



Palos Verdes/South Bay Chapter

Newsletter - June 2020

*Finding Friendship
and Harmony through Music*

FROM THE PRESIDENT, Lenita McCallum

There's not much Mu Phi Epsilon news these days which may actually come as a relief to you since we are certainly making "news" as a country with pandemics, demonstrations, elections and curfews to mention just a few. So many things are in flux. Our days are ordered in a fashion we probably never envisioned. Plans are cancelled. Our lives are on new paths from what we had assumed.

The International convention scheduled for July in Texas has been postponed for a year. The IEB will remain in office for an additional year. Think of what that means to someone like Rosemary Ames, our faithful and wonderful president for so many years -- She had begun packing up things to pass on to her successor. Now what? What about the International Competition scheduled for July?

Closer to home we have been denied the fellowship of each other as meetings and concerts are cancelled. Teaching music requires a whole new set of skills to accomplish our musical goals with our students. Conversations hover around trying to understand how to cope with the pandemic and still provide music for everyone.

School Budget committees, citing fund shortages, are taking aim at music programs, not understanding their value to the young lives they are committed to educate. We need to write letters pleading that they not be cut out. Please do so. There is information in this newsletter as to how it can be done. If you've never written a letter in your life, this is the time to do something new and valuable. We need to speak up for what we know is so crucial to the complete development of a civilized and cultured citizenry. The arts in all their forms give us ways to express, to dream, to work together and exercise all sides of our intelligence in constructive ways.

One of the things going through my mind is: What if all those who tried to hijack the Black Lives Matter protest demonstrations had had musical instruction all along the way in school? What if they had been in a band, a choir, a jazz ensemble or even been given music lessons somewhere along the line? Would it have changed their lives? Would they not be so hopeless and frustrated about their futures that they take to destructive rather than constructive paths? We all see the divide that economic opportunity or lack thereof has created. How can we as musicians help tear down the walls that are there?

As members of Mu Phi Epsilon we are well aware of what some of the challenges are. Collegiate members have been struggling for years to get an education while handicapped with financial problems that force them to work and study and manage family responsibilities. Our music teachers in the public schools have to beg and plead for funds to run any program of musical instruction. They get little time and little support. Newly minted performing artists need places to perform that pay a decent wage. Music programs in our churches have been abandoned, taking away another platform for training and development of an educated and inspiring worship element.

Remember the list of grantees in the last newsletter? There's part of the answer to the problems I listed above. We raised funds and we gave them away to all who asked. Nearly 20 programs for teaching music

in our area will have funds to assist them in their programs! That's one kind of support. Maybe we need to do more. As we gather to plan our meetings for next year, let's start from zero and think about what ways we can, with everything we do, be truly an organization dedicated to the advancement of music serving particularly our local community and our youth. Does that idea energize you? I hope so. Our new co-presidents, LaVerne and Darlene will be sending out an Interest Finder soon. Don't just toss it aside, please!!!! Put your heart and mind to work and commit to what you will do to be a part of the solution to the issues that ail our communities. How can we bring music to more people? How can we support musicians? What kind of support do you need for your musical ideas? Your hopes? Where is there someone with a plan to bring music who needs help from someone like us? We can't heal the world but we can work to make things better in our little corner of it.

Chapter News

Looking over the yearbook, one of many events we had so carefully planned caught my eye: The **BENEFIT CONCERT to honor Annette Smith and David Champion**, scheduled for June 6th. In lieu of that celebration, here are some ways we can honor them, in a socially distant manner:

Annette Smith's birthday is June 11. You could send her a card!

David Champion's musician friend Carl Rigoli dedicated a short score to him. It's called "Camminando Sulla Spiaggia" (Walking along the beach). something that David does a lot of these days. It has an easy going beat and meditative feel to it, just right for David's pace. If you would like to hear it or download it you can retrieve it from Dropbox at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1wtvxbyyy5zzpy3/Camminando%20Sulla%20Spiaggia%20%23%20A%20for%20david.mp3?dl=0>

Member and Patron News

- **Mary Feyk** received a 70 year membership certificate from the fraternity. Congratulations to her! Hopefully, someone in her family will send us a picture of her with the certificate!
- **Linnea Eades** was sent a 60 year commendation from the fraternity. We miss seeing these members among us.
- Among members putting forth creative efforts, **Charles Dickerson** has recently completed two choral and orchestral works. We certainly eagerly anticipate the resumption of live concerts and will look forward to hearing the Inner City Youth Orchestra perform "Psalm 91" and "The Storm is Passing Over." Charles' note dated May 6th: *"I have written two pieces for choir over the last couple of months. Both of these relate to the pandemic. The first is a setting of Psalm 91. If you're not acquainted with this text, please read it. It is particularly relevant for our time. I also took the text of a gospel song written by Charles Tindley (a famous African-American minister and gospel writer of yesteryear) entitled "The Storm is Passing Over", and I set it to a very grand and majestic idea. It is my intent to perform them when this pandemic lifts - hopefully as soon as the fall. and likely with the RHUMC choir on a Sunday shortly after we reconvene, and then hopefully in October in a grand Sacred Concert with ICYOLA. I'll let you know more as soon as more plans can be solidified."* We await those fine choral pieces!
- How quickly our focus changes, now a month later. **Charles Dickerson's** "This is Why We Kneel," recorded with a men's chorus and the Inner City Youth Orchestra, was recently updated to include events of racial inequality and pain. Watch this emotional artistic offering on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuxPSekKJk8>.

Adapting to Changing Circumstances...

One of our creative members has found unique ways to socially distance with good friends. **Mona Gifford** recently had a banjo concert in her backyard, with five people in the audience (all of them were Mu Phi Epsilon alumni and patrons of this chapter). You may recognize Jordan, who plays his banjo on Sundays at the Palos Verdes Farmers' Market!



KALEIDOSCOPE

Mona Gifford
supports the
Kaleidoscope
organization. She

suggested we all look at the The Los Angeles Times' worthwhile article: "This orchestra wants no conductor: How Kaleidoscope aims to move in different directions":
<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-kaleidoscope-chamber-orchestra-20190213-story.html>.

Other items of interest:

- Music patron and fan **Jim Eninger's** The Clickable Chamber newsletter can be accessed: <http://www.palosverdes.com/ClassicalCrossroads/CCMN.html>.
- **Peninsula Symphony** is receiving applications for their new conductor, as current maestro, Gary Berkson has his final year 2020-2021.



Carla Sedlacek sent a photo of her cat, Chloe, who is trained to walk in harness: Carla walks both Chloe and Figaro (her male cat) around their condo complex every day (separately—one at a time is enough!).

From **Pat Maki**: Under duress, I am learning how to be retired and finding myself drawn to other activities and trying to complete projects that have been put off for years. My husband likes cactus (I do not) and he had pots of them around the backyard. So, I made a cactus garden for him. When any of the cacti becomes unkept, off it goes to cactus heaven.



I have continued with trying to curb the cat population. I work with Pet Protector's League. Donna Ciminera, leader of the group, is actually a sane and intelligent rescue person. I take great joy in finding homes for cats and kittens. We have placed 16 kittens in the last few weeks and two adult cats. Trapping, spaying or neutering and releasing feral cats is a must. We have trapped at least a dozen. Pointe Vicente Animal Hospital is a terrific aid to Pet Protector's League in making certain the kittens and cats are healthy before they are adopted at greatly reduced fees. Pedro Pet Pals assists in funding the spaying and neutering. This really takes a village! If you know anyone



looking for a cat or kitten, please have them call Donna at 310-265-1204 or me at 310-326-5761. This is the height of kitten season (I hope). We need to place some before we take on more.

I found great joy in providing a neighborhood concert and am in the process of planning more throughout the summer. That helps the professional musicians in a variety of ways. The neighborhood set out chairs in their lawns, and as you can see, the children loved it. They circled around quietly on their bikes as we played. Awesome.



The highlights of my week are my three zoom students They make my heart soar!

Reading good mysteries, watching old movies and trying new recipes helps fill the void of missing spring and summer concerts – but not the joy of making music!

Feel free to email me any recommendations for easy read books, good movies and awesome new recipes. Hugs to all of you. Stay well. I cannot say this way of life will pass soon.

From **Darlene Vlasek**: During this Stay-at-Home period, my life has been almost the same as before, with the exception of my daily lunch hour at Starbucks, which is just an excuse for a peek at the world beyond the computer screen, my studio, meetings and the organ bench. Most of my students are willing to endure the challenges of Zoom lessons, even though it is rather difficult with a couple of the younger ones. The older ones are great because they are excellent students to start with and know very well what I mean by my suggestions or corrections. Since our church is not open yet, I have had time to re-acquaint myself with piano practicing, rather than organ preparation for the church services. With all the organizations' programs cancelled or converted to Zoom events, I have had some time to do a little gardening and a few other



projects around the house, plus spending more time in front of the TV watching the news. Unfortunately, we have not had time to take many walks, although Jim keeps suggesting a visit to Baskin Robbins following a shopping trip to Pavilions or Rite Aid. So, not much physical activity, too much ice cream and no one to cut my hair, are taking their toll. In spite of these miniscule inconveniences, we have so very much for which to be grateful. We and our family are all well, safe and moving forward with love for everyone and prayers for justice, positive reforms and peace. May all of you be abundantly blessed!!

From **Shanice Aaron**: I was recently interviewed about my online concerts:

<https://www.mindfulmusic.semel.ucla.edu/post/a-pianist-bassist-performing-with-a-purpose>



Lina Lee sent photos of her Zoom studio activities, too. How our lives have changed with these technological advances!



Statement of Support for the African-American Community

June 3 Mu Phi Epsilon Statement.

Mu Phi Epsilon Professional Music Fraternity has at its core the Triangle of Music, Friendship, and Harmony. We are an organization that is welcoming to all, and we appreciate and support the diversity of our membership.

When one part of our Triangle hurts, we all hurt. We recognize the pain and anger of our Sisters and Brothers in the African American community. We grieve for those whose loved ones or businesses have been hurt by the violence. You are in our thoughts, and we want you to know we care.

We hope during this time you will use the Mu Phi Epsilon values of harmony and mutual respect to guide your interactions with others.

Above all, we recognize the transformative power of music to heal, and hope that our members will use their gifts for music for those who are in need, and other innate gifts to reach out and care for one another. Please stay safe and take care. Loyally, your IEB

Orah Ashley Lamke Award open for nominations

Since the convention has been postponed the Orah Ashley Lamke award is now open to alumni chapters across the country. The criteria for the award are: The Orah Ashley Lamke Distinguished Alumni Award is given annually based on long, loyal, and dedicated service to the Fraternity. The award is designed to recognize the contributions of loyal members who have not been given recognition at the international level by means of an international office in the Fraternity or service on the Board of the Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation.

To guide you in recommending a candidate, ask the following:

- Has active membership in Mu Phi Epsilon been consistently maintained through the years?
- Does the member exemplify the ideals of Mu Phi Epsilon?
- Have assignments been carried out on the Chapter level or beyond the Chapter level?
- Has responsibility and additional work been accepted willingly?

- Has concern for the welfare of Collegiate members been constant?
- Has the member made an impact on the life of the community as well as in the Chapter?

We are on a short time frame if we choose to nominate someone since it must be done by **June 15th**. If you would like to nominate someone please contact Lenita immediately so we can put together the application and submit it by the deadline.

Some of the beneficiaries of our recent music grants: From Arts Alive, Crestwood Elementary School, and Los Angeles Academy Middle School. Remember what it was like before the pandemic? Pure joy on these students' faces!



Advocacy

Don't we all know that support for the Visual and Performing Arts has always waxed and waned with the financial stresses of the times? Now, with the academic budget crisis following the pandemic, VAPA programs will be once again targeted for cuts. How does the viable program continue to serve the school community? Knowing that cuts are necessary, I am encouraging friends to write a letter to the Palos Verdes Peninsula USD School Board and Superintendent. My "ask" is that VAPA programs be continued with strength because they are an essential part of education for our youth. The Social Emotional Learning that is an effect of good music education can continue and avoid the devastating impact that total cuts wrought in the past. Join me and express your thoughts! To contact either the PVPUSD School Board or Superintendent Alex Cherniss, write to: 375 Via Almar, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274.

To speak from an informed perspective, you can quote some of these points, from a document called "Arts Education is Essential":

- "Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person."
- "Arts education nurtures the creation of a welcoming school environment where students can express themselves in a safe and positive way."
- "Arts education is part of a well-rounded education for all students as understood and supported by federal and state policymakers."

VIRTUAL (EMAIL) MARCH on the School Boards: What if I don't live in Palos Verdes? Join me and express your thoughts, no matter your age, to your local school board! Speak up for music education everywhere. (This is socially distant and safe!)

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

All events from the 2019-2020 Yearbook Calendar will be postponed until further notice.

June 16th, 9:30 AM – Zoom Installation of new officers. David Champion will send out the link for all members to join in and give our new officers your support.

July 21st and August 18th – Summer board meetings, to be announced whether by Zoom or socially-distant backyard gathering.

SERV hours due: June 1st.

Patrons and members may submit hours for three categories: Service and Education, Resource and Volunteering, Financial or In-Kind Gifts.

Any recording format that is easy for you will be fine to submit. Please send your submission to: mika.y.voice@gmail.com



Last thoughts:

Ideas that were brought up at our just completed board meeting are:

Possible online fund raiser. Are you interested in donating? Helping?

We do have some items lined up already.

More communication about member performances that we can access online.