

Greater New York Region 15 Minutes of the May 5 RMT Meeting

The spring RMT meeting was held at the Hilton in East Brunswick, New Jersey. Peg DiSunno called the gathering to order at 10 a.m. Present were Jeannie Allen, Carole Argulewicz, Heather Collins, Peg DiSunno, Lisbet Kline, Carol Schultheis, Sharon Vitkovsky (outgoing DC, Sharon provided update on Director's Retreat and left at noon) and Harriette Walters. Christine Klepeis was absent, because she was out of town for family reasons. It was agreed that Peg would keep track of immediate and long-term accountabilities.

Peg began the meeting by welcoming the two new incoming coordinators, Carole Argulewicz (Director Coordinator) and Heather Collins (Communications Coordinator). Peg reported that she has received all year-end team coordinator reports related to the 2006 to 2007 term, as well as updated timelines describing ongoing projects managed by each coordinator. It was discussed that Beth Fulton, outgoing Communications Technology Coordinator, will handle the gathering and preparation of the annual State of the Region report, which relies on information from the RMT. The new CC, Heather Collins, will gather the information for the Annual Regional Evaluation, which is a survey of the regional chapters. Minutes from the January 6-7, 2007, management retreat were accepted as submitted. Finally, as a prelude to moving on to coordinator reports and other business, Peg reminded all attendees that the conversation was confidential.

Old Business (Prior To Coordinator Reports)

In Christine's absence, Peg reviewed the accountabilities list from the January meeting. The following outstanding items were highlighted for continued follow-up:

- 1) Peg mentioned that the Standing Rules update is still to be completed and distributed by her assistant, Johanna Herudek. The pending changes refer to updating the description for the Rise and Shine award, which recognizes par-

ticipation in regional events, as well as the rest of the regional awards section.

2) Discussion about the iPod raffle for TRAX was reviewed. To “win” the prize, TRAX 2007 attendees will be required to attend a predetermined number of sessions (these were not defined). Attendees who meet this requirement will be entered into a raffle for an iPod Nano or iPod Shuffle (total pricetag of no more than \$100). Heather was directed to buy the iPod, using funds from the marketing budget.

- o Peg reminded everyone that minutes should be revised, proofread and approved promptly. It was agreed that once complete minutes are delivered electronically as part of the group’s e-mail forum, RMT members will have one week to provide corrections/revisions/additions.

- o There was a general discussion regarding the budgeting process. Peg mentioned that she was under the impression that one goal of the spring meeting was to review team proposals for the current fiscal year (2007 to 2008 Sweet Adelines term). However, Jeannie stated that no RMT member had provided her with a proposed budget before the May 5 meeting, so she is modeling 2007-2008 figures on last year’s spreadsheet. The incoming RMT members, who have not previously served on the team, requested this be done for their categories while they become familiar with their roles. Carole A. asked whether the coaching reimbursement item could be increased, but it was decided to use the same allocation as the prior year, especially since not all choruses and quartets used the money set aside for 2006-2007. The RMT committed to reviewing their respective areas and reporting back to Jeannie by the end of May. It was also suggested that the annual budget proposal and review process be moved to the January meeting, so that the new budget will be ready earlier in the current fiscal year.

Communications Coordinator Report

- o Heather did not submit a report, because she just joined the team May 1.

- o There was a discussion regarding acceptance of minutes from the last meeting in January. No changes were requested, although Jeannie said she had not received the full version. Heather committed to sending her the file.

- o Heather presented the team with a sample of the proposed booklet for the upcoming Road Show meetings, scheduled starting May 14. The content was discussed briefly. Harriette suggested tabling the discussion and simply having Heather finish the booklets as she sees fit for prompt distribution in mid- to late May. Heather requested that the RMT look over the description for their positions and contact her by Monday, May 7, with any changes.

- o Nominations update: Heather reported that a meeting to discuss candidates has been set with Katie Blackwood (Liberty Oak Director) and Beth Fulton (outgoing Communications Coordinator). By way of educating the membership about the RMT's role, Carole A. suggested that a TRAX session be planned and held in September to help raise regional awareness.

The following positions are subject to election for the 2009-2010 term: Education Coordinator, Marketing Coordinator, Events Coordinator, Membership Coordinator. Nominations will be accepted until mid-July and will be discussed at the next team meeting on Sept. 10.

- o There was a general discussion of RMT articles for the July Taglines. In addition, Harriette requested that article headlines not be changed without discussing changes with the author. Heather agreed with this policy. Following is a recap of the articles for the July edition of Taglines.

1. Nominations article (also to be sent via e-mail) – Heather
2. Festival of Harmony – Karen Ayres from Hickory Tree
3. Article about contest results – Harriette and Lisbet
4. Heather should write some article introducing herself
5. TRAX promotional article – Harriette and Lisbet (If possible, we should include contact information for registration and hotel reservations)
6. Short article about the new showmanship award – Heather (will also include photo of Renee and Carolyn Schmidt)
7. Community Activity (ComAct) article that explains the award, talks about the winners and why they won – Lisbet
8. Director's Corner article that introduces Carole – Carole
9. Article about TC responsibilities – Peg

10. Article providing update about hotels for contest and regional events – Carol
11. Article about the importance of long-term budgeting - Jeannie
12. Article about the scholarship fund being set up on behalf of Joan Cobb, including the address for future donations - Christine
13. Advertising opportunities in Taglines - Heather

- o Heather asked about communications with Chapter at Large membership. She mentioned that as a CAL member, the only time she heard from the region was when the annual assessment was due. Lisbet said she had some ideas about how to improve outreach. Heather and Lisbet will discuss this.

- o Heather has begun gathering information about the Regional Directory and solicited information about how to make it more “user-friendly” in Lisbet’s words. (Changes in how information is presented.) This project will be worked on in June, after Heather finds her footing in her new role.

Financial Coordinator Report

- o Jeannie Allen distributed the latest budget spreadsheet and treasury report, reporting that there would be a profit of \$10,000.00 from Regional Competition, once the final bills are paid. The assessment was briefly discussed and the team asked how many members are currently in the region. Lisbet stated that there were slightly fewer than 700 members at the highest point last year.

- o Lisbet brought up the issue of funded visits and noted that International will pay the mileage reimbursement for up to 15 visits to choruses by RMT members that are for a specific purpose (goal-setting, education or the like).

- o Despite concerns about the region’s failure to book enough hotel rooms at last September’s TRAX meeting, the event was over budget less than was feared. Carol has reduced the room block for this year’s event to avoid this problem. We can increase the number of rooms if enough individuals register early enough.

- o Other items on the year-end financial report that will change when the final figures are in: Jeannie noted that she had just paid an additional “crime insurance policy;” the chorus

coaching figures will be updated pending new vouchers that were submitted by Sharon at this meeting; the per-copy fee for the quartet chorus music for the Ann Minihane tribute has been paid.

- o As mentioned earlier, Carole proposed increasing the budget for coaching reimbursement, but the RMT deferred doing so at this time, because not all the funds are used currently. Of the 35 quartets registered in-region, 18 used the fees. Carole agreed to send out more reminders about this.

- o Lisbet proposed increasing the allocation for the Community Activity awards. She will propose a new figure to Jeannie.

- o There was also a brief discussion about the marketing budget and whether it should be increased. However, it was agreed that since this money is not all being spent now, we should revisit our strategy in six months when the 2008-2009 budgets are being planned.

- o There was a brief discussion of the treasurer's report, including the fact that \$400 in funds were collected at regional contest and during the RMT meeting; they will be contributed to the Joan Cobb Scholarship Fund at the Half Hollow Hill School District.

- o There was a general discussion of fund-raising activities, especially grants and whether or not the region should attempt to apply for them. The concern was that we might interfere with the ability of choruses to write their own grants. It was resolved that the RMT should approach Judy Sanford Guise to handle this activity. Jeannie Allen will handle creating the grants team.

- o Advertising in *Taglines* and on the regional Web site was discussed, with an eye to increasing participation and offsetting more of our creation expenses. Heather will explore the Web site option and will publish an article in *Taglines* immediately reminding readers of advertising opportunities.

- o The team discussed minimizing expenses for future RMT meetings and retreat locations. Carol will talk to Lisbet about using her retreat house, and the team discussed advertising in *Taglines* for other location options, especially on Long Island. The November meeting will be held in Baldwin, N.Y.

- o The team needs to provide all updates for the 2007-2008 budget to Jeannie by the end of May.

- o The team agreed to support a request for funding from Carolyn Schmidt to pay for half the registration fee for IES for each member of the Capriccio quartet, which will compete on Region 15's behalf. It will also support requests for a \$400 donation for the annual Festival of Harmony and \$200 to the NJMEA program book. Choruses will be encouraged more in the future to help support these activities. These items supporting YWIH activities had not been budgeted, but it was suggested that we work them into future budgets.

Marketing Coordinator

- o In Chris' absence, the team discussed the Curves fitness promotion, which did not draw as much participation as had been hoped.
- o Lisbet said she will continue to handle coordination of the ComAct (Community Activities) awards programs
- o The team discussed the need to raise the region's profile, with an eye to increased membership.

Education Coordinator

Harriette contributed a report summarizing her activities since the last meeting. She discussed the theme of the September TRAX event, "Sing, Baby, Sing," which is being used with the permission of Darlene Rogers. It was agreed that the region will pay postage to have some of Darlene's CDs shipped to the event. A listing of all classes has been submitted by Darlene to Harriette and she said the event will take the same format as the September 2006 weekend, using the same meeting room space and requiring the same budget as that event.

- o The team set dates for TRAX 2008 on Sept. 12 to 14; Harriette said she would approach Jean Barford as a possible faculty.
- o There was a brief discussion of the Harmony Camp for young men and women held each year by the Buckeye and the notion of creating a similar program in Region 15.
- o There was a brief discussion regarding the status of several Region 15 choruses.

Director's Coordinator Report

- o Sharon Vitkovsky, outgoing Director Coordinator, joined the meeting to aid in the transition to Carole Argulewicz. The primary topic of discussion was the Director's Workshop, as well as a brief recap of the judges' meeting that immediately followed the regional quarter and chorus contest in Philadelphia at the beginning of April. It was agreed that comments from that meeting will be shared with the directors attending the Director's Workshop on June 1, so that they may incorporate the feedback into their rehearsal and coaching planning

- o Most of the discussion about the Director's retreat centered on setting appropriate prices for the pending June event and developing a process to do the same much earlier for next year's event in order to encourage increased attendance. Carole A. agreed to work closely with Carol S. on the 2008 event planning, with an eye to determining costs and appropriate pricing by next January. Michael Hayden was mentioned as possible faculty. (Addendum: Carole has since confirm Michael's participation.

- o After an extended discussion, the team came to a consensus about pricing for the June 2007 Director's Retreat event.

- o Looking forward to next year's event, Carole and Carol agreed to consider the Sister Servants of St. Mary's in Sloatsburg, N.Y.

- o The team discussed coaching reimbursements for choruses and it was noted that Brooklyn Chorus did not use any of their allocation. It was agreed that \$300 per fiscal year was a reasonable reimbursement.

- o Sharon discussed recommendations for MENC award, which recognizes high-school music educators.

- o Carole/Harriette said Mary DiLeo will continue as Director Certification Program Coordinator. She will attend the June 1, 2007 workshop with the intention of offering testing to DCP candidates.

- o As part of her 2007-2008 vision, Carole said she plans to emphasize the role of directors when it comes to education and will work to ensure that music teams and assistant directors are offered more opportunities for growth. She will also communicate frequently with the region's directors and plans to look out farther into the future when it comes to setting opportunities for educational events.

Membership Coordinator

- Lisbet submitted a report summarizing her team's activities over the past year.
- Introduced the idea of creating an in-region mentor program for directors, but teaming the following directors with directors who are new, who need skills development or have stated they need help.
- Suggested a coach-sharing program. The idea is for choruses to communicate when they are working with out-of-region individuals in order to piggyback on costs. Carole A. said she would gather this information.
- Request a class on the ComAct award at TRAX (to be taught with June Pierson) in order to encourage more participation. Only five choruses entered the process last year, despite the fact that this could be a valuable membership building tool.
- Also requested time for a class about the Diva program, which she will work on with Diane Chieffo
- Plans to work with Harriette more closely over the next year to learn the ropes as an Education Coordinator candidate

Events Coordinator

- Carol submitted a report summarizing her activities of the last five months, including multiple site inspection visits to help diversify our options for locations. Atlantic City and East Brunswick, N.J., both have possibilities. Waiting for quotes.
- The team discussed TRAX packages and pricing. It was felt that last year's decision to eliminate one of the pricing options for daily registration should be reconsidered. The following prices were set for the TRAX 2007 event in September: \$110 for registration covering events on Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning, including the Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast; \$55 for classes only (no meals); \$55 for Dinner/Show only; plus a \$10 First-timer's discount. Performers choosing to show up only for the dinner performance will not have to pay. Carol will reach out to choruses in Region 16, 1 and 19 in order to encourage their participation, given the terrific faculty. Attendees will have to call the hotel directly to make reservations.

- o Date recap:
 - RMT Retreat: Feb. 2-3 (Looking at Lisbet's house and retreat location in Sloatsburg)
 - Director's Workshop 2008 (May 30-31 in Parsippany)
 - TRAX 2008 (Sept. 12-14): Long Island location to be considered and evaluated

Team Coordinator

- o Reviewed goals for the Road Show starting May 14 and assigned team members to facilitate specific meetings. (Also referenced in Communications Coordinator report.)

- o Reported on Standing Rules addendums: Suggested that regional awards being given in the name of Renee Craig and the Cracker Jills be added to Ramapo Valley Chapter's rules (now known as Harmony Celebration). Jeannie was asked to let Anita Barry know the Renee Craig award is not the RMT's responsibility. Johanna is still reworking wording pertaining to the per-mile reimbursement section.

- o Team discussed the Rise and Shine Award, which is outlined in the standing rules and recognizes participation in educational events. Every chapter needs to start keeping track of member participation in eligible event, as of this fiscal year start on May 1. Lisbet needs to develop a form for tracking the award, and Carol S. needs to talk to Anita about appointing someone to handle this process, as it will be time-consuming. The calculations will be based on the number of chorus members in the chorus at the time of the regional assessment each year. The award will be given out at the TRAX events each fall. The first award will be conferred in September 2008.

- o Peg said several choruses will be asked to update their standing rules since they have not made changes in a while. It is suggested that choruses update every three to four years.

The next meeting was confirmed as a conference call to be held on September 10, 7:00 P.M

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Collins

Communications Coordinator