

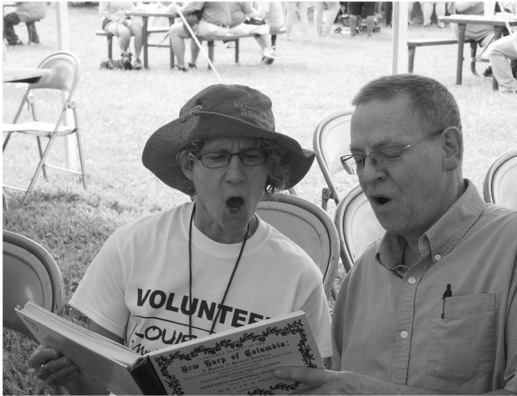
Old Harp

Number 45: 2018

The New Harp of Columbia Annual Newsletter

Harp Singing Convention: Mission Accomplished!

Thanks to all the organizers of, and participants in, this year's Wears Valley Singing Convention at Wears Valley UMC and Headrick Chapel in September. We had a great turnout—combined attendance of more than 75 singers and dozens of listeners—and two great days of excellent singing, food, and fellowship. Plans have already been made for next year's "Super Bowl of Harp Singing"! For more information, visit www.oldsarp.org/wears-valley-convention/



Photos from the Louie Bluiie Festival in September.

Photo credit: Gary Heatherly.



The Big Ears Festival!



Mark your calendars, harp singers! We've been invited to sing at the Big Ears Festival this year on March 24 at the Knoxville Museum of Art! Join us for the singing at 12-1 p.m. The Big Ears Festival is a big event in the Knoxville music world and beyond. The website calls the event "an international cultural gathering" and "a dynamic, interactive experience that explores connections between musicians and artists, crossing all musical genres while interfacing with film, performance, and the visual arts." We hope you will come out to support our group and teach Big Ears music lovers about the particular beauty of harp singers.

<https://bigearsfestival.org>

HARP SINGING, FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

We who sing in Knoxville and the surrounding area are lucky enough to sing with several folks who grew up with shape-note singing, and for whom, by now, it is well-nigh second nature. It is a pleasure to see and hear them. But many of us came to harp singing later, and by various roads and coincidences. On page two, we'll hear from two members who came to harp singing as adults—and stayed to sit and sing for a spell. (Continued on page two)

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Harp Singing From the Outside In, continued

Harp Singing Past, Harp Singing Present

By Chaz Barber

I was born and raised in East Tennessee, and one of my great-grandfathers was a singing school teacher in Kentucky. I still have his tuning fork. I attended Maryville College in the late 60's, and there was a group of "old men" who met at the chapel on Sunday evenings. I did not pay much attention to them, and being a classical music major, I unfortunately looked down on anything old-fashioned and unsophisticated. Almost ten years later, I was studying the music of Tennessee Composer Charles F. Bryan, and learned that some of his music was based on shape-note tunes. My girlfriend at the time happened to participate in the weekly sings at Helen Hutchinson's house in Fort Sanders, and she invited me to "try it." Helen was a retired schoolteacher who had grown up in the tradition, but most of the other folks at that weekly gathering were UT professors and students. I immediately fell in love with the "raw" and "uncultivated" sound, and perhaps even moreso because of the fact that I didn't have to sing every note perfectly, with perfect tone, breathing in the exact right places, etc. And if I wanted to sit out for a song and just listen, I was not going to be criticized. It was truly liberating! Over the years, of course, I have come to see that Old Harp has its own style of sophistication, and that its tradition is deeply intertwined with my own history. I have also enjoyed the social aspect, making lifelong friends with whom I share stories and with whom I work to help carry this tradition forward. --CB

I Am Still Learning: What I Wrote After the Headrick's Chapel Singing, 24 September 2017

By Sara Melton

I did not grow up with shape-note singing; I was only dimly aware of its existence. I was introduced to it by friends I knew through folk dancing, who suspected my fondness for folk dancing might translate to a fondness for this other folk tradition—in which assumption they were correct. For me, there is no recording that can really capture its strange harmonies, its lilting, sublime melodies, the mesmerizing vibration of it. People will occasionally respond to it with confusion. It is chaotic, they will say—disorderly, primitive. Other people, like me, will feel something like stunned recognition: it will be the music you have been waiting for without knowing, the sound your soul has been craving. My own response to it was so intense that I became certain that I had a weird genetic tendency to it. It was, after all, a form preserved for generations in the mountains (and southwest Virginia, where I am from, is no exception), and in other rural areas of the U.S. Surely, I thought, it was in my blood.

I have been singing with the Epworth Harp Singers for about twelve years now, and harp singing may well be in my blood, but I am, for all that, a somewhat middling harp singer, only clumsily able to sight read by the shapes, or sing the shapes in a complicated tune. No matter—I enjoy the process. But when I go to the Headrick Chapel sing, I see what it is to have grown up in the tradition: Paul Clabo, for instance, sang for much of today without a book. There are well over 100 songs in our songbook. There are many that I have never sung. He has not only entire songs but the accompanying SHAPES by heart. I will never be that comfortable, I know; I will not be a master. I lost too much time not knowing—all those years. But no matter. I found it when I found it; I was ready when I was ready. And I have found it comforting on many occasions during the last twelve years. The songs are often a little grim, but spangled here and there with startling, powerful, affirmative comforts that are the things you remember: "There is room enough in Paradise," "All is well, all is well," "The year of Jubilee has come: return ye ransomed sinners, home." When the song says all is well and that there is room, you believe it, for a while, no matter what else is happening in your world. I will keep learning. --SEM



“They Do Have a Responsibility”

They do have a responsibility, those that join Harp singing. They must put away all their pains and groans and griefs and fears, to give the Harp community a priority in their lives. Their agenda must be as contributors to the community, for its wellness and awareness of the next person who walks in the door. If they dwell on what they get out of the Old Harp then they are not givers and don't, it seems, last long. If the individuals who focus on giving and sharing to build the community harmony, then they will stay.

--Larry Olszewski, Old Harp singer from Tennessee

By Andrew Whaley

This poignant quote was featured in a recent Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter (Vol. 6, No. 2). Almost every time I put forth effort on something affiliated with Old Harp I think about people in the past that helped build this tradition. It's been over twelve years since Larry passed away, and yet we continue to reap the benefits of the seeds that he sowed. He was instrumental in the creation of an Old Harp newsletter, which helped disseminate information, document historical accounts, and perhaps most importantly, create interest. He helped revive old singings and start a few new ones. He worked on bridging the gap between the historic local singing communities and enthusiastic newcomers. His unique passion for the tradition was matched by an incredible work ethic. I'm confident there are dozens, if not hundreds, of people who would not be singing today if not for Larry.

He was right when he said that singers have a responsibility. This music belongs to us. As such, we should work to promote and cultivate all the things that make it special. People like Rev. John Trevena, Burl Adams and Larry Olszewski have been gone a long time, but the evidence of their efforts can be seen at every singing held today. I hope singers in the future will say the same about us.

Old Harp Monthly Sings 2018

ATHENS, TN—Old College Singers— at McMinn Living Heritage Museum (Call Cora Sweatt to confirm) **Third Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** Jan. 16, Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 17, May 15, Jun. 19, Jul. 17, Aug. 21, Sept. 18, Oct. 16, Nov. 20.

GREENE COUNTY—Franklin Singers at Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Greeneville (Call Jeff Farr to confirm). **Last Sunday of the month at 3:00 p.m.** Mar. 25, Apr. 29, June 24, Jul. 29, Oct. 28, and Nov. 25.

KNOX COUNTY—Epworth Singers at the Laurel Theatre, Knoxville (Call Claudia Dean to confirm). Usually **Second Sundays at 6:30 p.m., but please call to confirm. Schedule is somewhat in flux.** Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11, May 13, Jun. 10, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 11.

SEVIER COUNTY—at Middle Creek United Methodist Church, Pigeon Forge (Call David Sarten to confirm) **Third Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.** January 16th, February 20th, March 20th, April 17th, May 15th, June 19th, July 17th, August 21st, September 18th, October 16th, and November 20th.

OLD HARP ANNUAL SINGINGS IN 2018

Date	Day	Time	Potluck?	Singing and Location and Contact
Feb. 25	Sunday	2:00	*	Epworth Annual Singing at the Jubilee Festival, Laurel Theatre, Knoxville. Contact: Claudia Dean. *Refreshments at 4:00 pm.
March 25	Sunday	2:00	No	Oldham's Creek Missionary Baptist Church, 3629 Boogertown Road, Sevier County. Contact: Veta King or Hal Wilson.
April 1	Sunday	5:30	Yes	Easter Singing and Potluck Dinner at the home of Bill Gooch and Meg Mabbs, 4401 Alta Visa Way, Knoxville.
April 14*	Saturday	9:00	No	Quay Smathers Singing School , Clyde, NC Contact: June Jolley *Christian Harmony format. Pre-registration required.
April 15	Sunday	2:00	No	Tuckaleechee United Methodist Church, Townsend. Contact: Tom Taylor.
May 6	Sunday (1st)	2:00	No	Middle Creek United Methodist Church, Sevierville. Contact: David Sarten
May 12	Saturday	2:00	No	Wilderness Wildlife Week, LeConte Center, Pigeon Forge. Contact: David Sarten or Veta King.
June 2	Saturday	10:00	Yes	Franklin singing at New Bethel Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Greeneville, TN. Contact: Jeff Farr.
June 24	Sunday (4th)	12:00	Yes	Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church, Sevier County, Contact: Sharee Green
July 15	Sunday	2:00	No	Little Greenbrier Schoolhouse. Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Contact Robin Goddard.
Aug. 16-19				Camp Do-Re-Mi , Wildacres Resort, Little Switzerland, NC. Pre-registration required. www.doremicamp.org .
Aug. 19	Sunday (3rd)	2:00	No	Cades Cove Primitive Baptist Church, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Contact Robin Goddard or Tom Taylor.
Sept. 2	Sunday	2:00	No	Wears Valley United Methodist Church, Sevier County. Contact Bruce Wheeler.
Wears Valley Convention				
Sept. 22-	Saturday and	10:00	Yes	Valley View Baptist Church and Headrick Chapel, Wears Valley, Sevier County. Contact David Sarten, Andrew Whaley or Bruce Wheeler.
Sept. 23	Sunday (4th)	10:00	Yes	
Oct. 21	Sunday (3 rd)	2:00	No	Dollywood Singing, Pigeon Forge, Contact: David Sarten.
Oct. 14	Sunday	5:30	Yes	Music of Appalachia class from the University of Tennessee and regular Second Sunday singing. Laurel Theatre, Knoxville, TN. Contact: Claudia Dean.
Oct. 28	Sunday (4th)	2:00	No	Maryville College, Center for Campus Ministry. Contact: Tom or Nan Taylor or Nancy Olsen.
Nov. 17	Saturday	TBD	No	Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center Holiday Homecoming, Townsend. Contact: Robin Goddard
Nov. 21	Wednesday	6:30	Yes	12 th Annual Larry Olszewski Memorial Singing during the traditional Thanksgiving Eve potluck and Old Harp singing. Laurel Theatre, Knoxville, TN. Contact: Tina Becker.
Dec. 8	Saturday (2 nd)	9:30	No	Sugarlands Visitors Center, National Park, Contact Paul Clabo or David Sarten.

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Officers of the Friends of *The New Harp of Columbia*: President: David Sarten;
Vice President: Andrew Whaley; Treasurer: Joe Sarten; Recording Secretary:
Claudia Dean; Newsletter Editor: Sara Melton. Board Members: Chaz Barber,
Robin Goddard, Joe Schrock, and Kathleen Mavournin.

MAJOR SCALE.

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Name: Do Ra Mi Fa Sol La Si Do Do Si La Sol Fa Mi Ra Do
Pronounced: Do Ray Mee Faw Sole Law See Do Do See Law Sole Faw Mee Ray Do

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