

Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association

Newsletter June 12, 2011.

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Hello everyone. Let me start by thanking you for all the work you have done this year to make a really meaningful contribution to our students. And thank you for your kind help starting me off as the new president.

Teachers should look over the June 9th President's Update to make sure they are doing what they need to do to enter students in fall events. The Update makes clear that all participating teachers now need to put their shoulders to the plow and take on assignments to prepare for those events. Chairmanships have been broken down to smaller bits in order to reduce the amount of work for any one person and to spread the work among more people. In fairness to all, everyone needs to take on one of these smaller bits. In the President's Update are listed all those who are already secure in an assignment. Everyone else can contact me by email to choose an assignment. These assignments can be done by email from your studio.

We congratulate teachers whose students received our camp scholarships: Darlene Ziegler, Susan Kunz, and Carol Comune. And congratulations to Irmgard Pursell and Denise Williams whose students received the our college scholarships. And by-the-way, congratulations to at least one of our voice teachers whose student(s) received a Freddie's award.

Musikfest is another performance opportunity for students who will be here in the summer. Auditions will take place at Jacob's Music on July 26 beginning at 10:30 am. Performance time at the Platz Tropical is 1:30-3:30 on August 9. See the [lvpmta.org](http://lvpmta.org) website for details and application forms.

Have a wonderful summer. I look forward to working closely with you for the next couple of years.

Linda Perron, President



### **Frank Chesebro Scholarship**

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association held its annual Frank Chesebro Scholarship auditions on Sunday, May 15 at Moravian College. These scholarships, named after one of the founding members of the chapter and longtime treasurer, are awarded to high school seniors planning to pursue a career in music. The first place prize of \$2000 went to Katianne Janney, piano student of Irmgard Pursell, and the second prize of \$1500 was awarded to Seth Yoder, piano student of Denise Williams. Katianne, who is homeschooled, performed works by Bach, Mozart, Brahms, and Messaien. She has accompanied the Got Strings? Youth Orchestra, local cello studio recitals, and many church groups; she attended the Westminster College of the Arts Pianist Camp and has her own piano studio. Katianne will attend either Westminster, Moravian College, or Houghton College in the fall with a concentration in piano performance. Seth, who performed works by Bach, Mozart, and Mendelssohn, will attend Goshen College with a double major in piano performance and computer science. At Quakertown High School, he participated in district and regional chorus and played in the marching band; he has also been a part of his family's folk music group for the past 12 years. Both students have been active in the LVC-PMTA, participating in the Dorothy Sutton Festival, AAA, and the Hannah Young Play-a-Thon.

Martha Schrempel



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**Thank-you note from scholarship winner Katianne Janney:**

Dear Dr. Schrempel,

Thank you very much for arranging the Frank Chesebro competition on Sunday. Thanks for your time and the hard work you put into making this piano competition possible.

Thank you so much for the college scholarship! I greatly appreciate this!

Please thank the judges for me. I am so thankful for their time and evaluation of our pieces.

I have greatly appreciated LVC-PMTA throughout my high school years. It has given me so many opportunities to perform, watch, and grow. All of the members are so encouraging and such a blessing to young musicians.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Katianne Janney

**Summer Camp Scholarship Report**

Scholarships have been awarded to five students of LVC/PMTA members for study at summer music camps.

The recipients, teachers, and camp locations are:

Alethea Khoo, student of Darlene Ziegler (Westminster)

Paul Peng, student of Susan Kuntz (New York Summer Music Festival)

Jacob Wilkinson, student of Susan Kuntz (Moravian)

William Wilkinson, student of Susan Kuntz (Eastman)

Gealyn Comune Clegg, student of Carol Comune (Westminster)

We congratulate these students and know they will take advantage of the opportunity they have been given to further their studies.

Irmgard Pursell,  
Camp Scholarship Chair



### **Irmgard Smits--Honorary Life Membership**

Irmgard's birthplace was Wurzburg in Franconia, at the northern tip of Bavaria between Prussia and Bavaria. She lived there until the age of 8, long enough to develop the renowned Bavarian sense of humor, reputed to be necessary when dealing with the Prussians.

Her family moved to Wiesbaden and then to Berlin when Irmgard was 10. She sang in a choir where, at age 14, she was identified as possessing a voice worthy of study with fine teachers. However, as often happens, her parents thought she should first study something more practical, so she spent one year in a college for secretarial training.

Her first job is a story for another day. When in her second job, Irmgard was sent as a docent to a little museum. She developed bronchitis which unfortunately affected her voice permanently. When she returned to Berlin she didn't speak for 3 weeks. But then she developed scarlet fever, which resulted in damage to the heart. She was released from her job. Possessing the optimism of the Bavarians, she then said "Now I can study music!" She remembers hearing Walter Gieseke perform in 1942.

The years 1942-1944 Irmgard spent studying at the respected Academy of Music in Munich. She can still name her professors for Piano, Theory, Harmony, Music History and Acoustics. In 1944 the Odeon, original building housing all the records, was destroyed. Also in 1945 Dresden was bombed, as was Wurzburg, even more totally. There went Irmgard's birth certificate and some school certificates. In 1946 Irmgard passed the entrance exam to the highly selective Music University in Munich. Her 2 years of study involved a major in piano and a minor in organ, as well as a 2-yr. pedagogy seminar covering private and class instruction and required for music educators in Germany. The result was certification to teach piano, form, analysis, harmony, theory, and piano literature from Munich in the state of Bavaria under the auspices of the U.S. military government. She started to teach piano in 1948. After the war the Music University (Staatliche Hochschule fuer Musik) was located in the Stuckvilla in Munich, and it later burned. There went the university records!

Irmgard wanted to come to the U.S. An affidavit was provided by a teacher, since there was no birth certificate! She arrived in NY in July, 1949. Having borrowed money to come here, she took a job in NY as a railroad employee, while rooming with friends in Hoboken. An amused crowd would gather whenever Irmgard had to announce the names of the surrounding towns. She also took a translating job with a German company. She spent her 'free' hours enrolled in journalism classes at the New School and Columbia.

During this time Irmgard met the grandson of the finance minister to the Russian Czar. Dmitri Conradi performed and taught piano (and his father's tutor was a brother of Tchaikovsky!). He needed someone to accompany his performance of the Rachmaninoff 2<sup>nd</sup> piano concerto. This collaboration led to 2-piano



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concertizing of mostly Russian piano literature, all around the New York area. She was introduced to many famous artists, among them Dame Myra Hess.

Irmgard and Friedolf had met at a German choir concert at Carnegie Hall. They were married in 1955 in Riverside Church, and lived in NJ. Their children were born in 1958, 1961 and 1962. With 3 children under 4, they moved to Albuquerque and spent 3 years there, experiencing only one incident with a rattlesnake. Back in New Providence, NJ, Irmgard started a studio in earnest. Having one son who was always hurting himself resulted in a close relationship with the Italian doctor in the neighborhood. Irmgard's studies at the Frances Clark Institute resulted in a piano pedagogy certificate.

It was 40 years ago that Irmgard and her family moved to Allentown. Her mother, who had been living in NY, also moved and lived here for the remainder of her life. Irmgard learned about the LV chapter from the newspaper and lost no time taking a membership in 1978. Since then she has served in many capacities, including that of president. A faculty member and judge with the piano Guild, she also participated in the PA Federation of Music Clubs and the Allentown Music Club. She taught at the Community Music School since it was incorporated and when it first accepted students in September, 1982, until June of 2010. Her students at CMS were awarded many prizes and scholarships. Irmgard practiced her administrative skills by serving as Curriculum Coordinator of the International Workshops with Dr. Gerald Fishbach and Nelita True, held in Austria, France and Norway between 1996 and 2004.

Local students who studied with Irmgard have become successful in performing, accompanying, teaching, music therapy and other music-related careers.

An indomitable spirit has characterized Irmgard since she first fell in love with music, dealt with the vicissitudes of war, moved to a foreign country, learned and practiced many new skills while following her dream.

Members and friends, I give you Irmgard Smits, Honorary Life Member of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of PMTA. Irmgard, for your Dedication, Leadership and many Years of Service to the chapter, to your students, and to the community, please accept this plaque from all of us.

## **MUSIKFEST 2011**

Please note the following dates/times for Musikfest:

DEADLINE for Applications: July 18. Send to Carolyn Anderson

AUDITIONS at Jacobs Music Store: July 26, 10:30 am.

MUSIKFEST Recital: Tuesday, August 9, 1:30-3:30, Tropical Platz

Carolyn Anderson, Chair



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## MTNA 2011 Report

At the 2011 MTNA National Spring Conference and NATS Spring Workshop, I was privileged to attend a large number of inspiring sessions, master classes and performances .

Worthy of note are 2 items:

- 1) Milwaukee is the corporate headquarters of Hal Leonard, currently the world's largest source for piano music. The company welcomed MTNA attendees by holding an open house, with buses providing transportation every 15 minutes from late afternoon into the evening. So many people stood in the lines that the evening hours were extended. At every stop on the tour an employee spoke about his/her position in the company and what the job entailed. We were informed that everyone who applies for a job at Hal Leonard must have a music background, even if they are applying for a position in the technology, legal or business offices. Following the tour refreshments were provided, including delicious regional dishes.
- 2) I previously sent out an email announcing the collaboration between Carnegie Hall and the Royal Conservatory concerning the Achievement Program. I have brochures containing details about this collaboration; ask me any time for further information. It is interesting to note that 3 states (MA, Wyoming and Ohio) have already committed to awarding high school students with credit if they successfully pass set levels of achievement in their instrument.

I thank the chapter for this extraordinary opportunity. Next year's location in NYC might enable more of us to take advantage of MTNA's offerings at the national conference.

Carolyn Anderson  
Past President



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### **2011 Hannah Young Play-a-Thon**

The 2011 Hannah Young Play-a-Thon was held on February 26 and 27 at the Palmer Park Mall in Easton. There were 252 students of 17 teachers who participated; the top fund-raising studios were those of Gloriana Sewell, Susan Kuntz, and Lori Huth. These teachers received packets of music which we had received from Alfred. The top six fund-raisers among the students, in order of the amount raised (with the students who raised the most being first) were: Elijah and Gabriel Ligowski (tie; students of Gloriana Sewell); Seth Yoder (student of Denise Williams); Laura Baxter and Ben Kraft (tie; Laura is a student of Susan Kuntz and Ben is a student of Lori Huth); and Grace Doule, student of Lori Huth. The top three students received \$50 Visa gift cards and the rest received gift certificates from Youngs Music Store; all were also given computer memory bracelets from the Mall. Congratulations to these students and their teachers for all their efforts, and thanks to all students and teachers who participated! The profit from this event, after the expenses involved, was around \$5,400.

One new feature of the Play-a-Thon this year was the addition of a PayPal option for making donations. There were also two drawings for free piano tunings; Noble Art Pianos joined Zeiner's in providing these. The winners were Julie Markley, a student of Deborah Fleming, and Steven Paszkowski, a student of Jack Stevenson. We are grateful to Elizabeth Campbell from Noble Art for her help with this event, and also to Zeiner's for the use of their pianos and for all their other help. This event cannot take place without the work and contributions of many people. It is hoped that next year more members will not only participate, but also step up to help with the various tasks involved in running a successful Play-a-Thon. Please consider helping out---many hands make light work!

Cherie Murray and Randi Paul  
Play-a-Thon Co-Chairs



## Notes from the Outgoing President

Presidents usually reminisce about how quickly the time passes. I'm going to confirm that. I watched 4 years go by in 2!

When one is thrown into deep water, one must swim or grab a lifeline. I know how to swim but my style, speed and endurance aren't the greatest. Not to worry—my lifeline was always just an email away. My first thanks goes to Randi, who was the most dependable lifeline anyone could have. Next, I thank the 3 executive officers—Cherie, Jack and Linda—who handled other huge responsibilities in addition to executive matters, and whose competence I relied upon. Thank you to each committee chair and all committee members who conscientiously and reliably plan the activities and events of the chapter. Thanks to Valerie whom I finally met by phone, who has served us faithfully for some time, and who continues to do so. Thank you to Mirta whose organizational skills so often save the day!

If each attendee at this meeting were to indicate how many years she or he has served in an executive or committee position, almost everyone here would present a number far greater than my own. It is a humbling experience for me to contemplate that fact—how could an individual be so presumptuous as to accept a presidential position without adequate appropriate experience? What is the saying? "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Our chapter is at a crossroads—with too few committee chairs and as yet no candidate for president-elect, we can expect to have to make critical decisions in the next two years. I've learned that our situation is becoming common in the PA chapters and in PMTA at the state level. The time is coming when we can no longer continue to use, and some might say, abuse, those members who are most willing to step forward for yet another job. How can we uphold our finest traditions, i.e. those of most benefit to our teachers and students, while adapting to the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Certainly we are financially secure and we continue to offer events of great value to large numbers of students. We are in the process of soliciting ideas from chapters around the state as we attempt to define our future direction, and we welcome all suggestions from the LVC membership.

My deepest thanks once again go to the executive, the board of directors, and all other members who helped and supported me during the past 2 years. Our new president is more than capable to carry us forward. Let us all look to the future with a determination to not simply endure and perpetuate our annual events, but to work together to revitalize our chapter. We can do this.



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And finally:

Go Andante  
Make each day Tenuto  
May there be few Sforzandos  
Many Placidos, the occasional Habanera  
Or perhaps a Minuet,  
If there be Dissonance  
Resolve, and form a Cadence,  
If there be Consonance  
Rallentando, and enjoy.  
And if all else fails, Party!

Carolyn Anderson