

North Dakota Music Teachers Association Newsletter

www.ndmta.org

August 15, 2008

Jessica Just and Warren Granfor, Newsletter Editors

From the president, Arlene Gray

Greetings North Dakota Music
Teachers and Friends,

Thank you for allowing me to be your president for this term of two years. This organization has been a source of inspiration, camaraderie, professional growth and challenge through my nearly thirty years of membership. I was introduced to NDMTA by my piano teacher, Josephine Mushik, of Mandan. She practically dragged me to the state convention in Dickinson. Before I knew it, I not only registered to attend the conference, but I was signed up as a new member of the organization.

I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the members. Both teachers and students were attending the conference and the excitement was high. It was a happening place to be. I was amazed by the talents of the presenters and the students. I could not imagine inspiring my piano students to that level of musicianship.

Years have passed, three more children were added to our family and I remained at home to raise the children. Piano teaching and Thursday Music Club offered me fellowship with other musicians and teachers. Now that our family is grown, teaching provides a link to the younger generation.

One year ago I attended the Summit Conference for Leadership Training in Cincinnati, the MTNA Headquarters. That conference opened my eyes to the superb quality of this organization. I will again attend the Summit in September of this year. Representing this great state of North Dakota is a privilege. We have an exemplary state organization. With the influx of energy folks into this area in the immediate future, we need to continue our high standards of music teaching for the youth coming into our studios.

This first edition of the newsletter covers the June Conference in Bismarck. The attendance was over half our membership. Two of my sisters came to watch me take the presidency and to offer their expertise in the music field. My personal theme is, "Embrace Diversity". Too often we feel challenged by competition with sports and after school activities. Let's embrace the challenge and move forward.

Inside you will find the NODAK Competition form. I hope to see many of you and your students in Valley City. Competitions need to be fun. What an opportunity for our students to hear wonderful music by youth.

I'll close this first letter by thanking the state board members for their assistance keeping this organization active. It requires teamwork. Welcome to the three newest board members; Anne Morris as advertising coordinator, Jeff Dasovick as secretary, and Jessica Just as newsletter editor.

Good luck to everyone as you arrange your fall schedules. May you find balance with work, play, renewal and professional growth through MTNA and NDMTA.
Arlene E Gray, NCTM

2008 NDMTA Conference

IMTF Luncheon Report

Submitted by Sheryl Kjelland

Onnie Adams, of Richland Washington, presented the IMTF Luncheon topic entitled "The Golden Thread." Onnie encouraged us to think about our first piano teacher and subsequently several memories were shared. Also, Onnie stressed that there truly is a "Golden Thread" that connects us as students, teachers, members of local, state and national MTNA organizations. Onnie has taught piano successfully for the past 29 years. She is on the Washington State Board of Directors, is the District 7 Vice-President in Southeast Washington and is one of the sisters of our new NDMTA President, Arlene Gray.

CELTIC MUSIC

Submitted by Linda Wallevand

The program opened with our presenter, Debi Rogers, playing a beautiful melody on an ocharina, a flute like instrument, along with a hauntingly sweet song. She was dressed in a flowing outfit of muted oranges, blues, purple and reds. She looked quite celtic, right down to her curly red hair.

She informed us that Celtic is pronounced with the hard c sound, not the way the basketball team is pronounced and that it means barbarian. There are seven countries of Celtic origin so many people probably have some Celtic heritage.

She told us how she got into her Celtic background and wove her stories around music played on her Irish harp. The harp is sacred in Ireland and Scotland, is smaller, has wire strings, no pedal or levers and the person who plays one is called a harper, not a harpist.



She reduced some to tears when she related a story of when she was in Ireland, sang in Gaelic, and was asked if she would be able to teach them the language. Many never got to learn it, because it was one way of destroying the country. Forbid the language, the harp, the stories, all the traditional things a country lives on and you destroy the culture.

The session went very fast as she kept things moving with stories and music and we even joined in singing *Sweet Molly Malone*.

Dances of Universal Piece

Submitted by Ruth A. Stenson, NCTM

What great planning! Just a short time after sitting for lunch and sitting during a couple of wonderful morning sessions, Alice Radar had us up singing and gently moving. “Dances of Universal Peace” was the name of the session. Alice, one of Arlene Gray’s sweet sisters, eased our fears of dancing with the wise old saying, “If you can talk you can sing. If you can walk you can dance.”

We learned short, simple songs from different faiths including Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, Christian and Native American. The dances that mingled with the songs included walking, bending, reaching and turning—all done at our own pace and with a sense of peace.

I think Alice’s goals were met. At least for me, I experienced something new and it was something I can share with my middle school choir students. I felt refreshed, peaceful, and ready to sit once again as the conference moved on.

Thank you, Alice Radar, for this lovely session. Included here are several web sites for anyone who would like to know more about “Dances of Universal Peace.”

<http://dancesofuniversalpeace.org/> - Dances of Universal Peace 206-522-4353

<http://www.sacreddanceguild.org/> - Sacred Dance Guild, 877-422-8678

Scott M Smith

Submitted by Marilyn Moe

Scott M. Smith presented four helpful and practical sessions at our State Conference in Bismarck in June.

1) Teaching vs. Correcting

When students are leaving and/or not learning, the problem is not with the students but with the teacher. We must teach students how to learn, to be proactive, not reactive, which is correcting. Music study doesn’t yield instant gratification. Most students receive too much passive input, such as videos, which means all they are doing is viewing the results of someone else’s diligence and hard work. “Arts are good for you” is an attitude that doesn’t exist anymore. Even though parents say they want their children to learn music, the number of people studying music is decreasing. It’s human nature to not always practice what we preach.

2) The Power of Efficient Practice

Most “talent” is learned skills or precociousness. Some students more readily can perform certain skills. Singing is the basis for good aural skills. Material gifts and rewards, such as stickers, candy and point systems work for a while, but we need to know when to shift gears. Self esteem, carried to extreme is not an indicator of success. Rather, an undue emphasis on how wonderful they are leads only to an unlovely person who has no regard for other people, their rights or feelings. You become good by playing well, every step along the way. To motivate properly make sure given tasks are do-able. Making tasks/tests too easy gives a false sense of success. Making tasks/tests too difficult leads to discouragement or giving up. A key element in playing well (success) is concentration. A student who is required to write down their practice records is

- more likely to practice. Slow practice makes fast progress. Fast practice makes slow progress. If a student is playing poorly, do you let them play in recitals? Yes! A negative experience is a great motivator. Don't deny your students to learn this way. There is no such thing as a "hard piece", just pieces that more problems to be solved. Solve them one at a time. Break it down into achievable goals. By raising the bar – making students do the right thing – you are saying "I care about you and know you can do more."
- 3) Teaching Young Men
Scott presented this session using a lot of humor. Any one of us who has a husband knows that grown men are just boys in bigger bodies. Principles which we learned seem to apply to "men" of all sizes and ages. Some things never change! Boys are competitive. Boys aren't out to please their teachers. They need a slight mental break between unrelated musical concepts being taught –time to switch gears mentally. Boys like action, such as team activities, whereas girls learn and think in words, expressing feelings. Boys rise to challenges such as being asked to help one another – the "hero" concept! An example would be to ask a boy who plays with flat fingers to help another boy who is playing with flat fingers to play with nice, curved fingers.
- 4) American Popular Music
Scott Smith established this company about one and a half years ago with Christopher Norton. Students want to play more things of a popular style of the day. They already have the sound of their music in their ears. Students sometimes ask why they always have to play pieces by composers who are dead. They need to know there are lots of fine composers today. Contrary to popular belief, pop music has more styles than classical. Scott and Christopher produce pieces you like that also help you learn to play piano. Smith works on the pedagogy side while Norton composes the pieces. Their goal is to let students have fun and actually learn to play piano. Their series/books incorporate Lyrical, Rhythmic, and Ensemble experiences. In the Lyrical sections, work with students to read patterns and listen for the melody. Rhythmically, introduce the sound they are going to hear. 43% cannot clap a steady beat, it must be learned. Ensemble sections include a backing track which has captivating style so it sounds like the student is playing "real music." The track also forces them to keep going, thus avoiding musical stuttering. Do check out this new series by Scott Smith and Christopher Norton!

Julianne Miranda
Technology and the Association: Growing into the 21st Century
Submitted by Beth Gigante Klingenstein

After the banquet for the 2008 NDMTA Conference, the membership was treated to a presentation by Julianne Miranda, the Chief Information Officer of MTNA.

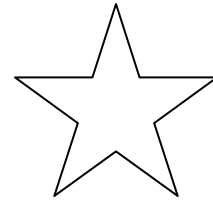
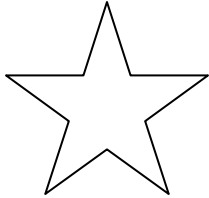
Miranda's presentation, *Technology and the Association: Growing into the 21st Century*, was a convincing presentation about the value of technology in today's studio. Although many of us (myself included) may feel reluctant to use technology, Miranda pointed out that today's students are different than past generations. They are used to

using iPods, cell phones, social networking sites, and the Internet. They are continually “wired.” We, as music teachers, need to understand this new generation’s approach to learning if we are to remain effective as educators.

Miranda gave an example of students being accustomed to going to social networking systems such as Facebook to interact. Teachers can take advantage of this new way of communicating by becoming part of Facebook and listing studio activities and discussions on the site. She also talked about how convenient it is to use an iPod to facilitate a lesson by having listening examples or ear-training exercises recorded on the iPod.

Miranda talked about the fears that many teachers have of technology taking the place of the private lesson. She assured us that technology is a good tool for expanding our teaching abilities, but that no one sees it as ever taking over our roles as educators. One way that technology aids us in our role as teachers is that it can expand the time our students have at the lesson. For instance, many teachers offer half hour lessons and find it difficult to cover all the material needed. A fifteen minute session at the computer before the lesson could help to cover theory, for instance, saving the teacher time, and ensuring that the student learns more theory than is possible in the face-to-face lesson.

What I found most reassuring about Miranda’s presentation was her clarity in encouraging us all to accept the inevitable move towards using technology that is taking place in modern day education, while still understanding that our unique role as educators will never be compromised by the use of technology.



Marilyn Moe: 2008 “Teacher of the Year”

Submitted by Kathleen Johnson

Marilyn Moe of the Fargo Moorhead MTA was selected to receive the “Teacher of the Year” award at the 2008 NDMTA Conference in June.

Marilyn’s teaching career spans 54 years during which time she taught music to children and adults. Marilyn’s main teaching instrument was the piano. However, she also taught accordion and formed an accordion band with her students called the “Junior Welks” that performed at community functions.



Among Marilyn’s achievements was the development of a course of study for preschool music students known as “Little Mac” (Music Awareness Class) that was published in Clavier Magazine. She also wrote and published “Creative Chords” which is a music theory text/workbook on chords and how to use them in music.

As an organizer and member of Upper Valley MTA, Marilyn was instrumental in bringing Lynn Freeman Olson, James Bastien, Marie Almlie, Amanda Vick Lethco, and Carole Flatau to present workshops to the organization.

Marilyn has always been a big cheerleader for the MTA and always endorsed the importance of belonging to a professional organization through which one could grow both personally and professionally. Marilyn taught with patience, kindness, love, and respect – and always with a smile. It was a pleasure to give this award to such a deserving teacher.



NODAK Music Competitions

(Non-advancing NDMTA State Competition)

Official Application Form

(Rules are in the NDMTA Directory)

(Do not use a pencil)

Entrant Information

Name _____ Male _____ Female _____

Mailing Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail address _____ Age as of Sept 1st _____

Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Home Town Newspaper & Address _____

Student Fee Included: (circle one)

- Elementary \$30.00(ages 8-11)
- Junior High \$30.00(ages 12-14)
- High School \$35.00(ages 15-18)
- Collegiate \$40.00(ages 19-26)

Teacher Information

Name _____ Dues paid on _____ Membership number _____

Mailing Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Name of Accompanist _____

Do you have students entered in other categories?__ If yes, give names & level on attached sheet.

Repertoire for Competition Performance Area entering (piano, woodwinds, brass, strings, etc.)

This repertoire program must include title and number of each movement, tempo markings, and the composer's full name. Please type the complete program on a separate sheet of paper and attach to the Official Application Form.

You must have a total of the time also.

| | <u>Composition</u> | <u>Composer</u> | <u>Duration</u> | <u>Period</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------|
| <u>Example:</u> | Sonata No. 1 in g minor, BWV 1001 | J.S. Bach | I. Adagio (4:17) IV. Presto (2:48) Total 7:05 | Baroque |

Competition Agreement It is the responsibility of the teacher and the entrant to abide by the rules applicable to the NODAK Music Competitions. **This form will be returned if there are any omissions or inaccuracies.** The undersigned verify that the information submitted on this application form is complete and accurate and that the teacher paid state and national dues on or before Sept. 1st, of this year. Unmemorized program requires two (2) copies of the music.

Signature of Entrant _____

Signature of Teacher _____

Mail your completed NODAK application form with a check payable to NDMTA with the correct amount for the student's level of competition to: Sharon Wesbrook-16898 Longview Lane, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501. **E-mail address:** sharonw@arvig.net **Phone:** 218-844-6009. This official Application Form must be postmarked on or before September 9, 2008. **Competition Date:** October 24th-25th at Valley City State University in Valley City, North Dakota.

Local Presidents

Badlands -
Bismarck-Mandan - Diane Eichhorst
Devils Lake - Lynda Pearson
Durum Triangle - Laura McLean
Fargo-Moorhead - Michelle Heaford
Grand Forks - Karen Dalager
Northwest - Ellen Croy
Upper Valley - Darla Sheldon
Valley City - Eileen Geske

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sept 9 Competitions deadline, both NODAK and MTNA
Oct 19 Bismarck Celebration of the Piano 3 PM
Oct 24-25 Competitions at Valley City State University
Nov 1 IVAN NDMTA Board meeting 10 AM Central time
Nov 15 Newsletter articles deadline

