



Chorale News

Winter, 2017

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE...

“Celebrating 50 Years” 1967-2017

The Blue Ridge Chorale of Culpeper is a community choral group with members at present from the counties of Culpeper, Orange, Madison, Louisa, and Rappahannock. We welcome those who love to sing from any area. The chorale presents a Fall and Spring concert, rehearsal for the Fall show beginning the last of August and for the Spring show the first part of January.

Originally called “The Choral Society of Culpeper”, then “The Culpeper Piedmont Choral Society”, fifty years ago in 1967 a few music lovers decided to get together to sing and with the guidance and help of wonderfully talented directors and accompanists, the chorale has expanded far beyond what the originators could have imagined having up to 60 members and singing in England.

And yes, you are right, this is our 50th anniversary year! We have had 13 directors, 679 members, over 100 different instrumental accompanists, and youth choirs from 8 to 20 during this time. We try to vary our singing site to cover Culpeper and all the surrounding counties and at assisted living facilities each season. For some time we have been singing at the Culpeper tree lighting ceremony.

This, our 50th year, our Culpeper concert will be held at Culpeper Baptist Church on December 9, 2017 at 7pm. For ticket information you may go to www.brcsings.com or call Patti at 540-219-8837. In honor of 50 years, if you are a previous member attending the show you will be our guest with a saved seat and when directed, stand and sing part of the last song with the chorale by just contacting me.

It is a privilege to be the president of The Blue Ridge Chorale and be a part of such a joyful singing group. Do come and join us.

Patti Christie / President 540-219-8837

Please join us for our

*50th
Anniversary
Concert*

December 9, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Culpeper Baptist Church
318 S. West St,
Culpeper, VA 22701

Origin and History of Some Christmas Carols

CHRISTMAS CAROLS - The Story Goes On

Introduction of Carols into Church Services

Christmas carols originated pretty independently of church influence until the 1200s, when St. Francis of Assisi fostered the practice of community pageants. Even for centuries after that, the singing of carols in the churches was not a popular practice. This started to change in 1880 when Edward White Benson - then the Bishop of Truro, Cornwall - later to become Archbishop of Canterbury, developed and held the first Nine Lessons and Carols service on Christmas Eve. The Festival of **Nine Lessons and Carols**, a service traditionally followed at Christmas, tells the story of the fall of man, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus in nine short Bible interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir music.

The format was based on an Order drawn up by Edward Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury but at that time Bishop of Truro, in Cornwall, for use on Christmas Eve (24 December) 1880. Tradition says that he organized a 10:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve in a temporary wooden structure serving as his cathedral and that the purpose of the service was to keep men out of the pubs.

Huffington “Top 15 Carols”

The Huffington Post – Religion - rates these as the top fifteen carols in popularity (12/23/2011):

- Away in a Manger** (Unknown, 1885)
- The Holly and the Ivy** (Unknown, 1710)
- Ding Dong, Merrily on High** (Johan Tabourot, 1589)
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** (Charles Wesley, 1739)
- It Came Upon a Midnight Clear** (Edmund Sears, 1849)
- Silent Night** (Joseph Mohr, 1816)
- The Twelve Days of Christmas** (James L. Halliwell, 1842)
- O Holy Night** (Placide Cappeau, 1847)
- Good King Wenceslas** (John Mason Neal, 1843)
- Once in Royal David's City** (Cecil Alexander, 1848)
- The First Noel** (Unknown, 1800)
- O Come, All Ye Faithful!** (John Francis Wade, 1751)
- I Saw Three Ships** (Unknown, 1700)
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas** (Unknown, 1640)
- Joy to the World** (Isaac Watts, 1719)



Figgy Pudding!

At our holiday concerts, we often carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," which includes the definite command "Now, bring us a figgy pudding... We won't go until we get some, so bring it right here!" Most of us are aware that this figgy pudding is also called a plum pudding or Christmas pudding and isn't pudding at all as Americans know it. Here's a bit about the exotic, elusive, very English non-fig non-pudding known as figgy pudding.

"Pudding" is a commonly used English name for any dessert. Figgy, or plum pudding is a Christmas pudding, a steamed, cake-like dish made during the holidays. Usually, these puddings are made with dried fruit, and often without figs. British Christmas puddings date back to the 1400s, actually starting as a means of preserving meat, over the centuries becoming sweeter and less meaty. Like many other old practices, this pudding regained popularity as a Christmas treat during Queen Victoria's reign. Historically similar to mincemeat pies, figgy puddings are now made with a variety of dried and glace' fruits, citrus peel and nuts, bound together with eggs, breadcrumbs and ground suet. The mixture is pressed into a bowl, covered with parchment, and steamed in a pot on the stove for many hours until it's cooked.



Like the American fruitcake, these puddings are made early, at least a month before Christmas, sometimes a full year before. The steamed pudding is then hung in a cloth and stored in a dry place until the holiday meal, when it is steamed to heat it up and then usually served decorated with a sprig of holly and with brandy poured over it and lit. Hard sauce (that "Hard" is brandy, good people) is often served with the warm pudding. Delicious!

It's thought that stirring the Christmas pudding brings good luck, and many families share the task - a great way to get help stirring this rather heavy mixture! Some folks add a coin or little charm into the mix, to be found by a lucky person who will certainly have a prosperous new year.

Pudding References

(from Dickens, of course)

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which set the trends for many Victorian Christmas old-customs-to-be, here is the miser Ebenezer Scrooge, chastising his nephew Fred, for wishing him a Merry Christmas (the illustration is by John Leech) :



What else can I be when I live in a world full of fools babbling "Merry Christmas" at one another? What's Christmas but a time for finding yourself a year older and not a day richer? There's nothing merry in that. If I could work my will, nephew, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

"Mrs Cratchit left the room alone -- too nervous to bear witnesses -- to take the pudding up and bring it in... Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper which smells like a washing-day. That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that. That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered -- flushed, but smiling proudly -- with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quarter of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top." - also from *A Christmas Carol* - Charles Dickens



Wassail -Customs, Songs, Apples

(source: Wikipedia and www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com)
*Here we come a wassailing among the leaves so green
 Here we come a wandering, so fair to be seen
 Love and joy come to you, and to you your wassail too,
 And God bless you and send you a happy new year,
 And God send you a happy new year..."*

Nearly every winter, the Chorale sings at least one wassailing song as part of our concert. That's no surprise: songs of wassail (among them, "Here We Come a Wassailing," "Masters in This Hall," "A Soul Cake," "Deck the Hall," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," and - maybe - "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen") are among the most popular traditional holiday songs and are great fun to sing! We all know

that the songs refer to that practice of singers going from house to house, singing and asking for a beverage, or a penny or maybe some figgy pudding, which forms the basis of caroling in English tradition. The old custom of wassail, though, was very different from caroling today, and was actually a January activity.

Wassail singing is a now Christmas-linked relic of an ancient, animist, mid-winter fertility ritual, in which the old year's cider is shared by humans and trees to inspire a strong harvest. It originated in the apple growing regions of southern and western England as a ritual visiting of the apple trees during their dormant time. A typical old wassail verse is:

***Here's to thee, old apple tree,
 Wence thou mayst bud, wence thou mayst blow
 Hats-full, caps-full, bushel, bushel sacks-full
 An all under one tree, Hurrah, Hurrah!
 ... and my pockets full, too! Hurrah!***

The ceremony of singing and drinking to the fruit trees, usually on Twelfth Night (January 5th), urged the trees to produce abundantly by making offerings to them, warning away evil spirits (by shouting or firing guns toward the treetops) and sometimes beating or threatening the trees, all to promote a good harvest. Though ceremonies varied from village to village, they shared basic elements. On the day of the wassail, farmers and their families would feast on hot cakes and cider, then would take warm cider and cakes or bread into the orchards. Typically, a village Wassail King and Queen would lead singers or musicians from one orchard to the next. At each stop, warm cider was poured at the base of at least one tree and the wassail Queen (or a young boy, called "Tom Tit") lifted into the boughs to place or hang on the tree a piece of toast or cake soaked in cider. This "sop" to the tree spirits honored the past harvest, reminding them to produce again.

***"Wassail the trees, that they may bear
 you many a plum and many a pear:
 for more or less fruits they will bring,
 as you do give them wassailing."
 - Traditional***

Wassail and American Authors

(source: Wikipedia, www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com)

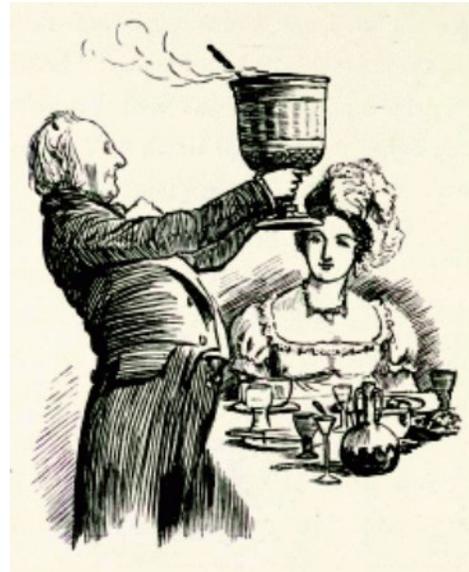
American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, in his essay *Wild Apples: The History of the Apple Tree* (1862), wrote of the very old English practice of "apple-howling", where troops of boys would visit different orchards, encircle the trees, and chant:

***Stand fast, root! bear well, top!
Pray God send us a good howling crop:
Every twig, apples big;
Every bough, apples enow!***

Researchers have associated apple-howling with "luck visits" which were made around neighborhoods with loud merry-making (often "fortified by copious quantities of alcohol" noted one researcher). These traditions merged with that of poor waifs who traveled the streets of the cities, and were paid to sing and play during the holidays (think of "We are not daily beggars who beg from door to door, but we're your neighbors' children whom you have seen before"). And from that merger came a welcome tradition: modern wassailing, or caroling.

"I found the tide of wine and wassail fast gaining on the dry land of sober judgment." Washington Irving, in his sketch of an English "Christmas Dinner."

The word 'wassail' comes from the Old English "Waes hael," meaning "Good Health". Stories referring to wassail drink, some of them pretty grim, go back to the dark ages in England. The origins of the orchard ritual are thought to be Roman sacrifices to the harvest goddess, Pomona.



Wassail – the Drink (source: Wikipedia)

Wassail! wassail! all over the town, Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown; Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree; With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

A wassail drink is usually a hot punch. Historically, the drink was hot cider mulled with spices. Victorian wassail recipes begin with a base of wine, fruit juice, or ale, sometimes with brandy or sherry added. Apples or oranges are often added to the mix. In both traditional and modern recipes, ale or cider, sugar, ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon would be placed in a bowl, heated, and topped with slices of toasted bread or cake (yes, such as was given to the apple trees!). Some recipes call for beaten eggs to be tempered in, and roasted apples very often are floated in the bowl.

Editor's note: This article is just a facile summary. There's a great deal of really interesting research into the origins of wassailing. Look it up!

Some History on our Songs

Still, Still, Still, a popular Austrian Christmas carol

This melody of a folk tune (authorship unknown) first appeared in a folksong collection of Maria Vinzenz Suss in 1865. The poetic and tender lullaby words are attributed to Georg Gotsch (1895-1965). This song sends a message of jubilation and peace for the greatest gift received in such a humble form as the infant Jesus. While the historical information of this song is mostly unknown, it remains a popular Christmas carol to this day, with its tender words and soothing melody. The chorale arrangement of this lullaby sung by the Blue Ridge Chorale in this 50th Anniversary year concert on December 9th, 2017 is by Norman Luboff, 1958, copyright 1958-1960 Walton Music Corporation.

Pat-a-pan, a popular French Christmas carol

This carol was written by Bernard de La Monnoye and was first published in 1720. The carol revolves around the birth of Jesus Christ, and is told from the perspective of shepherds playing simple instruments such as flutes and drums – the sound of which gives the song its name. “Patapan” is meant to mimic the sound of the drum, and an accompanying lyric, “tu-re-lu-re-lu,” the flute.



Deck the Hall

This carol is believed to come from North Wales, where it was originally known as the “Nartgarw Flower Dance”. Dancers would perform in a ring around a harpist and they made up verses to sing on the spur of the moment. The intervals between verses would be filled with the harp refrain. If a harp was not available, repeated nonsense lines such as “Fa la la la...” would be used. The earliest surviving manuscript is by the Walsh harpist John Parry Ddall in the 18th century. Near the end of the 18th century, Wolfgang Amadeous Mozart heard the carol and used it in his Sonata No 18. It did not reach the United States until December 1877 when it was published in the “Pennsylvania School Journal”.

The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

Edric Connor (1915–68) was a singer, folk-song collector and actor, who assembled a collection of the traditional songs of his native Trinidad in 1945. This was later published after he moved to England, and his own performances helped to popularize the songs in it, including *The Virgin Mary had a baby boy*, which is in the calypso style.

I’ll Be Home for Christmas

“I’ll Be Home for Christmas” was [written by Walter Kent and Kim Gannon in 1943](#). Credit also goes to Sam “Buck” Ram who wrote a poem and a song with the same name (though the lyrics and tune were different) in 1942. Popularized by — you guessed it — Bing Crosby, “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” is sung from the perspective of a soldier off at war longing to be home with his family for the holidays. It became one of the most requested songs at Crosby’s many USO shows throughout World War II and remains a favorite to this day.

In December 1965, having completed the first U.S. space rendezvous and set a record for the longest flight in the U.S. space program, the astronauts Frank Borman and James Lovell hurtled back to earth aboard their *Gemini 7* spacecraft. Asked by NASA communication personnel if they wanted any particular music piped up to them, the crew requested Bing Crosby’s recording of “I’ll Be Home for Christmas.”

Carol of the Bells

“Carol of the Bells” is a popular Christmas carol composed by Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych in 1914 with lyrics by Peter J. Wilhousky. The song is based on a Ukrainian folk chant called “Shchedryk”. The song was first performed by students at Kiev University in December 1916. It premiered in the United States on October 5, 1921 to a sold-out audience at Carnegie Hall.



Little Jack Frost Get Lost

Written by Sefer Ellis (music) and Al Stillman (lyric) in 1947. Carle was auditioning replacement singers in person and via demo recordings and his wife snuck in their daughter’s demo disc and Carle, unaware, liked the voice. When he discovered the ruse, he hired his daughter but changed her name to Marjorie Hughes.

PLEASE REMEMBER WHEN YOU SHOP TO USE



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Who supports the Chorale? The Chorale conducts several fundraising activities each year: Donations from generous individuals and corporations, concert ticket sales and grants. It takes over \$20,000 annually to pay our professional staff and cover our expenses.

If you would like to be a part of our contributing community, please send your tax deductible donations by mail or on-line.

Mail your tax-deductible donation to: **The Blue Ridge Chorale of Culpeper, Inc. PO Box 1871 Culpeper, VA 22701**

Or contribute on-line using a credit card at www.brcsings.com

Director's throughout the Years



Jeanne Sandidge
5 Seasons



Trevor Rea
2 Seasons



Marian Meredith
1 Season



Judith Gary
10 Seasons



Robert Hawkins
5 Seasons

NO PHOTO
AVAILABLE

Bobby Davies
2 Seasons



Lois Shanks
26 Seasons

NO PHOTO
AVAILABLE

Art Palmer
16 Seasons

NO PHOTO
AVAILABLE

Martha Mikula
1 Season



Virginia Erwin
16 Seasons



Carol Tomhave
3 Seasons



Melissa Janes
2 Seasons



Bob Burnett
8 Seasons

Blast from the Past



December 1971



Page 2, STAR-EXPONENT, Thurs. Dec. 6, 1979

Christmas concert tonight Eleanor Gladly Photo

Members of the Culpeper Choral Society have a last rehearsal before tonight's annual Christmas concert. The concert, open to the public, will begin at 8 p.m. at Culpeper Baptist Church.

December 6, 1979



Star-Exponent 12/12/80

Alleluia

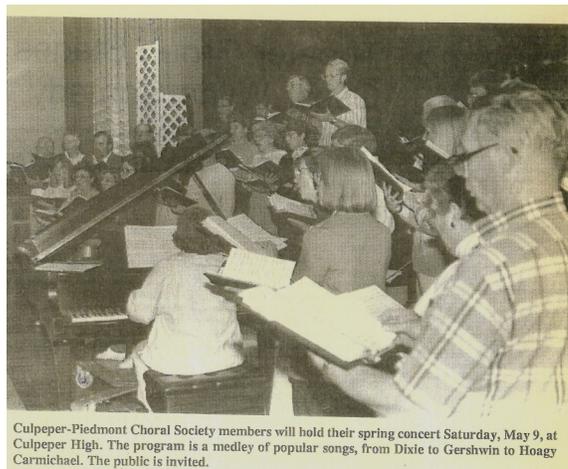
Kurt Bacci Photo

Tenor Neil LaGrow delivering a complementary rendition of the Choral Society's production of George Frideric of the third chorus (Every Valley Shall Be Exalted) as part of Handel's Messiah, directed by Judith Gary.

December 12, 1980



December 1985



Culpeper-Piedmont Choral Society members will hold their spring concert Saturday, May 9, at Culpeper High. The program is a medley of popular songs, from Dixie to Gershwin to Hoagy Carmichael. The public is invited.

May 9, 1987



Spring 1987
Lois Shanks, Director



Music Festival Celebrating 750th
Anniversary of the founding of Berlin
in July 1987



Christmas 1992
Culpeper Methodist Church



Spring 1992



Spring 1993



Staff Photo, Vincent Viki
(From left) Suzanne Sherwin and Laurie Crigler of the Culpeper-Piedmont Choral Society rehearse at the Precious Blood Catholic Church for the 28th annual Christmas Candlelight Concert to be held Dec. 3 at Lake of the Woods at 8 p.m., and Dec. 5 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Culpeper at 5 and 7 p.m. The concert is free and open to the public, however donations are gratefully accepted. Selections for the upcoming concert includes Midnight Mass by Charpentier, international and traditional carols and selections from The Messiah.

28th Annual Christmas
Candlelight Rehearsal
December 3, 1993



Photo by Vincent Vasa

Tuning up for the big day

Pictured above are sopranos of the Culpeper-Piedmont Choral Society in rehearsal for the premiere Choral Festival slated for Sunday, March 22, at 3 p.m. at Culpeper County High School. They are from left to right Robin Lane, Debbie Robertson and Jeanette Green. Other performing choruses will be The New Day Singers, Warrenton Chorale, Montpelier Chamber Singers, and the Madison Choral Society. The festival is free and sponsored by the Community Concert Association. For more information call John Brooks at 825-8863.

March 2, 1998



Alex ter Weele and
Ralph Smith

Tree Lighting on Dec 2007



Chorale cantata

Spring 2008

Blue Ridge Chorale warms up for its spring concert »C4

Spring 2008



Preparing for the concert

Some of the Blue Ridge Chorale members get in place to rehearse for their concert at Shenandoah National Park celebration. Pictured are Kathy Tester (front row, from left), Dorothy Scott, Thelma Davenport, Diana Cmeyla, Renate Chapman, Donna Pringle. Back row; Wanda Osborn (from left), Alex ter Weele, David DeLong, Charlie Pringle and Jack Garber.

Shenandoah National Parks 75th Anniversary
Celebration, June 25, 2011



Town of Culpeper 250th Anniversary Celebration

April 24, 2009



Chorale with Bells
December 9, 2012



Wayne Payne and Jack Garber
First Fall Rehearsal 2012



Johncie Carlson and Deb Thompson
First Fall Rehearsal 2012



Solo from "Les Miserables"
June 2012



Blue Ridge Chorale
Culpeper residents Cathy ter Woole (from left), Sam Miles and Tim Carlson perform the Archangel Trio for Haydn's "The Heavens Are Telling" in the Blue Ridge Chorale's concert, "Out of the Stars," on April 27 at Germanna Community College's Daniel Technology Center.

May 10, 2012



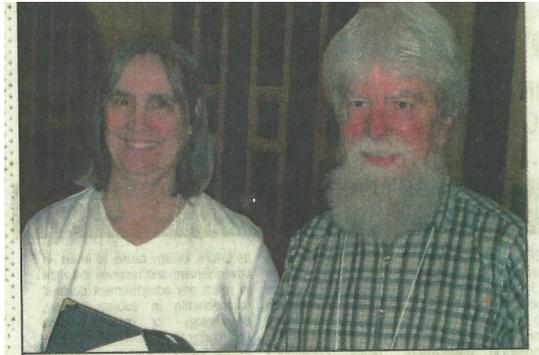
By Tim Carlson of Studio C Photography

Blue Ridge Chorale leads the community in sounds of the season at the Annual Culpeper Downtown Community Tree Lighting.

Tree Lighting
November 18, 2012



Spring Concert at Open Door Baptist Church
April 26, 2013



Contributed photo
CHORALE CHAMPS: Warrenton and Auburn Middle School teacher Scott Tester, and his wife Kathy Tester were recently recognized by the Blue Ridge Chorale. Kathy who is the Chorale's Concert Master, sings soprano and plays the flute for the Chorale, and Scott, Chorale tenor/baritone and violinist, will perform with the Chorale in an upcoming multi-media concert.

Germanna Community College
April 27, 2013



Nellie Santinga and Jan Rossano
Poinsettia Fundraiser
Fall, 2013



Margie Blankenship
Germanna Community College
April 27, 2013



Prince Michel Vineyards
Music from the Movies
Concert on May 2, 2014

Singing our
'*SWonderful* Concert
at Culpeper Baptist
Retirement Home

April 27, 2015

Photos by Svitozar Nenyuk



Singing our '*SWonderful*
Concert at Dogwood Village
of Orange County

May 1, 2015

Photos by Svitozar Nenyuk



Youth Chorale



Charity Sillero & Cathy ter Weele

's Wonderful

Great American Song Selections from
Cole Porter and George & Ira Gershwin
May 3, 2015
State Theater Culpeper, VA



(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



Peggy Carpenter & Patti Christie
singing "Just One of Those Things"



Cathy ter Weele directing the
Youth Chorale



Charity Sillero & Cathy ter Weele
singing "Dream Dancing"



Brittany Bache & Bob Burnett

JOY

December 13, 2015
State Theater, Culpeper, VA

(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



Youth Chorale dancing to
"Peppermint Candy Cane"



Brittany Bache & Kimberly Short singing
"Hallelujah (Light Has Come)"



Cathy ter Weele solo
"Sing, Ye Birds"



Brittany Bache receiving flowers
at the end of the concert



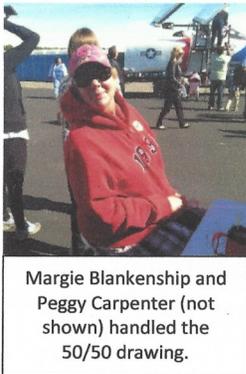
Fall, 2015



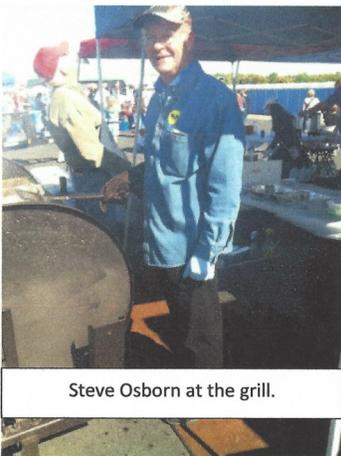
Burger wrapping: Geniene Zinn (left), Patti Christie and Elizabeth Hartsell



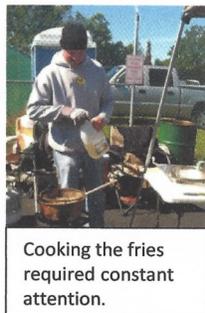
Burger Flippers Charlie Pringle (left) and Jack Garber.



Margie Blankenship and Peggy Carpenter (not shown) handled the 50/50 drawing.



Steve Osborn at the grill.



Cooking the fries required constant attention.



Wanda actually sat down for a few minutes!



*Puttin' on the Ritz
Great American Song Selections
from Irving Berlin
May 7, 2016*

(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



Lisa Zinn solo "Give Me Your Poor"



Martha Smith Solo
"Doin' What Comes Naturally"



Director, Bob Burnett dancing



Jodi Stone solo "What'll I Do"



Wanda Osborn solo
"I Got the Sun in the Morning"



Cary Oien solo "Deep is the Ocean"



Mary Schreiner & Rachel Cieplak singing "Sisters"



Dorothy Wright singing "Moonshine Lullaby" with the youth chorale



From Left to Right: Patti Christie, Lisa Zinn, Peggy Carpenter and Rita Giannic dressed up for the "Easter Parade"



From Left to Right: Margie Blankenship, Geniene Zinn, Lisa Zinn and Jodi Stone dressed up for the "Easter Parade"

(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



CURTAIN UP!

**A Broadway Musical Medley of
Songs by
Richard Rogers, Frank Loesser
and Frederick Loewe**

**Fauquier Community Theater
April 9, 2017**

(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



Faces in the Chorale



Director, Bob Burnett



The Chorale



Katie Hutchins singing "Adelaide's Lament"



Jeff Wolf & Brittany Bache



CURTAIN UP!

A Broadway Musical Medley of Songs by

Richard Rogers, Frank Loesser and Frederick Loewe

May 7, 2017

**Anne Marie Sheridan Amphitheatre
Verdun Adventure Bound**

(photos by Sara Rayaprol)



Faces in the Chorale



Peggy Carpenter, Geniene Zinn, Bobbie Cabibo and Cathy ter Weele relaxing during Intermission.



Brittany Bache, Jeff Wolf and Director, Bob Burnett