
PEACEMEAL

| A Publication of the Portland Peace Choir |

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Why we sing

Have you ever been tempted to skip choir rehearsal because you're tired, depressed, or just not in the mood? But then you force yourself to go, and before you know it, you're feeling happy, full of energy and find a smile on your face. It's not a coincidence, it's not a mystery ... it's singing!

Although we sing for the joy of it, scientists tell us that singing provides us with many health benefits as well, both physical and mental. Articles in many scientific publications, social media and magazines as diverse as Psychology Today, the Journal of the American Medical Association, and The Yoga Journal all report studies with similar findings: singing is good for us! And, interestingly, studies suggest that the effects of group singing are especially profound.



How It All Started: The Beginnings of the Portland Peace Choir

As a relatively new member of the choir (2 seasons), I've been curious about the history of this group that has so enriched my life. Who started it, why, and how did it all come about? With a little digging, and a lot of input from early members, I've put together this brief picture of the beginnings of the Portland Peace Choir.

Two of the founding members of the choir, Fred Sly and Kate Schuyler, are still singing with us. They shared with us their memories of how the Peace Choir was born.





Health benefits of singing

Here are some of the beneficial effects of singing:

- It is a cardiovascular exercise, improving lung function and capacity, circulation, and bringing increased oxygen to the brain.
- It improves posture and tones the diaphragm.
- It causes a release of pain-relieving endorphins in the brain, as well as dopamine (a mood elevator) and oxytocin (a stress reducer).
- It has been shown to boost the immune system, and has even been used with cancer patients to help combat the effects of chemotherapy on the immune system.
- Learning songs (lyrics, tunes, and dynamics) is a work-out for the brain, improving memory and concentration.
- Singing is a form of meditation, taking us out of the worries and stresses of our lives and relieving stress.
- Choral singing is a bonding experience and creates a sense of community.

How it all started..cont'd

Fred Sly came to Portland from Willits, CA to be near his grandchildren, and wanted to find a choir to sing with. He says, "At the time Marion Van Namen was directing a parent's choir on Friday mornings at the Portland Waldorf School (in Milwaukie, OR) and because my grandkids were attending PWS and I was transporting them, I sang with the Friday morning choir.

I was simultaneously auditioning choirs to sing with, and I wanted a choir that sang both music designed to lift the spirit, and that expressed outrage at how some people are left out of the human family, don't have a place at the table so to speak. No choir I interviewed seemed to match what I was looking for and, because my conviction that social change is most easily affected when it has a great sound track is so deep, I decided to start a choir.

I asked Marion if she would like to direct, she said yes. Marion brought a love of world music to the group. I already had the support of Kate Schuyler (Sufi music, Aurora Choir, and Portland Revels) who brought in Kristi Hellum and her husband Peter Banda. Kristi and Peter brought a love of gospel music to the group. Janet Alison, a friend of Marion's, was invited as well. Janet was singing with the Rogue Valley Peace choir before moving to Portland. These five became the core group of the choir, also known as the "Founders." We started having meetings and in the fall kicked off our first season.



The gleeful PPC Founders

We filled out the choir pretty fast and had a solid 40 in the first year. We first met in a rehearsal space at Division and 60th, then transferred to St. David's as we outgrew our original space. We have been at St. David's ever since.

From the beginning we were influenced by the music I brought from Emandal Chorale in Willits, and we still sing

How it all started..cont'd

combined concerts with Emandal when we have our combined Peace Choir summit in Ashland. Emandal was very edgy and we sang, *Take The Toys Away From the Boys*, *1000 Grandmothers*, *I Ain't Afraid*, *Gentle Arms of Eden*, and a host of other music of both protest and love of peace arranged by Don Willis, Emandal's excellent director.

We have been branching out over the years and the last two years have really expanded our command of both of the kinds of music we set out to sing, peace and protest. I have been delighted by our growth and am looking forward to inviting lots of young people into the choir, mostly so they can hold up us old people who stand in the back during rehearsals (and all the time really). "

Kate Schuyler's recollections of the birth of the Peace Choir agree with Fred's, and she adds, "We started meeting in May 2009, met throughout that summer, developing a vision, a mission statement, finding a rehearsal space (a building at the corner of 60th and Division,) and had our first rehearsal in September 2009 with about 25 people. I'm pretty sure Mary Tinkham was one of the original singers along with Fred and me. Mary and I have been singing with PPC ever since. Fred took a break for a few years and rejoined a year or two ago."

In addition to Fred, Kate and Mary, several others who sang with the choir in the first season are still with us. Alisa Jackson, Carole Most, Para Winingham, Peter and Sandy Lofy, Sue Bartlett and Trisha Lomax all sang in the Peace Choir's first Spring concert, and are still with the choir. We are fortunate to have these long-time members of the choir continue to sing with us and share with us their knowledge of the history of the group and their enthusiasm and love of singing songs of peace, protest and social justice.

~Barbara Burnett

PPC Summer Session

Join us in August for our Summer Session:

Wednesdays, August 3, 17, and 24, 7pm - 9pm at St. David's

Cost: \$25

Sunday, August 28, 2016 Performance at Portland Saturday Market

Time to be announced (around noon)

Get to Know Your Fellow Singers

For nine months, every Wednesday night, we come together for a lifting of spirit, to raise our voices and to have some fun. Yet, how many of us know anyone outside our own section? How many of us know anything about who is IN our section? Please take a moment to share a brief bio with this publication. Guaranteed, your contribution will tighten the bond we've begun in our commitment to singing for peace.

This issue: meet Chris, Cynthia, and Peter, Paul and Diane

Get to Know Your Fellow Singers

I was born in cold and snowy Flagstaff, AZ. Yes, we had white Christmases in the pine forest, not by the cactus. We mostly lived in the beautiful touristy red rock country of Sedona. My father taught English at Verde Valley School, a boarding high school. When I was 10, my father accepted a teaching job at the American-run Robert College, in Istanbul, Turkey. We children went to an elementary school for faculty kids. Living abroad was the most interesting time in my life. It also meant exploring Turkey and most of Europe during vacations in an original style VW van. We traveled as far north as Norway to see the MIDNIGHT sun and as far south as Spain to feel the HOT sun. When I had finished junior high, I came to Oregon to live with my grandmother to start my first year in high, at Catlin Gabel School. I accidentally signed up for the school choir, not thinking I would like it at first. But, I was hooked! We performed the Vivaldi *Gloria* and Britten *Ceremony Of Carols*, both great pieces. The rest of my family eventually moved to Oregon. My parents, who played string instruments, played in community orchestras. I continued at Portland Community College, singing in the choir, but not sure what to major in. I decided in a career in transportation. Recently, I took early retirement, but missed working. I now enjoy a part-time job delivering for a wholesale florist. I've recently gone through a divorce and am feeling lonely. The PPC and Harmony Circle Sing Along have brought some happiness back in my life.

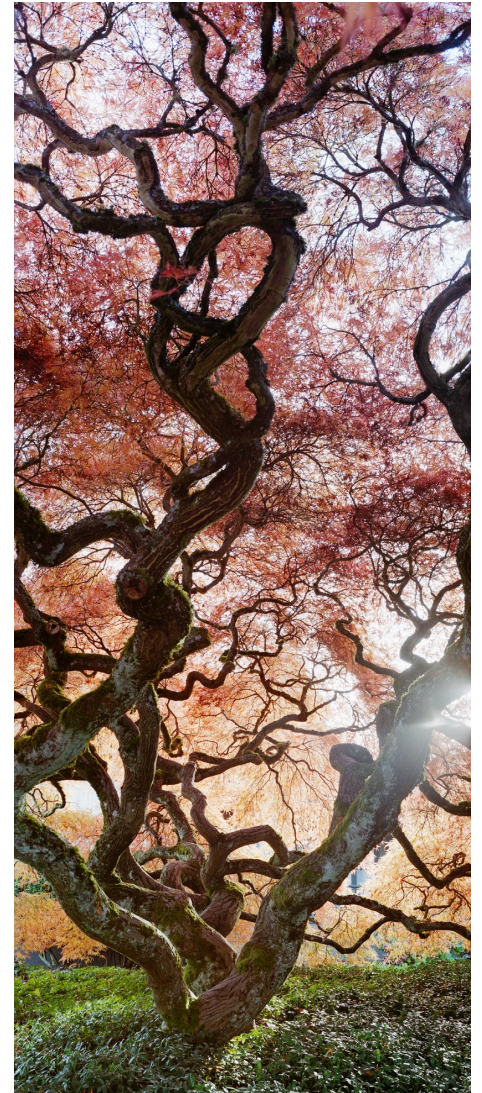
Chris P, bass

I used to be a midwife and I attended almost 500 home births in Florida. Then, I moved to Oregon and went back to college to be a Registered Nurse. I graduated 12 years ago when I was 50! I now work full-time for a non-profit Christian organization caring for the disabled and the elderly. I have three adult sons and three grandkids. I have been happily married for 42 years but never wear a wedding ring! Lastly, I volunteer for three places: The Portland Peace Choir, the BERNIE 2016 campaign, and Multnomah County Emergency Medical Response!

Cynthia F, soprano 🎵💜🌸🎉🕊️

I am a 30-year immigrant from southern California, currently a Fish Biologist for Bonneville Power Administration. Previously, for 15 years I worked for the Umatilla Tribes in Pendleton and La Grande doing fish hatchery research and operating a small fish culture facility. I'm happy to talk about fishy things and environment. But sorry, I'm not very knowledgeable about how to catch them. I send people who ask that question to Pike's Market.

Peter L, tenor



Reaching for the Sky

"A pair of gorgeous old Japanese Laceleaf Maples grow with intertwined branches reaching for the sky."

Paul (bass) and alto Diane Tweten have been selling photography at galleries, art fairs and the Portland Saturday Market since 1982.

To see more of Paul's beautiful work check out:

www.twetenphotography.com

Opportunities to Sing or Listen

- **Portland Symphonic Choir: Summer Sings July 6, 13, 20**

Singers of all kinds are invited to join the Portland Symphonic Choir singing through choral pieces by Mozart, Brahms and Faure'. "We provide the air conditioning – you provide the enthusiasm".

For more information, visit <http://www.pschoir.org/performances/summer-sings/>

- **Folk Music Song Circle (every 3rd Friday) FREE**

Friendly House (corner of NW 26th & Thurman) street parking

Friday, June 17 7-9pm.

- **Vi Voce Spring Concert**

"The Deer & The Nightingale"

Saturday, June 18 7:30 pm

St. Michael and All Angels Church, 1704 NE 43rd Avenue

Reception following to celebrate their 10th Anniversary!

Sunday, June 19 4:30pm

Eliot Chapel, First Unitarian Church, 1011 SW 12th Street

ViVoce website:

<http://portlandreveals.org/calendar/vivoce-singers/>

TICKETS: https://portlandreveals.secure.force.com/ticket/#details_a0So000000491RsEA/

Also available at the door.

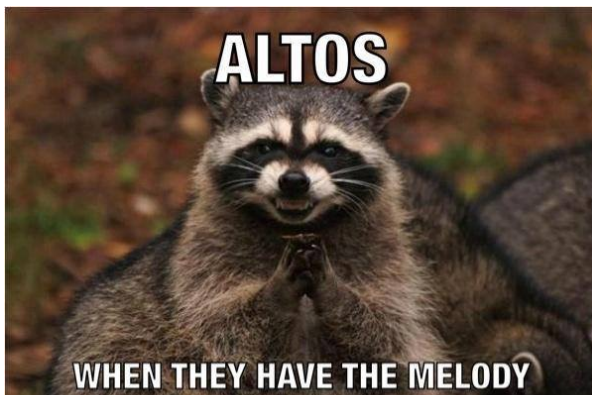
- **Portland Interfaith Gospel Choir Spring Concert**

"Get Your Blessing"

Sunday, June 26 Doors open at 4pm. Concert starts at 5pm

The Old Church (1422 SW 11th Ave (SW 11th & Clay).

TICKETS: <http://www.portlandgospel.com/concert-calendar.html>



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Tracie Korol: Editor and Writer

Barbara Burnett: Writer, Designer

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