



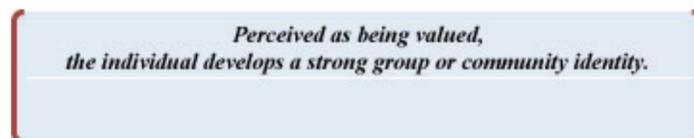
Wendell Berry, noted American cultural critic, states that, “One mind alone, like one life alone, is perfectly worthless, not even imaginable.” By emphasizing the emptiness of solitary existence, Berry highlights the need for community. This is clearly apparent in the choral arts. Singers and directors, both essential to the craft, contribute to the intangible excitement of the final product. Perceived as being valued, the individual develops a strong group or community identity.



This sense of community is powerfully apparent when choral directors gather to share knowledge, enthusiasm, and friendship. This year’s Georgia American Choral Directors Association summer conference held at the Clayton State College and University’s Spivey Hall, was a time for such community. Together, directors shared a few summer conference days in the hopes of learning more about their art. Loosely held together under the theme of *Lifelong Singing*, the conference celebrated the beauty of choral art and appreciation for lifelong learning.

Acting as headliner for the conference, Dr. Daniel Bara, choral director at the University of Georgia, was both inspiring and thought-provoking as he shared his expertise with the group. Dr. Bara encouraged self critiquing of the individual art of choral directing. Sessions including director as teacher, score analysis, conducting master class, rehearsal techniques, and expressive diction were highlighted throughout the weekend. A special word of thanks goes to the master class participants from area colleges and universities. The future of Georgia is bright with such talented young directors ready to start

their careers!



The relaxed atmosphere of a summer conference allowed for a wide range of performances and interest sessions. Dr. Jeffery Ames from Belmont University successfully pulled together the Multi-Cultural Honor Choir for a beautiful performance in the acoustically rich Spivey Hall. Over seventy participants shared in interest sessions ranging from *Excellence in Show-Choir* with Jeffery Funderburk, *Ethnic and Multicultural Perspectives* by Stephanie Cash, and *Demystifying Cuban Music* shared by Dr. Beth Gibbs.

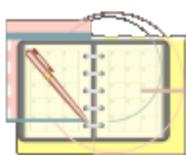
Performing groups from around the state enjoyed the Spivey Hall performing venue and provided a wide spectrum of listening in the evening hours. Primary age children through college students shared their music making with the registrants. Much appreciation goes to Ann Edmondson and the Woodward Academy Primary Singers, William Hall with the Etowah High School Advanced Mixed Chorus, and the Young Harris College Chorus under the direction of Jeffrey Bauman for contributing their talents and precious summer time.

With the theme of lifelong learning in mind, the conference final session was aptly filled by the Lifetime Singers under the direction of Dr. Michael O’Neal. This group, made up of over 100 community and church singers from around the Atlanta area, performed with passion as they shared patriotic music and Randall Thompson’s Testament of Freedom with the Georgia ACDA summer registrants.

A conference such as this has many contributors. Special thanks go to Dr. Alison Mann of Kennesaw University for her efforts towards organizing the Multi-Cultural Choir, Dr. Deanna Joseph of Georgia State University for organizing the conducting master class participants, Emily Floyd and Janice Folsom and their organizational efforts towards the Lifetime Singers, Dr. Kevin Hibbard of West Georgia University and Kathy Bizarth for registration, Dr. Alicia Walker past Georgia ACDA president, Amy Hughley Georgia ACDA president-elect, Morrow First Baptist for rehearsal space, the conference accompanists, the GA ACDA board and R & S Chairs for reading sessions, and the fine staff of Spivey Hall for their professionalism and hospitality.

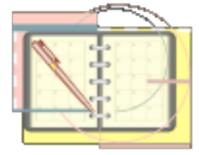
Finally, a conference would not be successful without registrants. Georgia is blessed with much talent and a generous professional spirit exists among the members. Experienced and long time residents of Georgia shared moments with new Georgia residents and with individuals fresh to the art. This exchange is what makes ACDA an exciting organization and vital to our choral community.

The upcoming year offers many opportunities of growth and camaraderie. Georgia ACDA looks forward to the Southern Division Conference in Winston-Salem, NC February 29-March 3, 2012. Through financial backing, Georgia ACDA supports GMEA as they provide clinicians in the winter conference. This year, Jeffrey Redding will be presenting through the support of GA ACDA. Next year’s 2012 summer conference promises to be very exciting as we anticipate Dr. Joe Miller of Westminster Choir College as headliner. The choral community is alive and vibrant in Georgia. In the coming year, please plan to support Georgia ACDA through the contribution of time, membership, and talents.

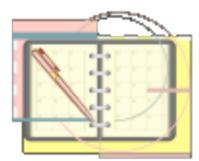


Georgia ACDA hosts Dr. Jeffrey Redding for choral clinics at GMEA In-service Conference. January 26-28, 2012 at the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center, Savannah, GA.

American Choral Directors Association Southern Division Conference.
February 29-March 3, 2012 in Winston-Salem, NC.



Georgia ACDA Summer Conference 2012. Watch the web site (gaacda.org) for details.



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Why ACDA? Why Now?
Drew Bowers, Membership Chair

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Why should we as choral directors be involved in ACDA? Why should we be recruiting new members for ACDA? Why should we be advocates of this organization? One might say, “I cannot go to conventions because of the economy.” Another might say, “I am so busy with my current program that I do not have time for ACDA.” While both of these statements may very well be true we should strive to overcome them and make sure that we are not only investing in our future but ACDA’s future.

We all know that it is so difficult with our busy schedules to find time to share ideas and visit with the colleagues that we trust and admire. This time to visit and share ideas is a huge part of the convention format and is generally one of my favorite parts. I thoroughly enjoy the choral concerts, interest sessions, and the gorgeous venues, but I get most excited knowing that I am getting to spend the weekend with friends and colleagues who I do not see as much as I would like. Conventions are our chance to network and see what is working with other people. What a great way to share literature! What a great way to share teaching techniques that have been successful! What a great way to get advice for things that are not going as planned in rehearsal!

Money is a concern for most people in getting to the conventions. We know that times are certainly trying economically – this is not a secret, but where there is a will there is a way. Plan ahead. Find a friend that wants to attend and split the cost. I know that I, personally, always look for a roommate to share the costs.

I once heard our President, Jerry McCoy, speak of dues and expenses. He mentioned that if you were a plumber, there would be certain classes you would have to take to be certified. This education continues throughout one’s profession. Generally these expenses are not paid in total or at all by the employer. If the plumber wishes to be the best then he finds a way to continue certification and trusts it will pay for itself in the end.

I think there is some truth in this. We would all prefer for schools to be able to pay all the expenses for our trips, but sometimes it is just not possible. These opportunities are an investment we make in our

careers. We all know that music classes will continue to come under fire as budgets come and go, but what a great opportunity for you to show your administration that you are willing to invest in your career and your students by being involved and continuously learning. This can only help your administration want to invest in you as well.

If you have ever been to an ACDA convention whether it was National, Southern Division, or a state convention, I think that you would agree that you left more fulfilled than when you arrived. These convention dates are already placed on the calendar and are there for the taking. Your attendance could not only further your education but someone else's as well.

I certainly hope that I see you in Winston-Salem for the Southern Division Convention and bring a friend – it will make for a wonderful weekend of music.

Best in music making,



Drew Bowers
GA Membership Chair

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A letter from Deanna Joseph
R&S Chair for Youth and Student Activities
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My name is **Deanna Joseph** and I am the new **Youth and Student Activities** coordinator for Georgia ACDA. I am writing to tell you about two opportunities – one singing and one conducting – at this year’s **Southern Division ACDA conference in Winston-Salem North Carolina February 29 - March 3, 2012**. Both opportunities will afford students the ability to work with renowned conductor **Hilary Apfelstadt**. Dr. Apfelstadt is the former ACDA National President and is currently the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Toronto.

**Don't miss these singing and conducting
opportunities at
ACDA Southern Division Conference!**

The first opportunity is singing with the **ACDA Southern Division Collegiate Singers**. This is a division-wide choir of 60-72 advanced collegiate singers assembled to sing in both the conducting master class and concert conducted by Dr. Apfelstadt. The repertoire, which will be performed with orchestra, includes Haydn’s *Te Deum* in C for Empress Marie Theresa and Handel’s Coronation Anthems, *The King Shall Rejoice* and *Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened*.

The collegiate singers must be student members of ACDA or be endorsed by a collegiate faculty member who is a member of ACDA. The sponsoring faculty member must supply a balanced quartet (or octet, etc.) of singers. This choir is open to both undergraduate and graduate students. For more details and for the application form, go to <http://www.acdasouthern.org/singersApp.pdf>.

The second opportunity is the **ACDA Student Conducting Master Class**. For this master class, six student conductors (three graduate and three undergraduate) will be selected to participate in a conducting master class with Dr. Apfelstadt during the convention. The convention registration fee will be waived for each of the six selected students.

Applicants must submit a complete electronic application portfolio including the application form, verification of video validity form, verification by a University official of the student’s class standing and fulltime status, an audition video recording, uploaded to YouTube, and a \$30.00 entry fee. Go to www.acdasouthern.org/studentApp.docx to view the application forms and to read the guidelines for entry.

I sincerely hope that you take advantage of these wonderful opportunities. Attending conventions

while in school provides countless opportunities for growth, opens doors and creates connections for future job prospects, provides hands-on resources to purchase books and scores for your personal library....and is just plain fun! Join us in Winston-Salem this March! If you see me there, don't be shy! Please introduce yourself. I would love to meet you.

Yours,

Deanna Joseph
Director of Choral Activities, Georgia State University
Youth and Student Activities Coordinator, GA ACDA

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MAN OVERBOARD!
The Survival of the Middle School Chorus
During “Stormy Seas”

By Ed McQuade
R&S Chair for Middle School Choirs

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Twenty-two years ago this fall, I walked into the chorus room at Mundy’s Mill Middle School in Jonesboro and began my first year as a teacher. During the five years prior while at Georgia State University, I spent a total of ZERO days envisioning myself as a *middle school* choral director. I was, of course, going to be a high school director. But the year was 1989, and the state of Georgia was offering big money to school systems willing to convert to the *middle school model*, so all of the junior highs in Clayton County were becoming middle schools, and most of their choral directors were jumping ship to claim open high school positions while they had the chance. That left a lot of open middle school positions, and a job was a job, so when the opportunity to teach at a great *middle* school became available, I grabbed it rather than holding out for the possibility of a better high school position. What did it matter? Junior high versus middle school—what was the big difference? So, I couldn’t cross grade levels to make up my ensembles—big deal. It didn’t matter to me that the “computer” was going to decide my class rosters rather than my students’ abilities, or that I would have to settle for SAB instead of SATB music. The “stormy seas” that were driving choral directors out of the junior high and on to high school were insignificant to me as a first year teacher—blissful ignorance. After all, I could be a middle school teacher for a few years, and then I’d surely be ready to move to a high school where I belonged.

It never happened. Somewhere between my third and fifth year, it hit me that I actually *liked* teaching middle school chorus. So many of my college friends had aspired to be either high school or elementary teachers, but I found myself enjoying some success at the level that no one else really wanted. I eventually told myself, “Maybe I can find my niche here.” What was the big deal about junior high after all? It sounded like *High School Lite* to me. Middle school was unique with its own rewards and challenges, and the guaranteed 90-minute planning time was hard to beat! The seas had calmed.

**What can Georgia
ACDA do to help you be
a more successful
middle school choral
director?**



Email me at

plan.smarter@gmail.com

Jump ahead 22 years. Some things haven't changed. I still can't cross grade levels during the instructional day, but I have figured out ways to structure my classes so I can have "advanced" ensembles, or ones made up of only boys or only girls. So, are there factors in 2011 that could possibly drive experienced middle school teachers to "jump ship" like those junior high teachers back in 1989? Experienced teachers know—the seas are angry again. But what has changed? What are the changes that new teachers don't recognize because they just never experienced things the way they used to be?

When I look back to 1989 and what frustrated junior high choral directors about the switch to middle school, I remember most of their complaints being music related. "How can you perform SATB music without 9th grade boys?" "6th graders are just too young to sing with 8th graders, and how can I have an advanced group if I can't combine my best 7th and 8th graders?" Unfortunately, the frustrations facing today's middle school directors are not so much about voicing issues or the quality of the music being taught, but more about the survival of the middle school choral program as we know it.

Twenty-two years ago, I taught six chorus classes—two at each grade level—each class being 55 minutes. I still have six choruses, but now the instructional time has shrunk to 35 minutes. This reduction in instructional time isn't unique to my situation. From what I am hearing, more and more middle school choral directors are trying to maintain their same level of expectations while dealing with less and less instructional time. I can't speak for others, but I know I find myself teaching "in fast motion" simply to maintain the standards I've set for my students and my program. Fewer warm-ups, shorter time working on sight-reading, rehearsing one or two pieces a day rather than three or four are all ways of surviving with ten less minutes per class.

So where did the extra hour of instructional time go? The trend across the state seems to be an extra instructional period—often referred to as "flex time." For example, my schedule now includes an hour each day during which I am with a grade level teacher helping her teach her subject. Ironically, it is my longest

class of the day.

If you are like me, you didn't wake up one morning and say, "I want to be a *teacher!*" Most likely you were a musician first. Then somewhere along the way you decided you wanted to conduct a choir of your own—and the easiest way to make that happen was to work in a school. I've often said, "I'm a musician first—a teacher by default." Fellow musicians can understand that statement, but other educators can't and don't want to hear it. During all of those hours in music theory classes or choral methods, I never pictured myself reading standardized tests to small groups of students, designing ways to make the afternoon "car-riders" dismissal more efficient, or creating supplemental Georgia History lessons for rotating groups of 8th graders every nine weeks. These were certainly NOT tasks assigned to those junior high teachers back in 1989, and yet they left.

Like it or not, this trend of using connections teachers to provide supplemental instruction related to CRCT standards seems to be the new norm. Of course, if you work in a middle school, you understand the pressures placed on administrators because of the CRCT, and whether we want to admit it or not, we know the success or failure of our school, and ultimately our freedom to direct our programs the way we have done so in the past, is directly linked to the success of our school's CRCT results. I don't believe these "new norms" were intentionally designed to harm or diminish music programs, but simply evolved out of necessity during a time when lawmakers have convinced the public that CRCT, AYP, and NCLB are more important than EGBDF and FACE.

So, is it finally time to "jump ship?" I don't think so. We need experienced, successful middle school choral directors now more than ever. I still believe in what we do; I firmly believe our programs impact test results more than any decision makers would ever chose to admit, and I think the demise of middle school choral programs would eventually lead to the extinction of the high school choral program as well. So what's the solution?

Regardless of how many minutes of instructional time we have lost with our students, the work that goes into preparing for those minutes does not decrease. If anything, it takes more planning to prepare for shorter classes because every minute is so valuable. Having spent the good part of a week in July previewing new holiday music, it finally hit me: does everyone put in this much time to find 30 to 45 minutes worth of quality music? I'm guessing the answer is yes. At the same time, are the grade level teachers at my school spending this much time alone preparing for their first unit of the year? Of course not! They plan together.

I, however, am the only middle school choral director in my district, so I have no immediate colleague with whom I can plan and share ideas.

Instead of “jumping ship,” I think it’s time that we stopped working harder and started working smarter. Perhaps there was a time when we found a great new piece and didn’t want to share it with others so we could be the first one to showcase it at an honor chorus or with our group at LGPE. It’s time to put that type of thinking behind us if, collectively, we want to survive. If you find a new publication that’s working well in your 7th grade class, why not share it with others ASAP? If you come up with a creative theme for a spring concert that turns out to be wildly successful with students, parents, administrators, and yourself, why not share that idea as well? Sure, there are websites out there with ideas and lesson plans, but there is something reassuring about receiving a tip from a colleague who understands your situation and limitations and knows what might help.

I want to hear your suggestions. What can Georgia ACDA do to help you be a more successful middle school choral director? Suppose you needed just one more title to complete your upcoming program, but you can’t find the perfect piece for your 6th graders. Wouldn’t it be helpful to have a data base of new song titles that were recently suggested by your fellow Georgia colleagues? With all the creative ways to communicate, what format do you think would be the best way for directors to share ideas, lesson plans, concert themes, or just that great new title you discovered and want to tell others about?

This shouldn’t be too difficult to establish, but I need your suggestions on what would be the most helpful, most efficient way to share information to help you “plan smarter.” Please e-mail me at plan.smarter@gmail.com and let me know your ideas and suggestions.

Back in 1989, choral directors abandoned the newly created middle schools because they couldn’t see how their programs would ever *improve* again with so many scheduling restrictions attached to the new funding. In 2011, middle school choral directors can’t worry so much about *improvement* because we must concern ourselves with how to *maintain* expectations in order to *survive* in an era of data-driven standardization. *Improvement* versus *maintain* and *survive*. It hasn’t always been this way, and I’d like to see us begin to reverse the trend. Agree? Then please share your thoughts and ideas on how we can all work together to “plan smarter,” and together we can start the process.

Ed McQuade

R&S Chair for Middle School Choirs

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We All Sang

Dr. Stephen J. Mulder
R&S Chair for Community Choirs

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At the concluding concert session at the 2011 GA ACDA Summer Conference, Michael O'Neal, conductor of the Lifetime Singers Lifetime Learners Choir, quoted this text, originally ascribed to an 85-year-old English horseman who was being interviewed in the 1960's. The man spoke about his difficult life, and then he suddenly interjected:

***The singing! There was so much singing then, and this was my pleasure too,
We all sang, the boys in the fields, the chapels were full of singing, always singing;
Here I lie. I have had pleasure enough, I have had singing.***

What a simple and poetic testament to the life-enriching power of singing! The Lifetime Singers choir was a collaborative project developed over the past several summers by Bryan Black, Alicia Walker, Janice Folsom, and Emily Floyd. Dr. O'Neal was the third conductor of the annually organized group, following John Dickson in 2009 and John Ratledge in 2010. This summer's choir rehearsed Friday night and Saturday morning in Spivey Hall and then presented their concert to the attendees of the Summer Conference. We plan to continue this project for Summer Conference 2012. Watch future newsletters for details and instructions for how you and your singers can participate, and plan to attend next summer!



As I take over the Community Choirs Repertoire and Standards position from Janice Folsom, I want to continue the work she started on creating a directory and network of Georgia Community Choirs. If any ACDA area can benefit from networking and the sharing of repertoire and successful projects and best practices, it is Community Choirs! I invite you to follow my choir, Griffin Choral Arts (www.griffinchoralarts.org), and send me your group's information so I can follow you. If you would like to be a part of this emerging network, send an email to steve@griffinchoralarts.org.

Be sure to register for the Southern Division ACDA Convention in Winston-Salem, NC on February

29-March 3, 2012. We are especially excited that Georgia Community Choirs will be represented by Eric Nelson and The Atlanta Sacred Chorale. Be sure to attend the conference and the ASC performance.

COMMUNITY CHOIRS REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS

- There are at least two *a cappella* choral settings (in various voicings) of the “I Have Had Singing” text quoted above. One is a mostly homophonic setting by Ron Jeffers (Earthsongs) which is quite accessible for most community choirs; the other is by Steven Sametz (Steven Sametz Publications) and is a little more complex harmonically.
- I have long wanted to perform Puccini’s *Messa di Gloria* but have been intimidated by the size of the orchestra. This past spring I discovered a reduced orchestration available on the internet that maintains the colors Puccini intended while simplifying the instrumentation (e.g. a brass “consort” instead of 4 French horns). If you are curious, you can see the full score here: www.musik-art.de/noten/puccini_messa/index.html. If you want to program something just outside of the mainstream, check out this hidden gem.

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**Workshop and Master Class
hosted by
GA Chapter of NATS**

The GA Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing will be hosting clinician Jeannette LoVetri, the creator of Somatic Voicework™, The LoVetri Method. Ms. LoVetri will be giving a workshop and Masterclass as a part of the jointly held NATS/MTNA Fall Workshop in Columbus, GA on the campus of Columbus State University Nov. 4-5, 2011. This vocal workshop will consist of two sessions (Friday afternoon 2-5 and Saturday morning 10-1) and will focus on Musical Theater singing (belt, legit, mix, etc.) as well as the younger singer (teen singers, early high school through early college) but will contain information that will benefit anyone who works with singers of any age.

The information contained in this workshop will benefit anyone who regularly works with the singing voice but Ms. LoVetri plans to *directly* address the teaching of vocal technique in **choral situations**. Ms. LoVetri is the founder of the first ever Contemporary Commercial Music Vocal Pedagogy Institute which focuses on the teaching of vocal technique that is appropriate for commercial music including musical theater technique (“legit”, belt, rock/pop belt) as well as vocal technique appropriate for rock, pop, country, jazz, bluegrass and any other commercial music style. This method of teaching stresses based on vocal function is also appropriate for the teaching of classical technique and is especially welcome to those singers who want to cross-train in differing styles.

This type of information will be helpful to your members who:

- Work with young singers and want to learn more about teaching them healthy vocal technique in a choral setting
- Work with beginning singers who prefer singing in contemporary commercial styles (rock, pop, musical theater, etc.) but also want to succeed in the choral setting.
- Work in a church setting that has either a “praise and worship” type of musical style or a traditional choral type of style or (most importantly) BOTH
- Work with young singers just starting out on their vocal technique
- Work with aging singers who might need a little more technical attention

Contact Dr. Christina Howell with any questions; or visit www.ganats.org for more information.

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North America Choral Composition Competition

Application deadline: December 31, 2011

In celebration of its 30th anniversary, The Festival Singers of Atlanta is hosting a composition competition for a choral piece, SATB a cappella or accompanied by keyboard.

The grand prize is \$500, and \$100 will go to two pieces granted honorable mention. Also, the Festival Singers of Atlanta will premier the winning works at its 2012 spring concert. A panel of three prominent musicians in the Atlanta area will judge the entries. Composers of all ages whose permanent residence is in North America are invited to submit work with a duration of 3 to 5 minutes and which has not been performed previously. Text can be secular or sacred, medieval to present, appropriate for a concert setting. The entry fee is \$10, payable to The Festival Singers of Atlanta.

The submission deadline is Saturday, December 31, 2011. Faxes will not be accepted. Please mail submissions to: Festival Singers of Atlanta Composition Competition, 4531 Oswood Court, Tucker, Ga. 30084. Composers will be notified by early February 2012. Please refer to festivalsingersofatlanta.org for full details.

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