

The Conductors' Podium

Illinois State Newsletter of the American Choral Directors Association



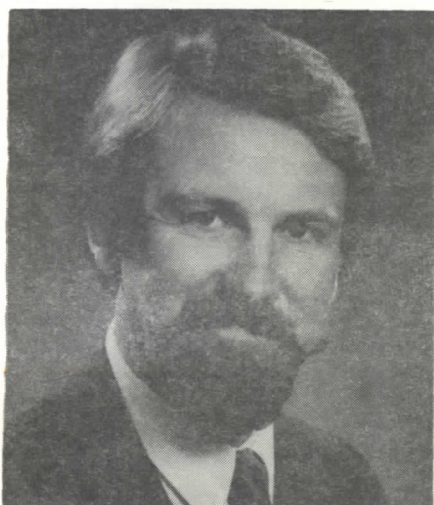
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SPRING ISSUE

July, 1983

New State Officers Take Over July 1, 1983

Joe Grant Chosen President-Elect



**Dr. Joe Grant, IL-ACDA
President-Elect**

ACDA members have chosen Joe Grant of the University of Illinois to be the next president-elect of IL-ACDA. Joe has recently completed his doctoral studies at the U. of I., and he has previously served as IL-ACDA District III Chairperson. Currently he is serving as a member of the Program Committee for the upcoming Regional ACDA Convention. Congratulations, Joe!

from the Outgoing President ... Dr. William E. Schnell

Bob Fuller officially took over the reigns of leadership of IL-ACDA July 1, 1983. As outgoing president, I would like to be among the first to extend my best wishes to Bob for a successful presidency.

As I review my tenure as president of IL-ACDA, I feel there are many reasons for all of us to be extremely proud of what we, as an organization, have accomplished. First, although quantity does not necessarily indicate quality, we are justifiably proud that IL-ACDA is now the second largest state ACDA organization in the nation, following only California in total memberships. Our growth has been exciting, but we must not cease to work at increasing our membership until every choral organization in the state is directly influenced by the excellence which ACDA promotes.

Secondly, our state conventions have increased in attendance and quality to the point where they are exciting, educational ventures for a great number of Illinois choral musicians. Only through the efforts of past officers and chairpersons was this growth possible. My thanks to all.

And finally, ACDA has entered a new era of political activity on behalf of those of its membership who are involved in public school pursuits. Recent hearings on State Mandates and the more recent study by the Presidential Commission on Education are not encouraging for public school music education. It is my opinion that ACDA and its sister organizations must continue its quest for governmental support of the arts in education.

As I assume the relatively sedentary role of past-president, I'd like to thank all of those officers who served with me these past two years. You have made my job rewarding and productive—and extremely pleasant. In particular I would like to single out two people who have done yeomen's jobs throughout my tenure. **Pat Densford** has served as Secretary/Treasurer, has attended and organized Executive Committee meetings, has kept all state records, and has served as registrar for all state conventions. Thanks, Pat; it will be a sad day for IL-ACDA when you throw in the towel. **Walter Lamble** also deserves special thanks for his work as editor of *The Conductor's Podium*. Under his leadership, the *Podium* has changed complexion, becoming more of a depository for articles than a who's-who in IL-ACDA. Having built upon the great work of his predecessors, Walt has fine-tuned our state publication to one of the nation's best. Walt is passing on his job to John Richmond as of the next issue. Thanks from all of us.

And thank you, the membership of IL-ACDA. Have a great summer.

from the Incoming President
... **Bob Fuller**

Although most of us are dreaming of that glorious day when the bell rings for the last time this year, it is also time for us to begin thinking about fall action at the District level. At present (May 9), plans are already underway for two "Fall Mini-Conventions." Mary Ellen Pinzino has some very exciting ideas taking shape for District 1; date and place will be announced later. District 3 (Joe Grant) and District 5 (Steve Stauffenberg) have already marked the calendar for a joint get-together of their two districts at the University of Illinois on September 10. Jim Wilson also is announcing a fall gathering of District 6 at SIU. The Fall Issue of *The Podium* will be devoted, among other things, to a review of all the District Conventions. The District Convention concept is an excellent way to become directly involved in ACDA; so get behind your District Chairperson, and let's have some action.

from the Chairman for Jazz & Show Choirs
... **Walter Lamble**

A number of things occurred at the National ACDA Convention in Nashville which should be of interest to all us involved in Jazz and Show Choirs. Of course, that which got the most exposure was the performance aspect. The jazz group from North Texas State University and the Singing Hoosiers from Indiana University presented musically wonderful and thoroughly entertaining performances. The very best of both the jazz and show styles were exposed to all of us, afficianados and doubters alike. I'm sure that none of those directors who attack jazz and show choir activities were "won over" to our side, but ACDA did a fine job of presenting the best of the genre to its membership.

A second activity (which received considerably less attention than the performances) which impacted on all of us was the series of meetings sponsored by the various interest chairpersons. I attended the several J & SC meetings, and found the discussions lively and controversial. National Chairman, Doug Anderson, filed an official statement at convention end which stated that the National J & SC Committee "is expressing frustration from the repression we feel from ACDA leadership. We believe the pop, jazz, and show choir literature and performance is an important addition to the total choral program in American Schools and Colleges and deserves the acknowledgement and support of the choral organization which represents America's total choral program." In particular, the Committee identified four main areas of concern.

1. Return "Popular Choral Column" to an every issue status in *The Choral Journal*.
2. Have performing groups at conventions at all levels chosen by the appropriate J & SC committee.
3. Have at least one interest session in J & SC at each convention at all levels.
4. Cause ACDA leadership (past & present) to exhibit a supportive attitude toward J & SC activities.

At the risk of "selling out" or being labeled a heretic, I would like the Illinois ACDA membership to know that I am not in total agreement with the Committee's statement. I agree totally with item number 3 above; it seems to me that each interest area should be represented at all conventions. Similarly, I agree in principle with item 1; however, I feel that our column should only appear if all interest areas have the opportunity to publish in each issue. Item number 2 appears on the surface to be worthy of notice: Who could make a better judgement as to convention performers than these who are involved in the field? Practically, however, I seriously question that it would be possible to get the various committee members together for reviewing tapes. Only two National Committee members were able to make it to the various meetings in Nashville. I wonder where the time and money would come from for additional meetings for tape review.

Finally, I totally disagree with item number 4. We jazz and show choir enthusiasts, of all people, must be aware that each member of ACDA has his or her own musical likes and dislikes; to attempt to alter these attitudes is to attempt to alter the basic make-up of the individual. It is impossible. No one can force a person who has a distaste for male chorus music to support it; no one can cause a madrigal-hater to espouse its brilliance. Similarly, we should not seek to cram our "legitimacy" down the throats of our peers. If we are, indeed, totally confident of our own musical worth, then we do not need the approval of others. We must, rather, be tolerant of their lack of knowledge about and abilities in our particular area. After all, the key to being a successful jazz or show choir director is the accumulation of training in those styles; those who detract from any style are simply short on background and knowledge of the field. And God knows there are areas in which each of us is less than brilliant.

The one thing we must not accept, however, is the use of an honored position in ACDA to decry our cause. We can't insist that every member of our organization support jazz and show activities, but our leadership can cause an end to public condemnation.

Well, enough of philosophizing. I suppose I've written enough to put my neck in the noose of Jazz & Show Choir leaders everywhere.

To return to our own state activities, I would very much like for ACDA to head up a series of clinics, demonstrations, and contests throughout the State of Illinois next year. These would be ACDA-sponsored, and they would be run by individuals living in the area where the event is held. To accomplish these activities, ACDA needs an active, state-wide Jazz and Show Choir Committee. If you are willing to serve on such a committee as a **working** member, please contact me immediately. Send me your name, address, phone number, and your particular specialty (jazz, pop, show, choreography, female show, male jazz, etc.) and level (children, junior high, high school, or college).

Please respond to this request. ACDA can function without you, but it can make an impact on your professional life only if you are actively involved.

Solo Literature for High School Vocalists

by Mona Quinn, Choral Director, Willowbrook High School

Today's choral director is called upon to perform many roles: director, accompanist, swing choir choreographer, yearly musical director and, not least of all, private voice teacher. The importance of this last position is more keenly felt at those times of the year when the student is preparing for solo/ensemble contest or end-of-the-year scholarship auditions. Although the director's background may be in vocal/choral music, it is possible that he is not aware of the large variety of solo literature available and suitable for high school vocalists.

As a high school choral director and private voice teacher, I am constantly looking for quality solo literature appropriate for the high school student. In choosing a piece or collection of works, I consider musical worth, level of difficulty, equal representation of musical styles and composers and appeal to the young singer. It is not always easy to find literature exhibiting a "plus" in all these categories, but I have found a repertoire on which I can depend.

Following is a list of the works I recommend, along with a short review and suggestions for use.

Row, Richard D., compiler and editor. *The Young Singer*. R.D. Row Music Co., Inc.

Published in four volumes for soprano, contralto (mezzo-soprano), tenor and baritone (bass) voices. An excellent set to have, as each volume contains a wide variety of songs chosen specifically for that voice type. Some songs in foreign languages are included, though emphasis is on pieces written in English. I have found this set to be most practical for the "average" student, while still providing the necessary challenge for the more advanced. Selections by Purcell, Grieg, Franz, Quilter, Brahms, as well as English and American folksongs are included.

Burleigh, Harry T., arranger. *Album of Negro Spirituals*. Belwin-Mills.

Available in high or low voice. Twelve familiar spirituals including "Were You There?", "Deep River" and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." Good arrangements and piano accompaniments. A collection offering the student good contrast to art songs and arias—a set to consult when planning a balanced contest or audition repertoire. Male singers tend to like these selections.

***Fifty-Six Songs You Like to Sing*, G. Schirmer.**

Probably the most varied and complete collection of solo literature available. Composers representative of all countries and musical periods are included. The only possible drawback is that there is only one available key, thereby making certain selections out of the student's range. I have had great success with "The Lass With the Delicate Air" (Arne), "Beau Soir" (Debussy), "O Rest In the Lord" (Mendelssohn), "The Two Grenadiers" (Schumann) and "Where'er You Walk" (Handel) from this set. Considering the number and quality of selections included, I would say this is one of the most economical investments one can make in solo literature.

Glenn, Mabelle and Spouse, Alfred, editors. *Art Songs for School and Studio*. Oliver Ditson Company.

Published in first year and second year volumes; available in medium high and medium low voice. A representative collection well-suited to the beginning voice student. Selections vary in difficulty and style; medium to moderately difficult piano accompaniments. Composers such as Schubert,

Densmore, Grieg, Brahms and Franz are included. Good source for contest pieces.

***Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias*.** G. Schirmer.

Available in medium high and medium low voice. A collection of "classic" Italian art songs, adaptable to beginning or advanced students. A variety of composers and styles enables the student to study several of the included works without losing interest. A "must" for all collections. Very appropriate for auditions and contests.

Taylor, Bernard U., editor. *German Art Songs for School and Studio*. Oliver Ditson Company.

Available in medium high and medium low voice. Sixteen selections by Schumann, Schubert, Brahms and Wolf. Piano accompaniments of somewhat greater difficulty. Well-chosen selections with good English translations. For beginning voice students or those with limited German background, I recommend "Der Tod Und Das Madchen" which moves slowly and is relatively short. "Ich Grolle Nicht" is outstanding for full voices with an extended range. "Widmung" and "Vergebliches Standchen" are especially good for developing German diction.

Spicker, Max, editor. *Anthology of French Song*. G. Schirmer.

Available in high and low voice. A collection of thirty-nine songs with English and French texts. Some of the finest French art songs by Chausson, Faure, Saint-Saens and Debussy are included. Piano accompaniments tend to be slightly more difficult than other collections. I recommend "Les Papillons" (Chausson) and "Bonjour, Suzon!" (Delibes). One of the finest sources I have found for French song.

Hughes, Herbert, collector and arranger. *Irish Country Songs*. Boosey and Hawkes.

Published in four volumes. A great deal of work went into collecting, translating and arranging these twenty-two songs for solo voice. They are unique in their own way and delightful to sing. This is a collection not known to many, but thoroughly appreciated once discovered. Though published in only one key, few songs approach the extremes of one's range.

Edmunds, John, editor. *Henry Purcell Songs*. R. D. Row Music Co., Inc.

Available in high and low voice. Contains fourteen selections typical of Purcell and the music of his time. Difficulty of pieces varies, though all are recommended for development of melismatic singing. Male singers tend to do well with these pieces.

***Fifty Art Songs From the Modern Repertoire*.** G. Schirmer.

Published in one key. Representing composers of fifteen nationalities, this volume contains works by Bartok, Sibelius, Wolf, John Alden Carpenter and many more contemporary composers. Pieces tend to be more difficult technically and have a more complex text. Not above the capability of the high school singer, but recommended for the more advanced student. A nice change from the more common art songs.

These are but a few of the many fine volumes published for the vocal soloist. Collectively, however, they represent a wide variety of styles and composers and offer a range of difficulty from beginning to advanced levels. From these collections, the choral director can find for his students a selection suitable for virtually any occasion. These are collections I have made great use of and have come to depend on through the years.

The Quest for Quality

by Robert Fuller, Choral Director, Oak Park/River Forest High School

The 1982 Illinois ACDA State Convention is now history, and it was indeed an historic event! One of our best! Reflecting back over those exciting days in Joliet, one can hardly escape noticing how good it was to sit with a colleague and talk about that which brought us together. As years go by, and more and more conventions stack on top of each other, there is one particular topic of conversation that appears to be surfacing above the others. That is the discussion of repertoire. Repeatedly one hears: "What are you 'doing' this year?", "Have you found any good numbers lately?", "Can you send me the name of a good composition for four-part mixed choir?", or "for male chorus?", or "for SSA?", or "for unison", etc.

The intention of this little missive is to suggest some techniques for finding choral literature and some cautions to use during the process. But even before that, the question of availability of good repertoire should be engaged. There are those who believe that what is called good literature is getting harder and harder to find. This simply is not true! So long as catalogs contain the works of the great composers, there is good literature to be had. Few are the publishers who fail to offer works by the great masters, not adulterated arrangements, but genuine editions. With very little research, representations from these masters, which are appropriate for virtually any group, can be found. Dare the suggestion be made that it is just possible that the reason some programs are experiencing difficulties may be attributed to the fact that the music of the great composers is not being used? But such talk may be heresy; on to less debatable topics!

Some warnings about choosing repertoire. The most obvious is to exercise extreme caution when ordering music from a "best-seller" list. Publishers sometimes "help" us by printing their most popular items in a special list, but it must be remembered that the only qualification for being on such a list is that the piece sells a lot of copies; and not that it be particularly good. Actually, ordering from any kind of "list," whether it be a "best-seller," "most favorite things," or even a catalog, is a dangerous flirtation with a waste of precious funds. Even ordering a piece on the advice of a friend is risky, because no one—not even your closest friend—is in a position to know the kind of music your group needs better than you. So, read lists, but beware of ordering—sight unseen—from them. And listen to your friends, but look at a copy of the music before you order. There is just no substitute for studying the actual copy and making a decision based upon your studies.

Getting started with the selection of literature includes a thorough knowledge of the group for which it is being chosen. Over-estimating a group's ability is always a hazard when music is being chosen. Following an acute inventory of the ability of the group for whom music is to be programmed, one of the very best starting places for a repertoire search is in your own library. This is especially true at the beginning of a year, when the ability of a group may be very difficult to predict. Hiding in the stacks of your own library may just be a beautiful composition which has been forgotten. So, begin your hunt at home; it will be a good warm-up for the quest away from home. Besides, a piece found already in the library is much cheaper than one in a publisher's library.

The most valuable segment of any search for quality repertoire should be your own personal single-copy file. This is your strongest asset for several reasons, most notably your ability to control what is there (no waste of time looking at junk) and its continual availability (no letters to write or trips to make). Your single-copy file offers you the advantage of time to study the merits of a piece; it gives you the opportunity to place one piece against another in order to study programming possibilities. Make sure that your single-copy file is not a "dead" one; keep adding to it continuously. When you decide to order something from your single-copy file,

take heed, because the price of any piece has probably changed since it was added to the file. There is even a bit of nostalgia involved in a single-copy file as you remember circumstances surrounding performances of a given piece. So treasure this file; it can be your very best programming aid.

Another means of searching out literature is to visit the shelves of your favorite (or unfavorable) music store. In this instance, you still have the advantage of looking at the music, but you do not have the luxury of a lengthy look. Because of the hurried nature of going through a store's files, there is the potential for ordering the wrong piece. A better idea might be to buy a single copy, add it to your own file, and study it in your own time.

A similar means for finding literature is the "Reading Clinic" or "Choral Workshop" as provided by some music dealers. These are less than the best of conditions. Be very cautious of those "Clinics" led by "big-name" composers; sometimes a composer with a nice personality can cause you to buy a piece whose personality is questionable. At least when you are looking through a store's files you can put down a piece that is not good and go on to another; but in one of those "musical sidewalk sales" you have to sit through the entire and quite often bloody mess (the two-year-old memory of a complete weekend of I-VI-II-V-I progressions still causes me to sit up straight in the middle of the night). If this is your method for finding good literature, then probably you are one of those who believe that finding good literature is difficult. Oops! Sorry! On again to less debatable topics.

A prime means of finding good repertoire is through *The Choral Journal*. Of course there are the reviews; and they should be read; and you should order single-copies of those pieces that interest you. But also there are the advertisements. "Bravo" to the publisher who advertises in *The Choral Journal*; but "Bravissimo" to the publisher who offers us free copies. The time spent dropping a note to a publisher on institutional letterhead for reference copies is time well spent. What a cheap way to increase the size of your single-copy file!

Read concert and record reviews. Not only can good literature be found in these reviews, but also the review may stimulate your thinking toward some other piece equally as good. Concert advertisements are a similar source of repertoire as are radio concerts.

With contemporary means of communications, letter writing is fast becoming a lost art; but it can be a superb way of discovering literature. Corresponding with choral-director-friends is an excellent way to ferret out good literature, as well as many other ideas. One of the real joys of attending ACDA conventions is meeting new friends and subsequently corresponding with them. Invariably this correspondence leads to new literature; because who is not eager to share the name of a piece that has been successful? And in many cases, actual copies of pieces are exchanged. In regard to ACDA conventions, it seems superfluous to remember those free copies handed out by publishers and dealers.

The quest for quality repertoire is rather like recruiting, it never ceases. Waiting until a few days or weeks before school begins, and maybe going out again during the holidays to find music can result not only in funds wasted, but also in discouraged choir members and distraught choir directors. One cannot set aside a certain day or time to choose music for a year or for a concert. This must be done continuously and over a long period of time. But the search is an exciting one, and one would not want it to be over quickly. Choosing the "right" literature has a tremendous effect on recruiting, but that is another story. Think about it! "Bon chance!"

The first meeting of the Executive Board for 1984-85 will be on the campus of the University of Illinois at 10:00 a.m. on October 8. This meeting will be hosted by our new president-elect, Joe Grant. The specific meeting room will be announced later through the mail and in the fall issue of *The Podium*. This meeting should be attended by all state officers and all District Chairpersons. Mark your calendars now!!!

from the Chairman for Higher Education
... Donald Armstrong

The year 1983 is another watershed one for choral musicians, the sesquicentennial anniversary of the birth of Johannes Brahms, 1833-1897. Having just completed such a year in 1982--Kodaly and Stravinsky--and surely beginning to anticipate one of enormity in 1985--Tallis, Schuetz, Handel and Bach--we have wonderful opportunities to share the valuable lineage of choral art with our singers, a lineage which we were privileged to "grow up" with, and are more privileged to proclaim to others.

Brahms' music is especially rich for introducing our students to nineteenth-century choral music. Not only is it a large body of work--twenty-six choral works in the one-hundred-twenty-two opus numbers--but it is quite wide-ranging in techniques, texts, forces required and style.

Many of us who may never have the opportunity of producing performances of the large-scale works--*Ein deutsches Requiem*, opus 45; *Triumphlied*, opus 55; *Schicksalslied*, opus 54; *Rinaldo*, opus 50; *Nanie*, opus 82; or *Gesang der Parzen*, opus 89--can reap the rich rewards of Brahms' skill and acumen in choral composition, and share these rewards with others, in a large number of smaller, yet equally profound, compositions.

For those us with female choruses, the trove is valuable indeed. Brahms served in both Detmold and his home city of Hamburg as conductor of choruses of female voices from 1857 to 1861. During this time, he produced eleven choral works, and five of them are for Frauenchor. Each is distinct in text, scoring, and accompaniment forces: *Ave Maria*, opus 12, his earliest choral work, for four-voice chorus and orchestra; *Vier Gesänge*, opus 17, is principally for three-part chorus, two horns and harp; *Psalm XIII*, opus 27, is for three-part chorus and keyboard; *Drei geistliche Chöre*, opus 37, are unaccompanied motets for four to six voices, in Latin, and in strict contrapuntal style; and finally *Zwölf Lieder und Romanzen*, opus 44, for four-voice chorus and piano ad libitum. Brahms composed no more music for this choral medium. He published in 1890, as opus 113, a set of Thirteen Canons for various treble-vocal combinations, but these are little more than intellectual exercises in contrapuntal skill.

The "Brahms sound" is just as clearly manifest in these compositions for female choir as in such staple works as *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*, *Schaffe in mir Gott ein rein Herz*, *O Heiland reiss die Himmel auf*, or *Waldesnacht, du Wunderkuhle*. They are challenging, both technically and vocally, although Brahms' affinity for correct voice scoring is a matter of proven fact. They are eclectic in texts, from the liturgical *Ave Maria*, through the German Psalm text, to poetry by Shakespeare and Eichendorff, and folk poems. They certainly merit attention by conductors of female-voice choirs at all levels.

Brahms composed only three works for male-voice chorus: *Fünf Lieder*, opus 41; *Rinaldo*, opus 50; and *Rhapsodie*, opus 53. The first set is quite worthy of attention. Both larger works have texts by Goethe, are both principally cantatas for solo voice--tenor in the former, alto in the latter--and are scored for large orchestra, and do not transfer well to keyboard accompaniment.

from the Chairman for Junior and
Community Colleges
... Lee Kesselman

In a recent survey of community college choral directors, recruitment and consistency of enrollment were listed as the most significant problems for choral music at community colleges today. Should this come as a surprise? Community colleges are known for rapid student turnover and particularly transient student bodies. In the words of one veteran of Illinois community colleges, "It is important to realize that incoming students have never heard of you (the director) or your choir, no matter how long you've been there or how good the choir is!"

With the thoughtful help of Dennis Sparger (Belleville), Max Guinnup (Sauk Valley), and David Brunner (Thornton), the following suggestions for recruitment have been compiled. You may already use many of these recruitment techniques, but some may be new to you. Even a stab at one of these might strengthen one thin section of your choir next year. May all of us benefit!

1. Tour area high schools during spring terms, concentrating on performances for high school choirs instead of entire student bodies.

2. Present Senior Preview Day programs for visiting high school seniors. This is a good time to use slides of choirs, have programs to hand out, or perform in showcase areas.

3. Be visible at registration with descriptions of choirs, past programs, posters, flyers, photos of groups.

4. Invite high school choirs and directors to concerts, It's not a bad idea to invite high school directors for a social gathering, workshop, or a tour of college facilities. Perhaps the local directors have unmet needs which the college can service?

5. Allow Music Appreciation students the option of joining a performing ensemble instead of a term-paper or concert attendance requirement. This "inside-out" concert appreciation would be of significant value to the student and a one-term requirement might lead to a three- or four-term member.

6. Use tapes of choirs and generously plug choirs in all music classes.

7. Use personal contact to sell membership. Having lunch in the student cafeteria, attending plays, poetry readings, and **EVEN** athletic events humanize the conductor and put you in contact with larger numbers of students.

8. Next term ask **EVERY** student you meet to join a choir. It's hard to resist a charming and friendly choral conductor.

Perhaps all of your choirs are adequately filled. (Ha!) Even so, think what you could do with another 30 willing voices connected to friendly human beings, male or female. Start another choir? A treble choir? A more select choir? An oratorio chorus able to do larger works? Recruitment is the question and the answer for all of us. And it comes around faster in the community college than it does in the high school or four-year college.

By the time this is read, the 14th annual Illinois Community College Choral Festival will have taken place at College of DuPage. Eight schools and over 250 singers will have shared an entire day of music together. Plan to attend the 1984 Festival at Sauk Valley College in Dixon with your choir.

One final note . . . Think back to your first September '82 rehearsal. Aren't you proud of the progress your choir(s) has (have) made since then? In community colleges, each year can mean tremendous growth. Take satisfaction in the small increments and rejoice in the music you're making.

ILLINOIS ACDA OFFICERS AND DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS

The officers listed below are people who want to be of help to you in your work in any way they can. Contact your District Chairpersons and send them information about what you're doing--special programs, workshops and festivals in your area, teaching techniques that work for you--any and all news.

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