem a daunting task, Petri said every shift was filled. People were generous with their time, along with donating water and ice for volunteers and buying fireworks to support the effort.

Many kids and parents returned for extra shifts because they had fun. Three students – Connor Smith and his sister Cassidy, and Haley Petri – worked more than 40 hours.

A camper donated by Kristin and Tony Ramaeker provided an air-conditioned, roomier place for the overnight shift of volunteers. The fireworks tent was locked down when sales

ended at 9 p.m. but volunteers provided extra security and did things like re-setting motion detectors accidentally tripped by wind in the tent. Petri gave a shout-out to Mike Wilson and Andrea Manganaro, who worked almost every 1-7 a.m. shift.

Volunteer numbers will be adjusted now that exact needs are known. "We had overkill in some areas just because we hadn't done this before," Petri said. "We can tighten that up for next year."

She will be watching a proposal by Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert who asked the City Council to cut the number of days fireworks can be sold from 10 to five. Petri doesn't expect a huge drop in the amount of money raised even if the council approves the change because most of the fireworks are sold in the last few days leading up to July 4, she said.

As pleased as Petri is with the financial success of the fireworks stand, she is absolutely thrilled with the "unexpected



...boxes and boxes of fireworks.

benefits" of students and parents making new connections and refreshing old ones. She watched incoming freshmen choir students work alongside upperclassmen. "It gave those freshmen a few faces they could recognize in the crowd when they started high school in the fall," she said. Parents who will spend the show choir season traveling to competitions to support their kids have a head start on friendships, she said.

"By January, we will be old friends," Petri said. "That's a good feeling."

Fireworks continued on page 6.

westsidechoirs.com Westside Vocal Music

Letter from the President

Interested in a quick round of "Name That Tune?" Here's your clue: Released in 1972, the motive behind this song was if everyone listened to music and momentarily left behind troubling global affairs, the world would be a better place. Need more? Here's a snippet of the lyrics: Don't you feel it growing, day by day People getting ready for the news Some are happy, some are sad Oh, we got to let the music play What the people need Is a way to make 'em smile It ain't so hard to do if you know how

Can you name it? Personally, it's my favorite tune of all time.* Yes, it's a bit utopian, but there's a lot of truth to be found too.

These lyrics sum up how I feel about our Westside vocal music concerts. If we allow, the music can envelop us and help us refocus. This is not just any music, by the way. The beautiful melodies we delight in are produced by our own kids. Maybe it's just me, but watching my own on stage singing harmonies, tackling tricky rhythms, and putting voice to lyrics memorized after weeks of practice puts a huge smile on my face. They make me so proud! And when your own and my own are performing - working together as diligently as any athletic team, presenting a feast for the ears - a bond forms and it lifts us.

These concerts come to life because of the dedicated, gifted and caring trio of Doran Johnson, Greg Woodin and Denise Millard. We are immensely blessed to have them. You're likely aware that Westside's vocal music program is recognized both locally and nationally as one of the best. The knowledge they enthusiastically bring each day to class translates into the zeal and energy we see on stage.

As parents, we invite you to partner with the excellence of Westside's vocal music program by becoming active mem-

bers of the Vocal Music Parents Association. Your contributions help to support highly qualified guest clinicians, scholarships and musical arrangements. Hall of F.A.M.E. donations support our three award-winning show choirs. In addition to monetary donations, your time volunteering with our three major events - Cabaret, the Competition of Excellence, and Evening of Show Choirs - directly benefits all of the vocal music groups and programs at Westside High School. Working side by side with you at these events is a win for all and we encourage you to mark your calendar for the benefit of our kids.

We are enthusiastic about this year and thank you for all you do as we listen to the music!

Marty and Sue Barnhart

Acknowledgments

The editors of Westside's *Voices* newsletter, Paul and Julie Trivilino, thank the following people for their contribution to this edition of the newsletter:

- Jackie Kroeger for contributing the Firework Fundraising, Cabaret 2017 visits *Broadway Today*, All-State Choir, and Where are they Now stories;
- Hannah Petri and Cathy Haney for their photography;
- Elizabeth Tape for her "eagle-eyed" proofreading and editing;
- Maria Akers for the Hall of F.A.M.E. donor tracking list;
- Marty and Sue Barnhart for the VMPA Presidents' letter;
- Paul Trivilino Design for generously providing professional graphic design and layout services;
- Westside Print Services for newsletter printing.

And our sincerest gratitude to Doran Johnson, Greg Woodin, and Denise Millard for the never ending dedication to the ongoing growth of our students as vocalists, team members and upstanding representatives of Westside High School.

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

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Meet the Westside Vocal Music Staff

Doran Johnson

Currently in his 20th year as a music educator, **Doran Johnson** has been the Choral Director at Westside since 1998. Under his leadership, Westside ensembles have developed a national reputation, earning top honors at many prestigious events. The Warrior Choir has performed with the Omaha Symphony on several occasions and has been awarded superior ratings at District Music Contest. The Amazing Technicolor Show Choir has been a consistent finalist at competitive events across the country, garnering many Best Vocals, Best Choreography and Best Band awards. Johnson has also served as a mentor to many student teachers from various institutions.

Johnson holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master of Music degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He has served as Chair of Choral Affairs for NMEA and currently serves as Music Coordinator for District 2 of the NSAA. Johnson is also on the staff of the Nebraska Show Choir Camp and has served as an assistant conductor for several Midwest Honor Choir European tours.

Johnson has been honored with the H. Vaughn Phelps Excellence in Teaching Award, the Distinguished Teaching Award from the Schrager Foundation, the Lundquist Award for Excellence in Teaching and was also presented the inaugural BRAVO Award from the Westside Foundation. In 2012, he was honored as Educator of the Year by the Nebraska Music Educators Association and in 2016 received the Alan and Sandra Chapman Outstanding Direc-



Doran Johnson

tor Award at Show Choir Nationals.

He is famously known by his students for his love of Diet Mt. Dew and random high pitch screeches. And he laughs at his own jokes.

Greg Woodin

Greg Woodin is currently the Associate Choral Director at Westside High School in Omaha, Nebraska where he teaches the Concert Choir, Mixed Chamber Choir, Treble Chamber Choir, Voice, Music Theory, the varsity women's show choir, Simply Irresistible and is musical director for WHS musicals. He graduated from Luther College in 2011 with his Bachelor's in Music Education. Mr. Woodin is a proud member of the American Choral Directors Associa-

tion chapters in Nebraska and Iowa, and still serves as the Iowa All State Jazz Choir Chair. Prior to living in Omaha, he was choir director at Adel-DeSoto-Minburn High School in Adel, Iowa where he taught grades 6-12. He also was founder and head coach of the Adel High School Men's Rugby Club. He is still an active rugby player with the Omaha GOATS rugby club, assists the Westside Rugby Club and enjoys fishing, backpacking, and camping whenever he gets a chance.



Greg Woodin

Denise Millard

Denise Millard, or "Mama Millard" as the students have nicknamed her, has been the pianist for Westside's six choirs for seven years. Like a "mama," her job is never-ending. She plays piano for extra show choir practices and contests that span many weekends. She plays for soloists preparing for auditions, she manages the choral library, assigns and organizes choir robes, prepares music folders, mends costumes, sets up chairs and whatever else she can do to help make the vocal music program successful. And like most "mamas," Mrs. Millard is abundantly appreciated by her students or in this case our children. Her job allows her to play piano every day, which is a dream job. And she enjoys the students. "They keep me feeling young," she says. Millard is from southern California and studied music education with an emphasis in piano at Biola University in La Mirada, Calif. She met her husband, Mark, in high school and moved to Omaha with him 25 years ago for his job with Berkshire Hathaway Co. Millard has taught private piano lessons and has been a pianist for churches for more than 40 years. The Millards cherish family times with their children; in fact, they are currently planning the March wedding for their daughter Stephanie.



Denise Millard

2 Voices Westside Vocal Music westsidechoirs.com Voices 3

^{* &}quot;Listen To The Music" by the Doobie Brothers

All-State Chorus Auditions

The 97 Westside students seeking a spot in Nebraska's 440-member All-State Chorus will use an audition process that's been tweaked with technology over the last five years.

The newest tweak is an audio-only recording sent directly to a website which is then fed to judges potentially located in another state. Once the audition starts, the record button is hit and it can't be stopped or restarted, said Westside Vocal Music Director Doran Johnson.

This is a change from videotaped auditions. With video auditions, students were allowed to make multiple recordings and choose the best performance to submit. However, because of the large number of Westside students auditioning, there was only time for one recording per student.

Now that judges will hear everyone's first and only performance, it evens the playing field a bit more, Johnson said.

The Nebraska Music Education Association sponsors the All-State Chorus to assemble the state's top high school singers in one chorus. Auditions used to be done in person, face-to-face with the judge but about five years ago, that was changed to video auditions. It solved many scheduling conflicts with marching band events, college entrance exams and other school activities on the Saturday of auditions.

It also meant students in western Nebraska no longer had to travel long distances to complete an audition. It meant the NMEA didn't have to pay for judges to travel to audition sites. It spread out the time between All-State instrumental and vocal auditions, which helped students and teachers who do both.

"In the end, the whole process is more flexible," Johnson said.

All juniors in Westside's Warrior Choir must audition for All-State as part of their course requirements. Johnson wants students to learn the process of preparing for an audition. While he teaches the All-State music in class, juniors also are expected to log rehearsal time outside of class. "It raises their level of independent musicianship," Johnson said.

All-State Chorus auditions are optional for Westside sophomores and seniors, but Johnson said he doesn't let freshmen try out even though they are eligible. Westside just doesn't have the staff or time to accommodate freshmen auditions, he said.

Things to Know About All-State Chorus

- Students learn seven songs but they sing only a small "cut" from three of the songs for their audition. Those "cuts" are not released until the morning of auditions and are chosen by the All-State Choral chairman. Students also must sing specific arpeggios and scales.
- The judges often are college professors and also are selected by the choral chairman. They often are from outside the state. Each voice part is scored by one judge. For example the same judge hears all the Soprano 1 recordings. A different judge hears all of the Soprano 2 recordings and so on. Singers are ranked from poor to superior in rhythm

- accuracy, intonation, score accuracy and tone quality.
- To ensure geographic representation from the entire state, recordings are grouped into audition sites and a quota system determines how many from each voice part can be selected for each site.
- Westside will make its audition recordings for the All-State Chorus on Oct. 6 from 4 to 8 p.m., and on Oct. 7 from 9 to 3 p.m. Students will select their 10-minute audition recording time. Results will be posted Oct. 18.
- The All-State Chorus performs
 Nov. 18 at the Lied Center in Lincoln. It usually sells out so if you get to buy tickets, buy them early.

Where Are They Now?

Where Are They Now is a compilation of WHS grads who were part of the music and theater programs and how music continues to be a part of their lives today.

1990

Peter Hazelrigg is a leadership consultant and executive coach for the Pilgrimage Professional Development Group in Greensboro, N.C. He co-founded the company seven years ago. Hazelrigg was in Westside's very first show choir, which didn't have an official name. He spontaneously introduced it as the "Amazing Technicolor Show Choir" at a competition, expecting someone to think of a better name in a few weeks. Hazelrigg has an undergrad degree from University of Denver and a master's degree from the University of North Carolina in counseling. He also has a master's degree in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has stayed in contact with many of his fellow show choir members and says he still knows by heart "Shut De Door," which ATSC performed his year and now is part of the Old Favorites performed annually at Evening of Show Choirs. He and his wife Marti have nine-year-old twins who play violin. He says he continues to be grateful for the life shaping experiences that choir/show choir gave him.

2011

Anne Sundell lives in Los Angeles where she works in comedy development at Sony Pictures Television.
A 2015 graduate of Northwestern
University, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Radio, Television and Film, an Integrated Marketing Communications certificate and a profound appreciation for the Chicago-style hot dog. While at Northwestern, she co-wrote and starred in a full-length play (Bucky D's) was a member of the Titanic Players Improv Troupe and was a writer/performer for Mee-Ow, a sketch comedy troupe.

Cabaret 2017 to Visit Broadway Today

Don't throw away your shot on Sunday Nov. 5 to support Cabaret 2017's *Broadway Today* when Westside students will entertain you with tunes from contemporary musicals that have stolen the stage in New York's theater district.

Cabaret is a major fundraiser for the Vocal Music Parents Association that directly benefits WHS's vocal music students, said Stephanie Cota, chairman for this year's event. It raises money to defray costs of choir enrichment programs such as guest clinicians and travel to district contests. The funds also help with other expenses such as equipment purchases, choir robe replacements and student scholarships.

The Broadway Today shows will feature Westside's Freshman Choir, Concert Choir and Warrior Choir performing songs from the smash-hit musicals of Hamilton and Dear Evan Hansen, among others. The choirs also will sing show tunes from Priscilla,

Queen of the Desert and Beautiful, which are contemporary musicals that feature fresh versions of popular rock songs those who grew up in the 1960s, 70s and 80s might find familiar.

Ten to 12 soloists will share the spotlight at this year's Cabaret with Warrior Choir, all three of Westside's show choirs and its two a cappella groups at two shows—3 p.m. and 7 p.m. The Freshman Choir performs only at the 3 p.m. show and Concert Choir performs only at the evening show.

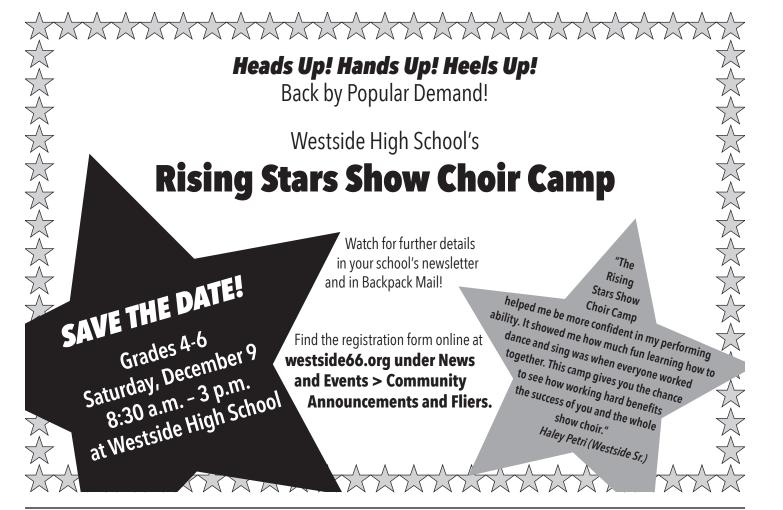
Cota said it's important for parents make *Broadway Today* successful by purchasing tickets to the show and encouraging friends and neighbors to come too. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students. Ticket order forms will be mailed to families of all WHS vocal music students. Tickets will also be sold at school the week before the event and on Nov. 5 before the shows.

Parents are also asked to support the

Cabaret raffle of six baskets valued at about \$300 each. A donation table in the lobby tonight is available for you to leave items for the raffle, or cash donations can be made. Checks made payable to VMPA can be left at the table, or sent to Jen Paul, 3362 S. 115th St., Omaha, NE 68144. Questions about the raffle can be sent to jenniferannepaul@aol.com.

Students later will receive a packet with raffle tickets to sell. Cost for the tickets is 4 for \$10, or 10 for \$20.

Finally, Cabaret needs volunteers to help the night run smoothly. The link for the online volunteer sign up is http://tinyurl.com/cabaret2017. Volunteers are needed to staff concessions, sell tickets, monitor dressing rooms, supervise the parking lot, hand out programs and monitor auditorium doors. You can also contact Cota with questions about volunteering at dscota@me.com.



4 Voices Westside Vocal Music westsidechoirs.com Voices 5

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



Cabaret 2017 Sunday, November 5, 2017

Show Times: 3:00 PM & 7:00 PM

Westside Vocal Music is not only one of the most rewarding experiences your child will ever have, it's also loads of fun for parents who get involved! The good news is there are plenty of opportunities for everyone to have a great time!

To get involved, go to http://tinyurl.com/cabaret2017 beginning in October to choose the volunteer opportunity that interests you, or contact Cabaret Chair Stephanie Cota directly at

dscota@me.com

to let her know you want to help.

Fill Your Tummy And Support Westside Choirs!

Don & Millie's Nights

First Wednesday of the month, September through May: September 6, October 4, November 1, December 6, January 3, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2

> 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Don & Millie's at 10727 West Center Road

Drop your receipt in the special container at the register and a portion of your meal purchase will be donated to Westside choirs.

It's an easy way to support the vocal music program, and treat the family to a night out.



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

Established by the Westside Vocal Music Parents Association in 2002, the Vocal Music Hall of F.A.M.E. (Fund for Attaining Musical Excellence) has provided funds to support our show choir program in its quest to become one of the best in the country. By joining the Vocal Music Hall of F.A.M.E., you continue our tradition of show choir excellence! Make checks payable to Westside Foundation and mail to: Vocal Music Parents Association, Westside High School, 87th & Pacific Streets, Omaha, NE 68114. Thank you for helping to make this the best year ever!



Members of Westside's 2017-2018 Amazing Technicolor Show Band (at top) and Amazing Technicolor Show Choir.

Fireworks continued from page 1.



Just a few of the customers who visited our tent.

Vocal Music Director Doran Johnson witnessed the enthusiastic volunteerism on the first day of the fundraiser when he joined parents and students unloading a semi-truck of fireworks.

"It was amazing to see that many volunteers come together to pull off this project. I am so proud of the support we received from parents and students," he said.

The city of Omaha grants a limited number of licenses for fireworks stands and requires that a non-profit benefit from a portion of the profits. VMPA partnered with Wild Willy's Fireworks, a distributor located in Springfield, NE. Petri said Wild Willy's was happy with how VMPA managed the fireworks stand and wants to continue the partnership.

Thank You to the 2017 - 2018 Hall of F.A.M.E.* Members (as of 9/19/2017)

Underwriter \$1,500 or more

Angie and John Bekins Scott & Ann Hofmann John & Chrisi Hughes Jackie & Terry Kroeger

Benefactor \$1,000-\$1,499

Meg & Nate Dodge Kim & Jim Simon

Sponsor \$500-\$999

Marty & Sue Barnhart Dave & Shannon Hoy Redstone Advertising Kristin Williams & Roxanne Wiles

Platinum Record Member \$250-\$499

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David & Stephanie Cota

Gold Record Member \$75-\$249

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Cory & Jane Kruger

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

Gail Seaman Dolan Stan & Gail Hille Scott & Janelle Kupka

*Fund for Attaining Musical Excellence.

I ■ Top-Ten Hits Member

Show Choirs event in May.

The names listed above are current as of September 19, 2017. 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.

Join Vocal Music Parent Association Today! Select Your Membership Level & Tax-Deductible Contribution

Individual/Family Levels

Gold Record Member \$75-\$249 Recognition in the vocal music newsletter

Includes all the Top-Ten Hits benefits.

Platinum Album Member \$250-\$499

Includes all the Top-Ten Hits benefits.

Individual/Family or Business/Corporate Levels

Sponsor \$500-\$999

\$10-\$74

Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing on banner*, 2 free tickets to Evening of Show Choirs.

throughout the school year and opportun-

ity to reserve seats for WHS' Evening of

Benefactor \$1,000-\$1,499

Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing or logo (business/corporate sponsors) on banner*, 4 tickets to Evening of Show Choirs, plus free 1/2-page student ad in Evening of Show Choirs program.

Underwriter \$1,500 or more

Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing or logo (business/corporate sponsors) on banner*, 8 tickets to Evening of Show Choirs, plus free full-page student ad in Evening of Show Choirs program.

Name (as it should appear in acknowledgements) Contact (corporate only) Address Phone (_____)

Make checks payable to Westside Foundation and mail to:

Vocal Music Parents Association

Westside High School 8701 Pacific Street Omaha, NE 68114

* The banner is displayed at all WHS vocal music events. For inclusion on the first banner of the season, enrollment forms and payment must be received no later than Friday, Oct. 6, 2017.

Westside Vocal Music westsidechoirs.com 6 Voices Voices 7

2017-2018 Vocal Music Calendar

Date	Event	Choirs
September 26 (Tues)	Fall Concert, 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	All Choirs and Show Choirs
October 6-7 (Fri-Sat)	All-State Auditions (recorded at WHS)	All Juniors/interested students
November 5 (Sun)	Cabaret at WHS (3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.)	Freshman/Warrior (3 p.m.) Concert/Warrior (7 p.m.)
November 16-18 (Thu-Sat)	All-State Festival (Lincoln)	Selected Students
December 9 (Sat)	Westside's Rising Stars Show Choir Camp Camp from 8:30 am - 3:00 p.m./Performance at 2:00 p.m.	ATSC
December 11 (Mon)	Winter Choral Concert (WHS Auditorium) 7:00 p.m.	Freshman/Concert/Warrior
January 2 (Tues)	ATSC Rehearsal 9:00 a.m 5:00 p.m.	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 3 (Wed)	ATSC Rehearsal with Dina Else 12:00 p.m 4:00 p.m.	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 3 (Wed)	ATSC Premiere Night 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 5-7 (Fri-Sun)	Viterbo Show Choir Competition (La Crosse, WI) Depart 11:00 a.m. on Fri/Return 5:00 p.m. on Sun	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 9 (Tue)	Simply Irresistible Premiere Night 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	SI
January 12-14 (Fri-Sun)	Rock Bridge Show Choir Invitational (Columbus, MO)	SI
January 18 (Thurs)	Warrior Express Premiere Night 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	ATSC/SI/WE
January 20 (Sat)	Millard West <i>Music Lives</i>	ATSC/SI/WE
January 27 (Sat)	Westside Competition of Excellence	ATSC/SI (work/perform) WE (work)
February 10 (Sat)	Elkhorn South <i>Crystal Cup</i>	ATSC/SI/WE
February 16-18 (Fri - Sun)	Clash of the Sequins (Naperville, IL)	ATSC/SI
February 20 (Tues)	Choral Clinic Concert 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	Warrior/Concert/Freshman
March 3 (Sat)	Lewis Central Clash of the Titans (Lewis Central Middle School)	ATSC/SI/WE
March 8-11 (Thu-Sun)	Warrior Theatre Presents, <i>Dogfight</i> (WHS Auditorium)	
March 17 (Sat)	Mitchell Show Choir Classic (Mitchell, SD)	WE
March 22-25 (Thur-Sun)	Show Choir Nationals (Grand Ole Opry House, Nashville, TN)	ATSC
March 27 (Tues)	6 th -12 th Grade Choral Festival 7:00 p.m. (Main Gym)	Warrior/ATSC
March 29 (Thur)	Show Choir Auditions 3:30 p.m10:00 p.m. (Vocal Music Room)	
April 17 (Tues)	Pre-Contest Concert 7:30 p.m. (Main Gym)	Warrior/Band/Orchestra
April 19-21 (Thu-Sat)	District Music Contest (at Fremont High School)	Warrior/Concert/Soloists
May 2 (Wed)	Spring Choral Concert 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	Warrior/Concert/Freshman
May 4 (Fri)	ATSC Picnic 6:00 p.m. (Courtyard/Little Theater)	ATSC
May 5 (Sat)	An Evening of Show Choirs 7:00 p.m. (WHS Auditorium)	ATSC/SI/WE

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

Westside Vocal Music westsidechoirs.com