A History of the American Choral Directors Association in the state of Washington

Compiled by Howard Meharg


The national ACDA was founded in 1959. By 1961, state chairmen (as they were called then), were recruited. The founders of ACDA believed that the organization would be benefited by a grassroots effort at that level rather than starting with regional leadership.

Washington’s first state chairman was Bernard Regier who was Director of Choral Activities at Bellingham’s Western Washington College of Education, later WWU. As might be expected, Regier’s primary role was that of a recruiter of members. A good many of the early members of WA-ACDA got a call from Regier...especially graduates from WWCE...saying, “You need to be involved in this organization. It’ll be good for your career!”

One of the early requirements for membership was to be sponsored by a current member. Regier no doubt sponsored a good many new members in his role as state chairman.

Bernard held office from 1961 to 1963. Regional leaders were appointed quickly, however. The September, 1962, issue of The Choral Journal, shows a photo of Regier along with Lee Kjelson, California, and Robert McCowen, Iowa, under a page header, “REGIONAL CHAIRMEN,” and noting “We are particularly proud and happy to welcome Bernard as our Northwestern Chairman and predict that the coming years will bring a strong choral directors organization in that area. His fine musical accomplishments and pleasing personality make his choice an excellent one for ACDA.” So, it appears that Bernard Regier served in dual ACDA roles for a period of time, state as well as regional chairperson.

Ellensburg’s Coyne Burnett was one of WA-ACDA’s early leaders. Coyne had the longest term of office, chairing the state from 1963 to 1968. He was a tireless advocate for music in the schools and for choral music. He directed choirs at Ellensburg High School and also served as editor of “VOICE,” the Washington Music Educators Association magazine, for some twenty years.
Close connection to the music educator’s organization

A very lengthy article (“ACDA’s Forty-Year Journey”) appeared in the September, 1999, issue of The Choral Journal. The article was written by Russell Mathis, president of the national ACDA in 1974-77. Russell provides a well-documented history of the national organization beginning with meetings in 1959 of J. Clark Rhodes, Elwood Keister, Curt Hanson, Harry Robert Wilson, Wayne Hugoboom, Archie Jones, and Warner Imig. He notes that ACDA was closely connected to MENC in its early years.

But twelve years later in 1971, Charles Hirt (USC) wrote, “ACDA will maintain the affiliation with MENC but will no longer use the MENC convention as the mother ship to carry us aloft.” This was the beginning of the first national convention apart from MENC. It was held in Kansas City. Sixteen hundred choral directors attended.

Washington state also had close ties to the WMEA in the early years of ACDA. WMEA’s “Voice” magazine had an article in the “Conference Edition” of 1965 with a headline “ACDA to Convene in Portland.” National president, J. Clark Rhodes, was a headliner, along with Jester Hairston, who conducted his arrangements of spirituals with Robert Robins’ Roseburg, Oregon High School Choir. ACDA functions were a part of the Northwest MENC convention.

The association with WMEA continued for many years. The program for the WMEA convention held in Yakima in 1970 shows a Thursday evening dinner meeting of the WA-ACDA chaired by Howard Meharg, state chairman. Close ties were maintained with the WMEA throughout the 70’s and early 80’s.

Despite the close ties at the state level, the MENC and ACDA had some evidence of a strained relationship. Russell Mathis’ article said, “For several years before the actual break from MENC, ACDA presidents took a good deal of flack from MENC officers. Both Harold Decker and Theron Kirk were recipients of unpleasant remarks and threats. Harold Decker said, ‘At the Seattle ACDA-MENC convention our guest speaker, Daniel Pinkham was not allowed to enter the meeting unless he produced an MENC membership card!”

Theron Kirk is quoted as saying, “The main thing that happened during the time when I was president wasn’t a goal of mine at all. That was when we had to bring about the change in convention, just prior to the MENC convention, to an independent and completely disassociated convention in respect to time and place.”

Following the lead of the national office, the NW division of ACDA broke its connection to MENC and held a convention in Spokane on February 23-24, 1973. Performing groups from the state included the Washington State University Madrigal Singers directed by Frank Green, the Shoreline Community College Choir, Bob Metzger, director, Walla Walla High School vocalists, directed by Dick Clark, Shorecrest High School Orcadian Choir directed by Neil Lieurance, and Kirchenchor from First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach, Seattle, Betty Jean Bartholomew, Director. It is of some interest that WMEA’s “Voice” magazine carried a multi-page coverage of the event. No doubt we can thank Coyne Burnett for that.
In states with 20 or more members, chairpersons for the state were elected through a ballot provided in “The Choral Journal.” Candidates, presumably chosen by divisional leadership, were listed and the voter clipped the ballot from the magazine and mailed it to the national office in Tampa, Florida. A 1966 May/June issue of “The Choral Journal” lists Coyne Burnett, Ellensburg, and Mildred Forsling, Yakima, as candidates for this state.

C. Jerome Semrau was elected chairman for the state in 1968. He resigned in the middle of his term and Howard Meharg was appointed by NW chairman, Rod Eichenberger, to pick up the remainder of that term until 1970.

Chairpeople during the decade of the 70’s included Wallace Goleeke, Gerry Loper, and Robert Metzger. Each of these leaders were from the Seattle area and worked on the merger of the PSCCG and ACDA. Both Loper and Metzger served two terms.

Connection with/potential conflict with Puget Sound Choral Conductors Guild
In the state of Washington there was also potential conflict with ACDA from a choral directors group in the Seattle area called The Puget Sound Choral Conductors Guild. The PSCCG had been a strong and viable force for the promotion of choral music in that region since 1957...an older group, actually, than the ACDA. It took diplomacy and thoughtful decision making over a period of nearly twenty years before the PSCCG finally rather fully merged into ACDA.

Letters between ACDA national president, Walter Collins, and presidents of both the WA-ACDA and the PSCCG indicate the serious concerns of both groups. A letter from Collins addressed to Neil Lieurance, President of the Guild, and to Robert Metzger, WA ACDA president, and dated October 12, 1978 noted: “If this unique situation were only a matter of organizational lack of neatness, no one would be especially concerned. But it appears to the officers of ACDA that the situation is seriously hampering the development of a state-wide ACDA organization commensurate with Washington’s potential and with other states in ACDA’s Northwest Division.”

Collins went on to say (to Lieurance and Metzger), “I would be very grateful if the two of you continue your discussions with vigor and would hope that you could propose a solution by the end of the year.” As one might guess, finances entered the picture. Collins went on to comment, “You may be able to devise a method that would allow PSCCG still to keep its identity in some way and perhaps to receive for a limited period the same guaranteed financial support from ACDA which it presently enjoys.” He then offered to travel to Seattle to discuss the situation in person.

(One should not forget how important the Puget Sound Choral Conductors Guild was to so many of its members. The group especially served church choir directors and one of its organizers in 1956 was the well-respected Carlyle Kelley, then Minister of Music at the First United Methodist Church in Seattle. Kelley and Dr. Charles Fisher of the University of Puget Sound were organizers and the first two presidents of the group. This note was taken from a March, 1982 newsletter with both the ACDA and the PSCCG logos on it: “Although the
P.S.C.C.G. has always been directed to the service of choral music in all its forms, the needs of the church choir, and particularly of the smaller choirs, have been prominent in its priorities. In 1969 we elected to become a part of the newer American Choral Directors Association, with the understanding that we would maintain our organizational integrity and our basic principles.

Two weeks later (October 31, 1978), Neil Lieurance wrote a thoughtful reply to Collins. He addressed the concerns of some PSCCG members that they would be “placed in a situation of paying ‘double’ dues with an interest in only local activities,” and that “the concentrated population of the Puget Sound area may be placed in position of ‘supporting’ the whole state…” He further informed Collins that “some were against the move to affiliate in the first place and would feel exploited by forced membership in the national organization.”

Neil’s letter made it clear, however, that many PSCCG members were in full support of ACDA and with merging the two groups. Walter Collins wrote back on November 8 to say he was happy that solutions were being developed and that he would, indeed, be delighted to come to Seattle for further discussions. Collins visited Seattle December 16, 1978.

Nineteen-seventy-nine became a pivotal year in the relationship between PSCCG and ACDA. Numerous directions were proposed and discussed in a PSCCG board meeting on February 6, 1979. A rough draft of a tentative proposal was sent to Collins in April. He replied, “I am sending copies of your proposal to the Executive Committee and they may feel that it will be necessary to discuss it with the Board when they next gather in June.”

On June 25, Lieurance received a letter from Walter Collins saying the ACDA Executive Committee was “in general agreement…” and that there would be “the expectation that by July 1, 1982, the PSCCG district of Washington ACDA will come fully under the same ACDA guidelines, practices, and policies that govern other districts and states in the Association.”

Delores Anderson took over as president of the PSCCG in mid-1979. She wrote to Collins in November, following a fall meeting of the group, that the “Puget Sound Choral Conductor’s Guild will align ourselves with the Washington State ACDA organization, becoming one of the districts within the state of Washington, and retaining the name ‘Puget Sound Choral Conductor’s Guild’ for that district.” The motion passed by a vote of 49-2.

Collins' reply was brief, but had a tone of relief. He said, “I say we look forward to revitalized choral activity in Washington and the Puget Sound area through cooperation among all of us who so strongly wish it to thrive for the benefit of the choral profession.” Finally, in a letter to Delores in December, Collins reminded her that Colleen Kirk, the ACDA President-Elect, would handle details of “our new relationship.” He summed it up by thanking Delores (and the PSCCG) “for your farsightedness in dealing with the future of choral music in your state.” It was well into the decade of the 80’s before the PSCCG finally faded as an organization and merged fully into WA ACDA.
For many decades choral directors depended on colleges and universities, larger churches, and the music retailers for workshops and reading sessions. Direct mail from these groups or articles in professional publications such as "Voice" of Washington Music Educators provided information. One of the well attended reading sessions was held mid-summer at Central Washington University and led by Dr. Wayne Hertz. For years Johnson-West Music of Seattle provided the reading materials. Later Sampson-Ayers of Spokane hauled the van-loads of titles, most often supplied by publishers as samples, for reading.

The "Voice" magazine ran an article in the May, 1980, issue announcing a July 24-27 festival in choral music for the church. Ronald Kuhn of the University Congregational Church of Seattle sponsored the event that featured Dr. Lloyd Pfautsch, director of music at Southern Methodist University and a leader in national ACDA circles as well as a well known choral composer. The four-day event ended with a performance of Beethoven's Mass in C, conducted by Pfautsch.

In the same issue, Dale Barker, owner of Sheet Music Service of Portland, announced that Dr. Charles Hirt would lead a September workshop in Portland.

Into the 80's
The Northwest Division of ACDA held its conference March 6-8, 1980, in Spokane at the historic Davenport Hotel. Washington's Maurice Skones directed a choir of quartets from northwest colleges. Taped auditions were used for selecting performing groups. Those from Washington were the Northwest Chamber Chorus of Seattle directed by Joan Catoni-Conlon; the Shoreline College Jazz group directed by Bruce Spitz; Soundsation 80 Vocal Jazz Ensemble, directly by Frank DeMiero; Renton High School's A Cappella Choir, Richard Houser, director; Washington State University Concert Choir, Dr. Frank Green director; the Chamber Chorale from Seattle directed by Robert Metzger; and the Knox Bell Ringers and Sanctuary Choir from Knox Presbyterian Church, Spokane, directed by Blanche Kangas.

State leadership during the 80's included Gordon Leavitt, Ellensburg, Judy Kuhn (now Filibeck), Seattle, Rush Chase, Seattle, Bob Cathey, Seattle, and Paul Schultz, Tacoma. Schultz, who moved in 1982 from Michigan to direct the Adelphians, the University of Puget Sound's premiere choir, quickly became a vital ACDA leader. Both he, and another Michigan transplant, Judy Burns, who directed choral groups at Central Washington University for several years before returning to Michigan, brought ideas and enthusiasm for ACDA, and demonstrated excellence in their own choral work that was an inspiration for all WA-ACDA members.
A sentence in an article in "Voice" (WMEA's magazine) about the national ACDA convention in New Orleans March 5-7, 1981 spoke of performing choirs at that convention. Along with a choir from Missouri and Princeton, New Jersey it added "and the Shorecrest High School "Chanson," a chamber choir from Seattle. That, of course, was directed by WA-ACDA’s Neil Lieurance.

Rush Chase noted in a November 1983 newsletter article that the state had 234 members. Rush, coming out of the PSCCG, now calling itself the western division for Washington state, proposed that, since the membership was divided by the Cascade mountains, that members east of that divide call themselves the “Inland Empire Choral Conductors’ Guild.” The idea apparently didn’t gain much traction.

That same newsletter featured an article by Scott Peterson of Yakima Valley Community College...one of the first mentions in print of this superb leader who became (2007) the president of the NW Division.

The PSCCG was by no means inactive. Bob Cathey, Julie Anderson, and Mimi Mosbaugh worked with WMEA in featuring a fall workshop with one of ACDA’s founders, Dr. Charles Hirt (USC), clinician...this at Seattle Pacific University in October of 1983.

The next month, CWU brought in still another famous name, internationally known Howard Swan (Occidental College, LA area). This was held Saturday, November 5 in the Hertz Recital Hall. Some directors will remember that session. At that time Swan had suffered some sort of paralysis to his vocal cords and could speak only in a rather high pitched sound. (Some years later he recovered full use of his voice.) Full use of his voice or not, attendees of that session still remember the inspiration of this man, another “spiritual” founder of ACDA.

At a WMEA conference in 1984 at Renton High School, the WA ACDA board met on Saturday afternoon, February 18, prior to the evening ACDA banquet. The main topic of that meeting was the beginning planning for a state convention for 1985. Rush Chase was president, but Bob Cathey, president-elect, and Paul Schultz (president-elect for Cathey) were each a part of the planning for that event.

Cathey noted in a newsletter just weeks before the state convention, “I believe that Washington ACDA is entering its most exciting year since the organization was founded!”

The first state convention
(convention photos by Coyne Burnett)

The first state convention was held October 11 and 12, 1985 in Ellensburg. These dates were chosen because they were state in-service training days for teachers.

Dr. Eph Ehly, University of Missouri (Kansas City), talked about “Rehearsal Techniques to Motivate Your Singers,” Susan McBerry of Portland State University, did a session called

“Training Young Treble Voices and Working with Boys’ Voices,” Larry Marsh (Linfield College) and Howard Meharg (Longview) spoke on “Back to Basics: A Review of Techniques for Producing Good Choral Sound.”


Performing groups included the Northwest Girlchoir, Rebecca Reitz, director, Shorecrest High School Choir, Neil Lieurance, director, the p.m. singers, Phil Mattson, Male Ensemble Northwest, and the Whitworth Community Presbyterian Sanctuary Choir, directed by Paul Olsen.

To top it off, a convention choir was formed. Dr. Eph Ehly conducted this group.

It should be noted that even though the first state convention of WA ACDA was separate from WMEA, it was not altogether disconnected. Peggy Burrough was WMEA president. Neil Lieurance, who was serving as WMEA Choral Officer, noted in a letter to President Bob Cathey, that he should be sure the program stated, “This workshop is being partially funded by the Washington Music Educators Association.” (WMEA provided a $500 grant.)

Washington American Choral Director’s Association
It’s also worth noting that total income from the first convention was over $4,600. Registration fees accounted for over $3,000 income. WA ACDA ended in the black by $700...much to the relief of the whole board. But, perhaps even more importantly, evaluation material turned in by participants rated the whole event as “first class.”

Meanwhile, despite earlier mention of plans to completely merge with ACDA by 1982, minutes of the PSCCG showed discussion about that group being able to compete with ACDA and concerns about ACDA being sensitive to the needs and services to local members. A February 2 motion was presented to effectively dissolve PSCCG by July 1, 1985. The vote was to occur March 2. No record could be found as to the actual vote, but it is assumed that the group was “absorbed” into ACDA, essentially through an almost seamless transition of the leadership of PSCCG being elected into leadership positions in WA ACDA, i.e., Rush Chase, and Paul Schultz. Schultz, particularly, during his term in PSCCG demonstrated considerable sensitivity to the concerns of members about directors of small church choirs being “lost” in the now larger concerns of ACDA. Even at that, according to Schultz, there were a few members of PSCCG who did not become members of ACDA.

Other WA ACDA events were going on besides the state convention at this time. A church music workshop was held January 25, 1986 at University Place Presbyterian Church in Seattle. Charles Peterson, western division chair, set it up. The focus was on anthems for Lent and Easter. Directors were invited to bring two anthems that had worked for them. Bob Northrup, choir director at the host church, presented his choir in a short demonstration program.

Two festivals were organized in the Puget Sound district, the first was on April 20, in Marysville, the second on July 20, in Tacoma. The first eight directors to apply became the festival program. Charles Peterson and Deuane Kuenzi chaired these events. A later report said the July 20th festival failed to materialize.

The ACDA also co-sponsored Eric Ericson’s (Sweden) visit to the area to conduct the Pacific Northwest Chamber Chorus, Joan Catoni-Conlon, Director, in Bach’s “Christmas Oratorio.” This was presented August 26, 1986.

The organizational structure that had developed for ACDA can be seen by taking a look at the board. By this time the ACDA board consisted of President, Bob Cathey, President-Elect, Paul Schultz, Western District, Charles Peterson, Southwestern District, Lee Jennings and Noel White, Eastern District, Randi von Ellefson, and State Newsletter Editor, Fran Jones. R&S Chairs were to be appointed by their peers holding that position at the divisional level or, if unfulfilled by October 1 of the appropriate year of the term, by the state president. The R&S leaders were not official members of the board.

Planning for a second state convention followed the exultation at the conclusion of the first. Some 140 people had attended the 1985 event. 1986 promised an even larger response and, indeed, it happened.
In the July, 1986 newsletter, Bob Cathey said, “...the central (center of the state) location proved to be a drawing card...Judith Burns (CWU) was a capable and gracious hostess, and will be doing the job again this year.”

Twyla Brunson handled the registration for the ’86 convention. Cost was $20. A single room at the convention headquarters hotel, The Ellensburg Inn, was $36.00. Of course there was always Ellensburg’s RegaLodge at $21.00.

One hundred-seventy-four people registered for the second state convention. With performing choirs, vendors, and CWU student assistants, the total number of participants approached 300. Guest clinicians included Doug McEwen, Arizona, Doreen Rao, Glen Ellyn Childrens’ Choir, Donald Collins, Cambiata Vocal Institute, Steve Harter, Central United Protestant Church, Richard Sparks, PLU, Charles Peterson, studio voice teacher, Dr. Alan Keaton, Laryngologist, and Roger McRea, Temporal Acuity Products (computers and music writing software specialist).

Performing groups included: The Most Happy Fellows (barbershop), Tacoma, Curtis High School Choir, Bob Northrup, conductor (Tacoma), Mission View Elementary School Choir, Sonja Yeager, Conductor (Wenatchee), The Adelphian Concert Choir, UPS, Paul Schultz, Conductor, The Seattle Girls’ Choir, Jerome Wright, Conductor, Central United Protestant Church Chancel Choir, Steve Harter, Conductor (Richland), and the West Valley Junior High School Choir, Roger Stansbury, Conductor, (Yakima)...this group serving as a demo choir for Don Collins from Conway, Arkansas, expert on changing voices.

Again, the board and planners breathed a sigh of relief when the final financial report was presented by treasurer Rush Chase. The net gain for the 1986 state convention was $26.00.

On Saturday, February 7, 1987, the Western Washington District of ACDA, again led by Charles Peterson, held “A Choral Symposium on the Young Voice.” This was on the campus of Seattle Pacific University. Peterson and Vicki Reiels and Karen Fulmer talked on “Care and Development of Young Voices.” Another session was on the topic of the changing voice. Jerome Wright had an interesting title for his session, “Didactic Deployment of Delectable Descants to Delight Developing Dilettantes.” The final session of the day was a festival presentation by four children's choir from the area. Eighty people attended.
To work into the rotation and not compete with the Northwest Divisional convention or the national convention, WA ACDA decided (especially after some word from Gene Brooks, Executive Secretary of the national group) to wait until 1988 for the next state convention.

But that didn’t stop the board from scheduling a fall workshop on the campus of the University of Puget Sound at Kilworth Chapel. It was set for October 9 and 10, 1987. Since the workshop was for band, orchestra, and choral directors there were sessions for each. Vocal sessions included “Learning to Listen in Rehearsal,” presented by clinician Howard Meharg, “Motivation, Before, During, and After Rehearsal,” by Paul Schultz, “Rehearsing Repertoire that Works,” by Dave Cross and Don Barrows, and later in the day three simultaneous reading sessions led by Cheryl Falk, Cathy Bennett, and Dan Jackson. Male Ensemble Northwest sang an evening concert.

It may be interesting to note that a precursor of things to come occurred in the summer of 1988 at Kilworth Chapel on the campus of the University of Puget Sound. In fact, the event was called "Summer Institute." It was sponsored in part by the national ACDA and was designed for training junior high choral directors. The event featured Linda Anderson and Sally Herman, both of whom "have gained national prominence for the excellence of their junior high choruses at state, division, and national ACDA conventions." This version of the "Summer Institute" was held on two campuses that summer, Ohio State in Columbus, as well as at UPS, Tacoma.

The third state convention was set for October 14-15, 1988. A newsletter article by Karen Fulmer said, “The bi-annual ACDA of Washington State Convention has moved from Ellensburg to Yakima in order to offer more session space, larger performing facilities and an opportunity to become acquainted with the city of Yakima. The local organizing committee, chaired by Scott Peterson, has done a tremendous job preparing for the convention.” So, Yakima it was...at A. C. Davis High School, where Deb Wagner directed choral music.
Program chair Karen Fulmer arranged to get some major headliners for this convention. Weston Noble from Luther College, Emily Crocker, Composer and Educator, and the performing group, Chanticleer. State clinicians included Cheryl Falk, Paul Schultz, and Dave Cross. Twyla Brunson handled registration. Member attendees paid $35 for a registration fee that year. Paul Schultz reported in a January, 1989 newsletter (edited by Robert Bode), that despite registration numbers being down slightly as compared to the second state convention two years before this, that the event broke even. Treasurer, Robert Northrup, actually reported a profit of $254.02.

Survey results from the third state convention showed tremendous enthusiasm for the quality of the event. Karen Fulmer’s analysis reported in the same newsletter (January, 1989), noted, however, that only 29 survey forms were received. When asked whether the October date was better than a summer convention, 95% said “yes,” keep it in October. However, a follow-up survey was also sent to state members who did not attend the convention. Fifty-nine members responded saying they had previous commitments on that weekend and many of these indicated their places of employment did not allow release time to attend such in-service offerings. Karen, in retrospect, says she believes this was the beginning of school districts making use of the October in-service days for district-level training.

Planning for the next biennial convention began almost immediately, but a major planning session was held October 14, 1989, in Tacoma. Karen Fulmer had taken over as president on July 1. She noted that the planning session was open “to any interested ACDA member.”

That fall newsletter praised Ed Schaefer and ACDA members in the Spokane area for planning “several events for the Eastern Division.” It also mentioned Robert Metzger and the “Western Division Board,” calling attending to the leadership of Jerome Wright in presenting a “fabulous Music Technology and Choral Exposition Workshop” during the past summer at Shoreline Community College.

Other choral events during the summer of 1989 included one at Whitworth College, Spokane, entitled “Popular Choral Symposium,” with Gene and Audrey Grier, Roger Emerson, and Eugene Butler. Randi von Ellefson, director at Whitworth, headed this up. On July 31 through August 4, Pacific Lutheran University featured Paul Salomunovich. Richard Sparks, PLU’s director, organized this workshop.

“Go for Greatness” was the theme of the 1990 state convention held in Longview, Washington, at Mark Morris High School. Donald Neuen, Director of Choral Activities at the Eastman School...
of Music, was the featured clinician. Linda Spevacek, from Moscow, Idaho, composer, consultant and active clinician presented several sessions on elementary and middle school literature and vocal techniques for this level. Paul Klemme, then on the faculty at WSU, gave two sessions on the use of organ with choir...this at Trinity Lutheran Church in Longview. Dennis Coleman, Director of the Seattle Men’s Chorus, talked of funding community choral groups.

Male Ensemble Northwest members worked with a male chorus organized by SW Division Chairman, Noel White. The chorus sang a concert on Friday afternoon of the convention.

Friday evening, February 12, a banquet was held at the Red Lion Inn in Kelso, followed by a concert at 8 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran in Longview. The George Shangrow Chorale (Seattle) and Male Ensemble Northwest sang.

During this convention an award was presented to Paul Schultz for his leadership in WA ACDA. The board had decided to...”recognize members who have shown dedication to the organization, professional leadership, and a commitment to excellence in choral music.”

With the help of Hinshaw Music (Don Neuen’s sponsor), the state in-service fund, and WMEA, once again the state convention was on sound financial footing. Just over 100 people registered for the event. The cost to ACDA members, again this year, was $35.00.

Scott Peterson made his debut as president in July, 1991. Elections were held for President-Elect with a nice spread in the April edition of the state newsletter showing Janet Reiter (Vancouver) and Ed Schaefer (Spokane) as candidates. Ed was elected and took office on July 1.

Robert Bode resigned as newsletter editor and C. Glenn Burnett was appointed as editor by President Peterson. Glenn, whose first name is also Coyne, is the son of Coyne Burnett, who edited “Voice,” the WMEA magazine, for so many years. Glenn’s inherited sense of humor showed up immediately in his editorial column called “The Other Side of the Coyne.”
The 1992 state convention site was announced for Spokane. Again, the in-service days for schools, October 9 and 10 were chosen. Ed Schaefer, director of choral music at Gonzaga, in his role as president-elect, was the program chair.

The May, 1992, edition of the Washington ACDA newsletter announced that James Litton, of the American Boy Choir in the other Washington, would be the featured clinician. The article by Peterson noted: “As you can see, we are trying to broaden the spectrum of session subjects so as to appeal to more of our members and potential members.”

Meanwhile, Pacific Lutheran University scheduled Dale Warland for its Summer Choral Workshop. This event was August 3-7, 1992. And just across the river, Sheet Music Service of Portland was advertising a August 14-15 event with Jonathan Willcocks and Anton Armstrong, followed by a September 19 event with Andre Thomas and Don Hinshaw.

The 1992 state convention in Spokane, despite being in the “far east” with regard to the zip codes of the largest number of Washington’s ACDA members was well attended. Well over 100 members registered. Program chair and President-Elect Ed Schaefer, said: “I must confess that when the idea was proposed to me to have the state convention at St. John’s Cathedral (Spokane) and to bring James Litton, director of the American Boychoir, as the headliner, I had mixed emotions. Personally, I thought it was a fantastic idea. However, I was a bit nervous about the appeal such a convention might have for a membership that is weighted heavily with teachers.”

Apparently Schaefer’s fears (and, we’re sure, President Scott Peterson’s) were allayed. Along with Litton, clinicians from within our own membership (Geoffrey Boers, Cheryl Falk, Paul Bruggemeier, Karen Martin, Cindy Busler, Felip Holbrook, Paul Klemme, and Joan Conlon) proved to be “of the highest caliber.” “Mr. Litton’s quiet passion for his work and the humility with which he created such incredibly beautiful and inspiring music” struck Ed as making the convention a huge success. “Thanks must go to the Seattle Girls Choir, Jerome Wright, Musical Director, and to the Spokane Area Children’s Choir, Tamara Schupman, Music Director, for the absolutely outstanding Evensong and concert...,” said President, Scott Peterson. Another convention goer responded, “It was as if God opened the door to heaven for about 20 minutes and let us listen!”

Peterson, in the January 1993 issue of the state newsletter, said: “I am happy to report that Howard Meharg of Mark Morris High School in Longview, will be our new president-elect as of July 1, 1993 when our current president-elect, Edward Schaefer of Gonzaga University, becomes president. Howard ran against Cindy Busler of Kalles Junior High School in Puyallup and I have to say that the Washington State Chapter could not lose with the quality of candidates from which to pick.”

Cindy Busler accepted the role of state newsletter editor in 1993.
In the September, 1993 issue of the WA ACDA newsletter, President Schaefer put out the call for suggestions for the state convention 1994. In addition to the state board involvement, Ed encouraged members-at-large to offer ideas. “We need to hear from you! Please call or write your R & S chair and let us know where you need help—or better yet, where your expertise can help others.”

President Schaefer also called attention to a workshop sponsored by ACDA that was to be held in Yakima June 23-25, 1994. “A Trio of Northwest Women” provided was reported to be one of the better workshops on the subject of Junior High/Middle School choral music. The “trio” was Linda Spevacek, Audrey Snyder, and Catherine Bennett, true experts in this field. Karen Martin, who was serving as Women’s Choirs R&S Chair at the time, said, “I felt exhilarated at the depth and breadth of what was offered. I also felt a huge disappointment that so many of my colleagues chose not to be there. I also felt the icy waters between the mainland ACDA and our Junior High/Middle School island.”

The 1994 state convention of October 14-15 turned out to be the last of the state conventions. Dubbed “the Unconvention or ‘Trying on New Clothes’,” it was designed just a bit differently. The general sessions were to be followed by small group sessions during which we were to experiment with the theories presented. Rodney Eichenberger, Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University, was the headliner. His focus was on four topics: Multi-neural Networking, Language/Para-language, Non-verbal Rehearsal Techniques, and Warm-up Techniques in Holistic Style.

The evaluations following this convention were astonishingly in the “Great” and “Good” categories. Every respondent on the evaluations rated Eichenberger in the “Great” column.

Another feature of the “Unconvention” of ’94 was a hymn sing/concert presented Friday evening...“In Our Music, We Are One.” Margaret Gries and Paul Klemme served as organists. In one section of the event, a set of three anthems was sung...by the audience. The concert portion, tied perfectly to the entire service, was presented by the Central Washington University Chamber Choir, directed by Geoffrey Boers.

Rod Eichenberger’s keynote address is available here...and is still timely today.

In the January, 1995, issue of our newsletter, Ed Schaefer reported, “If any of you have read the most recent issue of the Choral Journal, you are, no doubt, beaming with pride over the accomplishments of our Washington State colleagues and the recognition they are receiving at the national level. There are three groups and a clinician from our state making presentations at the national convention. The Central Washington University Chamber Choir, Geoffrey Boers, director; The Walla Walla Master Singers, Robert Bode, director; Male Ensemble Northwest (several Washington members); and Karen Fulmer leading an interest session regarding our involvement in securing lasting place for choral music in the educational reforms that are now taking place.”
As Ed Schaefer prepared to leave office in 1995 he wrote (in January) a review of his goals for his 1993-95 term. One of his goals had been to "examine throughly what need ACDA might fulfill by sponsoring summer workshops. If it is determined that ACDA can provide a service in an area that is not being met any other way, we would establish a series of summer workshops." While he questioned "both the rationale and the efficiency of ACDA launching a regular series of summer workshops...in an environment that is nearly saturated with them already," he went on to add the important thing was meeting the needs of our members. In short, it is obvious that Ed and his leadership team had been pondering some changes, including dropping the October state convention concept and moving to summer events.

Board meeting minutes for June 16, 1995 give a strong hint of “something big” on the horizon...changes in direction for WA ACDA activities. Despite good attendance at the state conventions each even numbered year, there was concern that fewer and fewer teachers were able to free themselves of their school district obligations during the in-service days of October each year. Discussion favored moving the convention to the summer and co-sponsoring it with Malecki Music...with more emphasis on the reading of music. While a headliner “might be engaged” (quoting the minutes), it was felt that the R&S Chairs would be well qualified to staff such a convention. During this meeting it was announced that Twyla Brunson had been elected to the office of President-Elect.

Following a leadership training session in Lawton, Oklahoma, headquarters of the national ACDA, that stressed advocacy for the arts, Howard Meharg wrote a letter to then Governor Mike Lowry on August 14, 1995. Lowry responded on September 29, saying he “generally support(s) any programs that contribute to a better informed and educated public. NEA, NEH, and PBS are certainly part of this framework.”

In a bit of dreaming, President-Elect Howard Meharg called a meeting of as many college/university directors as he could assemble in Seattle at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, on Friday, January 5, 1995. He asked, “Is it feasible to think, plan, operate, a 5-14 day Choral Summer Institute co-sponsored by the WA-ACDA and the college/universities of this state? Envision a panel of representatives from both bodies ultimately being chosen whose job it is to plan and run the event. Envision the state of Washington becoming a choral “destination” of national and international renown based on:

- Excellent planning, "curriculum," materials, leaders of unmistakable repute.
- The finest facilities, using curent university and/or church sites.
- Touting the cool summer weather of the NW.
- Possible combinations with/interweaving of events with choral "camps" for high school, junior high school, and children's choirs.
- Sharing of costs, risks, profits between co-operating organizations.

The meeting was interesting and the discussion lively, but one would have to say that nothing specific developed from it; except to say that some of the ideas generated translated into elements of the current Summer Institute that had its debut in August, 1996.
“Welcome to Washington” was the headline in the October, 1995 edition of the state newsletter. “We welcome Leslie Guelker-Cone to Washington ACDA. Leslie is the new Director of Choral Activities at Western Washington University.” She had taught previously at the University of Hawaii, and at California State, Fresno. Her first teaching position, however, was a park Middle School in Kennewick, Washington. She reported she was “thrilled to be coming ‘full circle’ and returning to the Pacific Northwest.”

In September of 1995, the board committed completely to the Summer Institute concept to be held at the University of Puget Sound, co-sponsored by the University, WA ACDA and Malecki Music. Meharg, Boers, Fulmer, Tripp, Schultz and Brunson were charged with the responsibility for developing a program for the summer of 1996 and were to present their plan to the board in January, 1996.

The board also encouraged in-service workshops for October, 1996, to be developed in four locations: Cheney, Bellingham, Ellensburg, and Longview. Regional representatives were to head these workshops.


The First Years of the Summer Institute (1996-2007)

Howard Meharg’s (Editor for UNISON) front page article for the newsletter (Spring-1996), indicated the planning for the Summer Institute (set for August 1, 2, 1996) was well underway. He said, “We’ve got music for you to read for virtually every level and voicing. Our reading session directors are leaders in choral music from this state. We’ve got past ACDA presidents, Ed Schaefer, Scott Peterson, Karen Fulmer, Paul Schultz, Repertoire and Standards chairpersons, and many other outstanding choral experts. We’re featuring a session of the music of NW composers and arrangers including some outstanding pieces by newly published writer Vijay Singh. Church choral leaders will have significant reasons for attending. You won’t find a boring moment!”

Twyla Brunson also promoted the first Summer Institute saying, “This institute was developed to provide choral directors in our state an opportunity to meet with colleagues for several days of reading and interest session.” Twyla also talked of a feature of the event that has continued to be popular to this day...the annual Salmon BBQ.
In addition to the presenters mentioned earlier, we can’t forget that Gene Brooks, national executive secretary of ACDA was there. Don Barrows, Judi Burns, Dave Cross, Cathy Bleecker, Scott Dean, Ken DeLong, Linda Fahlgren, Leslie Guelker-Cone, Judy Herrington, Dan Jackson, Helen Lauritzen, Rich Nace, Charles Peterson, Janet Reiter, and Greg Vancil all led reading sessions at this first annual Summer Institute. Planners had begun with the premise that we have outstanding choral leaders in the state and that they should be used.

It’s also worth mentioning that in addition to using state leadership for the sessions, we would ask Malecki Music to provide titles for reading that were chosen by the session leaders. The usual complaint among choral people attending publisher/retailer reading sessions...the kind many attended each year...was that “you had to wade through a great deal of ‘junk’ to find a few gems.” The intent of the organizers of the Summer Institute was to guarantee that the pieces selected were high quality, tested, and chosen by leaders who could be trusted to select great choral literature. Despite these stipulations, the Malecki people cooperated and provided a great service to WA ACDA.

In this same newsletter (Spring, 1996) we see first mention of the WA ACDA website. Meharg, who has continued as webmaster since then, was just beginning his website work at the time. He cautioned by saying, “It runs best on Netscape 2 or better.” Not one to raise expectations too high, he also said, “It’s rudimentary with lots of room for additional information and links.”

A headline in the Fall edition of the newsletter said, “Reading Session Serves 70.” President-Elect Twyla Brunson served as program chair for the event held on August 1 and 2, 1996. In addition to all those named above, it should be mentioned that music of northwest composers, Donna Schultz, Jerry Weseley Harris, Vijay Singh, and Andrea Klouse was featured. “Essential Learnings,” a hot-button topic in the schools was the topic of a Karen Fulmer led presentation. Charles Peterson talked on vocal pedagogy and Joseph Crnko held a “break-out” session about “The Child’s Voice.”

Considerable work had gone into listing the criteria for the Outstanding Leadership and Service Award for Washington ACDA. Basically, the award goes to one who demonstrates outstanding qualities in musicianship, leadership, and loyalty to ACDA. WA ACDA named Joan Catoni-Conlon, then teaching and conducting choral music at the University of Washington, as the first recipient of this award.
With Editor Cindy Busler’s resignation after the spring newsletter issue, Howard Meharg picked up the role as Editor of the newsletter. He proposed naming it “UNISON.” His article on the naming of the newsletter quoted the dictionary, “Unison! One sound, the interval of a perfect prime, the state of being so tuned or sounded; akin to union, an act or instance of uniting or joining two or more things into one as in the formation of a single political unit from two or more separate and independent units, a uniting in marriage, something formed by the combining or coalition of parts or members, oneness, the growing together of severed parts.”

He further stated, “Unison, that illusive guiding principle which is the obsession of so many successful choral conductors. Unison provides the yardstick, actually a micrometer for measuring tuning, for observing balance, for evaluating blend, and for deciding the presence of ensemble or precision in attack and releases. In short, are we together here?”

1997
The WA ACDA was off and running with the Summer Institute. It was to become a yearly event. The second annual session was held July 30 to August 1, 1997. UPS promised another great Salmon BBQ and the board continued with the notion of using state leaders, asking them to select the titles and conduct the sessions.

The second issue of UNISON, January 1997, featured a full page article with the headline “Wayne Hertz Remembered Fondly.” Dr. Wayne Hertz, best known for his work at Central Washington University, had died July 26, 1996. The article noted, “It may be impossible to name all the choral directors who ‘came to be’ as a result of Wayne’s leadership.” He was born in 1908 in Illinois. He earned a Doctor of Music in Education degree from New York University in 1959, but after teaching in the Illinois public schools, moved to Ellensburg and CWSC in 1937. Governor Daniel Evans proclaimed Wayne S. Hertz Day in the State of Washington for May 25, 1974...a unique honor. Hertz became a member of ACDA in 1962, one of the early members of the organization.

At a January 11, 1997 board meeting it was announced that Richard Nance and Karen Martin had consented to allow their names to be placed in nomination for the office of President-Elect...term to being July 1, 1997. Ballots went out later in the spring and Richard Nance was elected to the position.

At the same meeting, the board commended Karen Fulmer, a past president of WA ACDA and director of choral music at Sumner Junior High School, for being named the Washington Teacher of the Year.

Twyla Brunson took over as president on July 1, 1997.
The second annual Summer Institute, July 30 - August 1, 1997, again featured state choral directors as leaders of the reading sessions.

Rebecca J. Rottsolk, Artistic Director of the Northwest Girlchoir in Seattle, was awarded the 1997 Service and Leadership Award.

Twyla’s article in the Spring ’98 UNISON commended Washington choirs for their great performances at the NW Convention in Portland. The Tacoma Youth Choir, The Pacific Lutheran Women’s Choir, the Tudor Choir, and the Gonzaga University Choir each sang. She also thanked Noel White, SW Washington chair, for heading up a March 28 workshop in Longview featuring Solveig Holmquist from Western Oregon University, and Karen Martin, who organized a Women’s Choir Festival held at PLU.

The last Wednesday of July came to be “the date” for the start of the Summer Institute. A pattern was beginning to develop as it appeared the WA ACDA had designed a “keeper” as to the annual event.

1998

In the 1998 session (July 29-31), the planners, led by Richard Nance, Program Chair, invited Stephen Hatfield, a Canadian composer, as featured guest. Jim Moore, the current ACDA national president, Connie Branton, president of the NW Division, and Robert Hawthorne of Oregon Catholic Press also joined Hatfield in the “headliner” category.

Judy Herrington, R&S Chair for Children’s Choirs, wrote an article for UNISON in the form of an interview with Stephen Hatfield. This idea has been used several times since then as an introduction to the Summer Institute headliner.

Hatfield, quoted from another source, said, "I hope to present an alternative approach to inspirational content, one that incorporates a broader emotional spectrum and does not condescend to singers or audience. I think my music tends to have more grit and friction than most choral music in this genre, more of an examination of the dark places we must all work through en route to the light."

The session of 1998 was once again held at the University of Puget Sound. The board, at various times (early in the life of the Summer Institute) discussed the possibility of rotating the event among several locations throughout the state. So far, it hasn’t happened. A location close to Sea-Tac airport, comfortable weather, and most of all, the hospitality and welcome expressed by the music department and food service at UPS keeps bringing WA ACDA back year after year to this campus in Tacoma.
Paul Schultz, Director of Choral Activities at UPS, was instrumental in making sure ACDA was welcomed. Paul was also the recipient of the Leadership and Service Award for 1998. Upon receiving the award he said, as he listened to the list of ACDA activities in which he had been involved, that it “sounded like a quote from a history book.” He said that history is really a process and that “performers are better equipped to present who ‘they’ are...what a Bach fugue or a Beethoven sonata or an Ives song is really all about. No one is allowed to recarve Michaelangelo’s David, or to repaint Monet’s Water Lilies or to rebuild the Cologne Cathedral. But, we are the fortunate ones who are allowed to breathe new life into Bach’s Italian Concerto or Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony or Schubert’s Winterreise...whatever we perform, whenever we perform it!”

Male voices got another boost when R & S Chair, Stuart Hunt, of Marysville, organized a male chorus festival featuring Male Ensemble Northwest. Stuart followed up on a workshop two years prior that was set up by Janet Reiter of Vancouver. The Marysville event was attended by 400 high school male singers.

Richard Nance, Director of Choral Music at Pacific Lutheran University, took over as president July 1, 1999. Judy Herrington was WA ACDA’s newly elected president-elect.

1999
Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe, Director of Choral Studies at the University of Miami, Florida was a special guest at the 1999 Summer Institute. Again, the attempt of the planning committee was to provide reading sessions for all levels for schools, churches, colleges, and community groups.

In addition, Leslie Guelker-Cone headed up a “Time Management” roundtable, Cathy Haight, Seattle Pacific University, talked on vocal pedagogy, Paul Schultz presented a session on motivation techniques, and Ken Wilson’s topic was “Teaching Vocal Jazz.” Mary Neumann of Malecki Music once again headed the team of workers from Spokane who provided all the music for the event.

Howard Meharg was presented the Leadership and Service Award for 1999.

2000

Interest session included: “What I wish they had taught us in college,” a roundtable led by David Anderson; “Percussion Techniques,” with Oscar Munoz; and “Choreography for choirs of all ages,” presented by Kandy Gilberty. The Rainier Valley Harmonizers from Puyallup, presented a short concert. The annual salmon BBQ continues to be a favorite.
Robert Northrop, who directed choirs at Curtis High School in Tacoma for many years, was the recipient of the 2000 Leadership and Service Award. Bob served as state treasurer for five years and had been on the board. He had been suffering from brain cancer for some time and died on August 14, two weeks after the award was presented to members of his family. Sarah Graham, a former student of Bob’s, said he knew he had been given the award and appreciated it very much.

Meanwhile, Karen Fulmer had been elected as president-elect of the NW Division. This meant she was program chair for the 2000 NW convention in Seattle. Fifteen choirs from the state performed during the convention of March 8-11, 2000. In addition, Stu Hunt, Lori Weist, Paul Dennis, Roger Kelley, Ben Keller, Paul Schultz, and Scott Dean all led or participated in interest sessions.

**2001**

Headliners for the 2001 Summer Institute were Diane Loomer and Morna Edmundson of Vancouver, B.C., co-directors of the internationally acclaimed women’s choir, Elecktra. Loomer also directs Chor Leoni, a men’s choir from Vancouver, B.C.

Presenters were eil Lieurance, Randy Wagner, Darnelle Preston, Susan Windham, Karyl Carlson, Rob Higby, Ben Brody, Cindy Dinsmore, George Strid, Fred West, Sarah Graham, Dave Dickerson, Keith Loftis, Wayne Lackman and Ben Keller.

Evaluation forms continued to show that the Summer Institute was meeting the needs of directors. “The most valuable resource I have is a network of supportive colleagues. At Summer Institute I have a chance to expand that network and also learn from other directors,” one participant said. “I look forward to singing here every year and selecting new music,” said another.

The 2001 Leadership award went to Richard Sparks, then director of choral music at Pacific Lutheran University. The award was presented by colleague on the PLU staff, Richard Nance. Sparks founded Seattle Pro Musica.

As Judy Herrington began her term as president, Leslie Guelker-Cone was elected as the new state ACDA President-Elect.
2002

It was former King’s Singer (an original member of the group) Simon Carrington who served as clinician at the 2002 SI. Others who led sessions were Karen Thomas, Margaret Green, Dan Davison, Peggy Burrough, George Guenther, Heather Stein, David Anderson, Michelle Ancianux, Patty Bourne, Mark Kloeppe, Jim Peterson, Kathryn Lehmann and John Walk.

Pepper Music at Ted Brown, Tacoma, took over as supplier for all music read at the session. Pat Howland led the Pepper team.

The 2002 Leadership and Service award went to Twyla Brunson. Twyla was a huge contributor to the planning of the format for the SI, among her other roles in leadership in ACDA...including a two year term as president of the NW Division. Her outstanding choral work was at the Junior High/Middle School level.

2003

Anton Armstrong, Professor of Music at St. Olaf College and conductor of the famed St. Olaf Choir, was the WA ACDA Summer Institute guest clinician in July, 2003.

Unfortunately, records on who, from among the ranks of Washington leaders, presented the reading sessions could not be found.

President Leslie Guelker-Cone’s article regarding the session said: “Talking about music “as a means of grace in other people’s lives, Dr. Anton Armstrong...graced us with his participation...This year’s event...drew a record 170 participants.” Leslie thanked past--President Judy Herrington, Linda Hamilton, President-Elect, and the entire board. She also had high praise for the work of Rob Dennis, Treasurer, and George Guenther for their work on registration and housing.

The year’s Leadership and Service award went to Peggy Burrough. Long noted for her outstanding work with Jr. High choirs, Peggy had just recently retired after directing music at Puyallup High School.
2004

The 2004 SI opened for registration on Wednesday, July 28th. Edith Copley, from Northern Arizona University, was our guest clinician.

Leslie Guelker-Cone, Bellingham, was president in 2004 and Linda Hamilton, program chair.

Presenters included Kristina Ploeger, Multi-cultural music, Priscilla Baldock, women’s music, Steve Goodenberger and Gary Cannon with sacred music, Kelly Kunz and Teresa Fraser, vocal jazz material, Leora Schwitters and Richelle Tripp with Jr. High/Middle School music, Judy Herrington, elementary choirs, Dave Dickerson and Ann Brueggemeier, presenting high school materials, and Kurt McKee, Josh Viles, and Matt Carey leading new songs for male voices. Paula Herd and Kathryn Lehman presented the college/university packet.

Rob Dennis, who served as treasurer for several years, had the emotional honor of presenting the 2004 Leadership award to his father, Paul Dennis. Paul was noted for his superb choral work first in Longview at Mark Morris High School, but most of his career was spent at Walla Walla High School where he continually impacted lives and developed some amazing choirs for well over 20 years. He was a lifetime ACDA member and also served WMEA in several roles.

Other ACDA sponsored events continued to be presented. A workshop for Children’s Music Specialists was held October 9, 2004, at Bethel Lutheran Church in Shoreline, Washington. Kelly Foster Griffin, past-president of the NW Kodaly Educators, was the clinician.

2005

Dale Warland headlined the 2005 Summer Institute.

A complete list of institute reading session leaders was unavailable for 2005.

A “new twist,” as Program Chair, Linda Hamilton called it, featured a “Jazz Interaction Night.” It offered a change to experience jazz with a live combo, along with a teaching demonstration by Janet Reiter and Judy Filibeck.
Scott Peterson, choral director at Yakima Community College for 29 years, was awarded this year’s Leadership and Service plaque. Scott has served ACDA in many capacities, most recently as state president. He was president-elect for the NW Division at the time of this award and was in the middle of preparations, as program chair, for the NW convention coming up in Portland in 2006.

Scott, who was in Fairbanks, Alaska leading a choral workshop, wrote: “I thank my colleagues in the Washington Chapter of ACDA for this honor. To be recognized by one’s peers is a precious thing and I am truly grateful.”

2006

Planners, including President Linda Hamilton, stayed a little closer to home in choosing the headliner for this year’s session. Sharon Paul, who is choral director at the University of Oregon, clearly demonstrated that excellence in developing great choirs is a NW tradition and expectation.

Jennifer Price of Granite Falls and Rebecca Rottsolk presented elementary choir music. Planners went to Oregon, too, for Loren Wenz, Newberg, to lead the reading of collegiate level music. Loren was joined by Robert Bigley of Shoreline Community College. James Browyer presented music for women’s voice, while Dan Jackson led the reading of male chorus literature.

High school material was presented by George Guenther and Ben Keller. Ken DeJong and Jason Anderson conducted the sacred music reading session. It was Ken Riggs and Pam Nordquist for Middle School/Junior High materials.

Sheri Erickson and Frederick Lokken directed participants in music for community choirs and Tom Almli led the jazz session.

The recipient of the 2006 Leadership Award was Judy Filibeck. Judy was state president of WA ACDA in 1981. She has been an active ACDA leader for over 25 years.
The leadership, with Leora Schwitters as president, of ACDA again ventured to the eastern side of the country for the 2007 clinician, Z. Randall Stroope. Stroope is well known for his wonderful compositions for choirs. His packet of reading materials had a number of his pieces. They were well received and it’s a safe assumption that many NW programs feature Stroope compositions in 2007-2008.

The multi-cultural session was led by Russ Seaton and Kristina Ploeger. Anthony Giles and Matt Carey directed music from the high school packets. Ron Mallory and Norma Aamodt-Nelson took care of the sacred music materials.

Connie Branton, from Boise, Dawn McCormick and Georgina Philippson led participants in music for middle school and junior high school students. Paul Schultz and Mark Kloepper directed community choir music.

It was Nick Anderson with vocal jazz materials, while Sue Green and Shari Anderson did elementary choir literature.

Music for men and for women was presented by Linda Short and Rafe Wadleigh, while Megan Oberfield held a session on Kodaly in the Choral Context.

The winner of this year’s Leadership and Service Award was Neil Lieurance, former director of choirs at Shorecrest High School. While retired from full time choral work, Neil still conducts choirs at Seattle Pacific University. Readers will note that Neil’s name has been connected with ACDA from the time the organization began in this state. He was particularly active in the Puget Sound Choral Conductors Guild and, as noted previously, helped in the merging of that group with ACDA.
Summing it up

WA ACDA has apparently found a format, a time, and a place for meeting the needs of choral directors. The organization’s Summer Institute, while the main venue for serving members, is only one of the events and services provided by the association. For lack of documentation, many workshops and services may well have been omitted in the writing of this history of the organization. If member readers can provide this material, please send it to Howard Meharg, your ad hoc historian. History will be “revised” to accommodate additional information as it comes in.

In the meantime, the SI has become nationally recognized as a wonderful way to learn more about the job of a choral conductor and a superb venue for finding wonderful literature for use by choirs of all types. The friendly atmosphere, great weather, and the wonderful facilities and hospitality of the University of Puget Sound contribute immensely to the success of the event.


This period of WA ACDA History written by Leora Schwitters

2007-2008

By mid-2007, the officers and R&S Chair for WA ACDA were: Past-President: Linda Hamilton, President: Leora Schwitters, President-Elect: Marc Hafso, Treasurer: Georgina Philippson, Secretary and Newsletter Editor: Josh Viles, R & S Chairs: Kristina Ploeger (Children’s), Dawn McCormick (MS/JH), Joel Ulrich (HS), Justin Wisness (Multicultural), Barbara Irish (Men’s), John Weiss (College/University), Ron Bayer (Two Year College), Giselle Wyers (Student Activities), Tom Almli (Jazz), Ron Mallory (Worship), Karen Thomas/Robert Bode (Community), and Tim Fitzpatrick (Women’s).

When the Fall 2007 Board Meeting at Issaquah High School came to an end that early Saturday afternoon in September, a general frustration emerged in that the usual four hour meeting was not sufficient to do all that the board wanted to do, and that it might be better to meet for a full eight hours at a time in the future. Since members travel from all ends of the state. As the group adjourned, the possibility of having a board retreat so that the group could really get past the nuts and bolts of planning and administrating the Summer Institute and actually do some visioning about other projects was mentioned.

Throughout the 2007-2008 year, Treasurer Georgina Philippson took over the books, and with Past-President Linda Hamilton’s strong support, managed to get our records into a Quickbooks and finally reconcile everything to the satisfaction of the national ACDA Accountant, Mark Smith.
Summer Institute 2008 Program Chair Marc Hafso’s efforts resulted in a new record for attendance with 216 attendees enjoying the humor and expertise of headliner, Dr. Tim Seelig for the three day event, held as usual at UPS in July. (Summer Institute 2008 Summary)

J.W. Pepper again supplied the music packets with Pat Howland and Kathy Rasmussen in charge. Pepper’s co-sponsorship is valued immensely as they supply thousands of dollars worth of free music for the reading sessions while WA-ACDA began this year to pick up more of the print costs for music that is not in their catalog. The books, CD’s and other materials available for perusal and purchase by J.W. Pepper and staff add an important component to the success of the conference.

WA and NW ACDA presenters for SI 08 included Dr. Sandra Glover discussing the vocal mechanism, and Megan Oberfield shared Kodály methods for older singers in rehearsals. Reading sessions were led by Bernard Crouse, Judy Filibeck, Vicky Thomas, Gary Cannon, Julia Meyering, Brian Hoskins, Solveig Holmquist, Richard Nance, Frank DeMiero, Kenny Kraintz, Dave Cazier, Darla Pumphrey, Kurt McKee, Stacy Winn Jenny Price, Susan Windham, Ron Bayer, John Weiss, Bayard Dubois for Barbara Irish, and Josh Viles.

Ron Mallory resurrected the Wednesday Vespers service after the salmon dinner on the lawn. Tim Fitzpatrick and Anni Stankovic were the accompanists, and DJ Records made hundreds of CD’s available for purchase.

Karen Fulmer was presented with the Leadership and Service Award by her high school director, Howard Meharg.

President Leora Schwitters instituted the first WA ACDA Board Retreat, which extended the UPS experience at the Summer Institute from Friday afternoon, overnight in the dorm, and through Saturday noon. Since everyone was already there, no travel reimbursements were necessary, and the retreat was deemed so successful, fiscally and otherwise, that the board agreed it should become an annual event.

Friday afternoon was spent debriefing the conference, basking in its success, and planning for next summer’s event.

The incredible myriad of a year’s worth of tasks for the program chair was laid out in detail to the astonishment of the rest of the board.

The board took immediate steps to identify sub tasks that could be farmed out to other board members for following years, and make the Program Chair position more manageable in the future. A Summer Institute Manual began to be assembled describing these tasks in detail.
The following morning was mostly a visioning session, with President-Elect Marc Hafso reporting on the ACDA officer training retreat in Oklahoma City and his very positive feelings about the new Executive Director, Tim Sharp. Marc shared some of Sharp’s many visionary ideas, which touched off much excitement among the board as they brainstormed ways ACDA could better serve Washington State.

Sue Green and Russell Seaton were tasked with exploring ideas on offering a fall or winter workshop on the Eastside and on the Westside.

Discussions included exploring methods to liaise with WMEA in ways that would benefit our members and their students, perhaps in how contests are structured and administered, among other things.

2008-2009

President: Leora Schwitters, President-Elect: Marc Hafso, Vice President: Linda Hamilton, Webmaster: Howard Meharg, Secretary/Unison Editor: Josh Viles, Treasurer: Leora Schwitters, Eastern Liaison: Russell Seaton, Western Liaison: Sue Green, R & S Chairs: Kristina Ploeger (College/University), Joel Ulrich (HS), Giselle Wyers (Student Activities), Josh Viles (Men’s), Justin Wisness (Multicultural), Ron Bayer (Two Year Colleges), Robert Bode (Community), Tim Fitzpatrick (Women’s), Ron Mallory (Worship), Dawn McCormick (MS/JH), Jenny Price (Children’s).

A full day September board meeting gave the board a chance to make sure preparations for SI 09 were well underway, and also allowed for expansion of several ideas generated at the retreat in July.

Don Clausen, WMEA President, was invited as a guest, and the first communications began regarding ACDA’s collective concerns regarding regional and state festivals and contests.

Concerns that were discussed included standards in these areas: adjudication forms, literature lists, adjudicator certification, and sight reading components. Ron Bayer was appointed as a liaison between WMEA and WA ACDA, and was invited to a collaborative meeting for the following January to further this discussion.
National ACDA has given WA ACDA the task of adding 57 new active members and 14 new student members to their rolls by June 2009. Ideas were explored as to how this could come about, including contacting personally all members who had slipped off the roll over the past few years. Online renewals, eventually with monthly payments through the new national website and exciting members-only benefits there will help. This task will be daunting, given the recent collapse of the economy.

Giselle Wyers volunteered to set up a WA ACDA Facebook page, and the board discussed the possibility of each R & S Chair having their own page on the WA ACDA website as a resource.

A committee of past presidents secured two outstanding candidates for President-Elect: Lori Wiest and Russell Seaton.

The spring board meeting included guest, new President-Elect Lori Wiest. The “How to” manual for planning Summer Institutes has begun to flesh out, and the board’s goal of taking on more duties previously owned by the program chair are panning out well.

Several board positions will open up for 2009-2011. Replacements were nominated, and were subsequently contacted and asked to submit applications. A committee with current officers and past presidents was assigned to evaluate and select replacements and invite them to attend the board retreat in July.

Ron Bayer reported some progress on the WMEA Liaison front. Another collaborative meeting was scheduled for August.

Sue Green reported little improvement on growing the membership despite much effort, but noted optimistically that given the economic situation, job losses, etc., WA ACDA is not losing members, but holding steady.

Joel Ulrich will pursue an “Ambassador” program to schools, churches and community choirs who wish for help. Funds were allocated for this purpose.

Before adjourning, the board gave permission to Leora Schwitters to begin working on a program to allow for annual recognition of more of the membership, i.e., “Outstanding Young Choral Director”, “Outstanding Choral Director” Awards such as other states offer.
**Summer Institute 2009**

President and Program Chair, Marc Hafo, again hosted a successful conference, themed “Sing Out Your Stories...... A tale rises from the heart and the mind to be sung” with another record attendance of 229.

Headliners Tom Carter and Charlene Archibeque gave attendees many practical and inspirational ideas. Phillip Copeland of Choral Net and chair of the National ACDA Technology Committee, added a bonus session on using technology which had been presented at the national ACDA Conference in Oklahoma City earlier in the year. It was well received by those in attendance.

Leslie Guelker-Cone received the Leadership and Service Award, presented by her WWU colleague, Tim Fitzpatrick.

Other information, including a list of state presenters can be found on this page.

New board members were introduced: Brian Mitchell, (HS R & S), Julie Whalen (MS/JH R & S) and David Anderson (College & University R & S).

Barbara Tappa was announced as the new Eastern Liaison as Russell Seaton rotates off from that position.