

**“In Musical Style” Saskatchewan Music Festival Association
Conference and AGM; October 27 and 28, 2017
Manitou Springs, Watrous, SK**

What a wonderful place to meet! The provincial board members and representatives from at least 26 of the 47 Saskatchewan festivals met in Watrous to engage in healthy discourse about all things related to the smooth running of their festivals.

Many thanks to Kelly Stein for her beautiful planning of the 2 day event. The table settings, centerpieces, door prizes, balloons, live music and delicious food were celebrated by everyone. Pink, white and black were the conference colours. A comprehensive program (Thanks Carol and crew) and swag bag was given to each guest. Conference sponsors included Inkster Fashion, Watrous Travel and Nokomis Florist.

On Friday, October 27, guests could register beginning at 5:30 PM. The 7 PM Conference session was presented by our fabulous president Karen Unger – a Syllabus Scavenger Hunt – during which conference guests worked in table groupings to quickly navigate through the festival syllabus and hopefully gain knowledge of the layout and information that the syllabus holds. There was great discussion, friendly competition and lots of laughs.

The 8:30 PM fashion show was delightful as it featured local models and clothing from “Inksters”. Guests also enjoyed a cash bar, appetizers and live guitar music from 16 year old Carson Froelich, student of Luz Marina Dominguez.

Saturday morning started with a buffet breakfast at 8 PM. At 9 AM, Wendy Thienes presented on the topic of “Board Governance”. She issued three challenges to the festival groups: to read the bylaws and constitution; to read the syllabus rules and regulations, and; to read the festival handbook. Wendy stressed the importance of strategic thinking within each festival unit – making plans with awareness for the future.

At 9:40 AM, Nancy Toppings presented a session on Festival Reporting/Website aided by Carol Donhauser at the computer/projected screen. The protocol surrounding local festival’s correspondence with the SMFA head office was clearly outlined. The importance of a corresponding secretary who could check their email often was highlighted. Due dates were reviewed. Nancy was extremely clear and knowledgeable.

At 10 AM, the AGM began under the clear direction of president Karen Unger. Board nominations included a 2 year Director Position – Jeri Ryba, Moose Jaw Music Festival – and a 3 year Director Position – Dianne Gryba, Battlefords Music Festival. Thanks were expressed to outgoing members Kelly Stein and Michael Lyngstad.

Upcoming events and dates were outlined: Wallis Memorial Opera Competition – Regina, February 24 – 25, 2018; SMFA District Festivals – 47 locations in SK, March

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– May, 2018; Provincial Finals – Saskatoon, June 1 and 2, 2018; and, Nationals – Sackville, NB, August 12 – 18, 2018.

A delicious turkey lunch with all of the trimmings began at 11:30 AM. Karen Unger welcomed local guests and many recipients of volunteer awards. Jim Coulter was a fabulous keynote speaker and addressed the spirit of volunteerism with passion and humour – “Service above all”. Maxine Moore skillfully led St. Peter’s Chorus through a set of songs that celebrated Canada and featured composer Lorne Atkins. The Board paid tribute to the 12 recipients of volunteer awards as nominated by their home festivals, many of whom had travelled to Watrous for the event. The recipients included:

Doreen Gaudet – Biggar & District Music Festival
Joanne Meszaros – Biggar and District Music festival
Kari Mitchell – Carnduff Music festival
Sheila Applin – Kindersley Music festival
Leanne Livingstone – Kindersley Music festival
Lorna Gibson – Prince Albert Kiwanis Music Festival
Theresa Keyowski – Quill Plains Music festival
Wendy Thienes – Shaunavon & District Music festival
Deana Mainil – Weyburn Rotary Music Festival
Marilyn Whitehead – Saskatoon Music Festival
Tracey Loucks – Yorkton Music Festival
Tonia Vermette – Yorkton Music Festival

A posthumous service award went to Maggie Chartier, owner and operator of Allied Printers, Regina, and the main service provider for SMFA’s print and promotion needs for many years.

At 1:30 PM, Darren Schwartz led a discussion about “Online entries – Is it right for your festival?” The pros and cons of online vs. manual programming and data collection were discussed. Certainly, online entries are the way of the future with the exception of festivals small enough and with sufficient volunteer man – power to continue manual programming. Darren was to follow up his presentation with a written synopsis of the computer programs available and a few Trouble - shooting tips for users.

At 2:30 PM, Tammy Villeneuve presented a quiz on “Diversification” which pin pointed current status points about the SMFA’s desire to remain “current” and inclusive to all musicians in Saskatchewan who would benefit from participation in our classical music festivals. It is a difficult but worthwhile and necessary journey and resulted in much discussion.

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Karen MacCallum spoke about Nationals and Bonnie Nicholson asked for any volunteers interested in helping with Nationals 2019 in Saskatoon.

At the 3:30 PM roundtable discussions, delegates were separated by their roles at their local festivals - “like committees”.

The SMFA Board met at the conclusion of the conference to finish business began at Board meetings early on Friday and to welcome Jeri Ryba and Dianne Gryba.