

## **STRING VIBRATIONS NEWSLETTER**

FALL 2000

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### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear ASTA Colleagues,

Another school year is here! I hope this finds all of you with enthusiastic students, great parents, supportive administrations and (at least) tolerable teaching schedules!

So, the other day I was walking in the hallway of an elementary school where I have taught for several years. My instrumental teaching team had just given our presentation on the opportunity for 5th graders to study an instrument and we were hurriedly

trying to leave the building, en route for our next school -- we all know the scenario. To my surprise, a little blonde 5th grader was running up behind me, calling my name. Before I had a chance to tell her how busy I was and that she needed to hold her questions until the next time we were in her building, she shouted, "I've been waiting my whole life for you to be my teacher!"

Suddenly I wasn't in such a hurry. I stopped as this little girl, Kristin, who I had never seen (or should I say, noticed) before went on to say that she had heard the 5th grade orchestra when she was in Kindergarten and every year since. She had seen me come in and out of her building twice a week for those years, had noticed when I had been absent, all the time planning that when her turn came, she was going to play the violin in my class.

Although we haven't started classes yet in her school, I can't get Kristin out of my mind. I am struck by a monumental fact -- that we have no idea how or when we will touch children in this career. No matter what our specialty in the world of strings--private teachers, school teachers, conductors or performers--our impact and influence is greater than we will ever know.

Sometimes just a smile from us to a group of first graders walking down the hallway is the beginning of some kid's music study. After we shake our heads at the student who didn't practice (again) his mom calls you to say that coming to the lesson is the only thing he gladly does.

We all have stories like this one, students whose lives we have impacted in big and small ways. It seems sometimes that factors outside ourselves become more important than the reasons most of us came to this profession until a child reminds us of what is really important in our work days; namely, kids and music.

I remember Kristin every day, now. In this difficult and busy time of year when we are expected to carry twice our weight in instruments to 6 schools a day, teach a lesson at 9:00 PM to accommodate a student's sports schedule, and drive across town to a school just to find out that an assembly has been scheduled during orchestra class, I will remember her -- and all the other Kristins out there who are waiting their whole lives to be in our classes. And I will try never to be in that much of a hurry again.

Have a great fall!

Katharine (Kip) Mason  
Colorado ASTA WITH NSOA President

## **BITS AND PIECES: INFORMATION NEWS ITEMS**

The CMEA Clinic/Conference Program will not be mailed out in advance of the convention this year -- it will be found on the new CMEA Website, [www.CMEAonline.org](http://www.CMEAonline.org) in advance and handed out at the Broadmoor.

This is the last year that audition tapes for elementary/middle/junior high schools performing groups will be accepted in the Fall. The Deadline for all CMEA audition tapes for the 2002 Clinic/Conference will be May 30, 2001. CD recordings will be accepted.

Remember our Colorado ASTA with NSOA Logo Contest! Deadline November 1! For more information, e-mail Kip. The prize is a one-year, transferable membership to ASTA with NSOA!

BIG THANKS to Herb Kress who has agreed to serve another term as our State coordinator for the National High School Honors Orchestra. Herb always does a great job at this. The next NHHO will take place at the ASTA with NSOA National stand-alone convention in 2003. Stay tuned!

If you are not on Kip's CASTA e-mail list, and would like to get the latest ASTA WITH NSOA news, just e-mail her, and you are there -- she's at [KipMason89@aol.com](mailto:KipMason89@aol.com).

### **CASTA WITH NSOA GENERAL MEETING AND A CALL FOR BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS**

A general meeting of Colorado ASTA WITH NSOA will be held in Greeley at the Western States Honor's Orchestra Festival: A Weekend for Strings. The meeting will be on Saturday from 9:30 - 11:00 in the Main Lobby of the Union Colony Civic Center which is located at 701 10th Avenue. This general meeting is open to all CASTA WITH NSOA members.

The Colorado ASTA WITH NSOA seeks nominations for new board members for May 2001 - May 2003 term. According to ASTA national guidelines, a nominating committee will be appointed at the general meeting of CASTA WITH NSOA at the Weekend for Strings in Greeley. To help new board members, handbooks were

completed that clearly delineate duties and timelines for the completion of those duties, all of which are very manageable. The election process will include a ballot in the Winter edition of String Vibrations and election results will be published in the Spring newsletter. If you are interested in being nominated for one of the positions, please contact Kip Mason or a board member to let them know of your interest in being nominated.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - MATT SPIEKER**

By Beth Wells - Northern Colorado Board Member

One of the newest members of the orchestra teaching staff in the Poudre School District (Fort Collins) is Matt Spieker. Matt, a violinist, is the orchestra director at Fort Collins High School and Leshar Junior High.

A 1985 Colorado graduate from Evergreen High School, Matt received his Bachelors of Music Education degree from the University of Northern Colorado in 1990 and his Masters at Converse College in South Carolina. Matt did his student teaching with Steve McNeal at the schools where he currently teaches.

Matt's teaching experience began in the fall of 1991 in Duncan, South Carolina when he started a new orchestra program with 25 students. When he was hired in 1998 to teach in Fort Collins, he left the South Carolina district with over 200 string students ranging from 5th grade to 12th grade and three directors in three schools.

This past summer Matt had the opportunity to guest conduct at an international orchestra camp in Luchow, Germany. This was an incredible time for Matt and his family. They did some sight seeing, and also started some relationships with students and other directors. Now Matt receives emails from Germany, Netherlands, and elsewhere.

The Fort Collins High School orchestra has 83 members. Nearly 60 of those students are string players! This is a special year for the orchestra as Matt has arranged for them to participate in an exchange program with a German youth orchestra. They will travel to Germany during spring break and stay with German families for the majority of their time. The students will go through a small string camp-like experience as well as perform two concerts; one in Leuchow, Germany and one in Luneburg, Germany. The Luneburg part of the trip will involve some sightseeing as well. This is a special place because Bach spent 6 months in Luneburg where he wrote his "Tocatta and Fugue in g minor" at St. Michael's church. The church has the same organ used by Bach to write the

Tocatta. The last part of the trip will be spent touring in Salzburg, Austria where the students will tour the Mozart Museum and one of the castles.

The string students in Fort Collins are fortunate to have a very caring and creative teacher and director for their orchestral training. Thanks, Matt for all you do to promote string playing in the schools!

## **UPDATE: CASTA STRING CAMP**

By Amber Campbell Martin

If you don't know about the CASTA Camp for middle school string students, YOU SHOULD. What a fantastic experience it is! This year it was held in Ranglely Colorado at the community college, and I had several students attend who are still talking about how fun it was. But what I have noticed most is how much better they are doing in class. Because of their involvement with the camp, I see in my students increased confidence, an interest in private lessons, and many have become leaders in my orchestras. We had a wonderful staff this year. Dr. Katherine Mason was our guest conductor, who has been asked to come back next year. Carlos Elias and Ellen Currier are our violin teachers, and I teach viola. Cameron Law is the cello teacher, and Troy Raper is the bass teacher. Lori Law is the camp nurse and a violin player. Andrea Elias did a fantastic job accompanying all of us at our faculty recital. We also had several college string students who were camp councillors and valuable assets to the camp. Every year we also take a student as a teacher intern who spends 4 days with one of the staff in preparation to teach one of the enrichment classes the last day of camp. This is a great opportunity for a future teacher to see what is in store for them for they return to the camp as a staff member the following year. The camp gets better and bigger each year, and it truly is designed for middle school students who have played for one year up to 9th grade. Look for an further information and an application in a future *String Vibrations* newsletter! If you have any questions, please contact me at [mamber@mesa.k12.co.us](mailto:mamber@mesa.k12.co.us)

## **ASTA WITH NSOA PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES STRING PROJECT GRANTS**

Please pass the word to your local colleges, universities and conservatories about the next round of String Project grants to help solve the string teacher shortage in this country. Applications to receive funding to start a String Project will be due by December 11,2000. Ten more sites will be chosen to receive \$10,000 per year for assistantships for

undergraduate music education students. Information and Application Packets can be obtained by emailing [ASTA@Mozart.sc.edu](mailto:ASTA@Mozart.sc.edu), or calling 803-777-5412. Also, please check out the following new items on our web page for more information about our recent \$424,202 FIPSE grant and details on the next National String Project Consortium grant proposal: [http://astaweb.com/Consortium\\_PressRelease.html](http://astaweb.com/Consortium_PressRelease.html)  
[http://astaweb.com/Consortium\\_Details.html](http://astaweb.com/Consortium_Details.html)

## **ASTA WITH NSOA ANNOUNCES THE STATE CHAPTER-GET-A-MEMBER CAMPAIGN**

The American String Teachers Association with National School Orchestra Association announces the Chapter-Get-A-Member Campaign. The National Office of ASTA WITH NSOA is sponsoring this campaign to help state chapters grow their membership and expand their member activities.

The National Office is offering cash prizes to chapters who recruit the most members during the duration of the campaign, from July 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001. State chapters are divided into three categories, based on chapter member size, with each division competing for a first prize of \$450 and second prize of \$200. State chapter prize winners are to use the prize money to fund professional development events or projects that will benefit the state chapter as a whole, such as funding workshops, master classes or publishing the state chapter newsletter.

Increasing the ASTA WITH NSOA membership base is beneficial for both state chapters and the national organization. As membership grows, state chapters can become more active, with increased participation, diversity, and perspective. More members also increase the amount of the quarterly rebate check to state chapters. The national organization benefits from increased member participation because it is able to develop and fund new member benefits and services such as the advocacy brochure, "Why Strings?," upgrade the web site, produce new publications, and offer more national programs and conferences.

In order to participate in the "CBM" Campaign, state chapters must send new member applications to the National Office on an official CGM membership application. If an official CGM application is unavailable, a regular ASTA WITH NSOA membership application marked with CGM on the bottom will be acceptable.

Colorado has been noticed as a leading state chapter of ASTA WITH NSOA, and we can be proud of our state events. Every member finding at least one new

member to join ASTA WITH NSOA can only further serve the goals of our state chapter. Please! Every member talk to others about the benefits of joining ASTA WITH NSOA. An official "CGM" form is included in this newsletter.

## **CMEA CLINIC CONFERENCE PROMISES TO BE OUTSTANDING**

Plans for this year's CMEA Clinic/Conference are almost final and it promises to be an outstanding event. Our ASTA WITH NSOA Guest Clinician is Michael Allen of Florida State University who will be, among other things, presenting the new Essential Elements Book 4. In addition, many of our regional colleagues will be sharing their expertise with us, including: Jim Przygocki (University of Wyoming), Don Robertson (Robertson's Violin Shop), Carlos Elias (Mesa State College), and a special session for University students - a panel of string teachers speaking on the state of the profession. All this and six orchestra performances!

The Clinic/Conference ends with two fantastic opportunities - Tim Lautzenhauser will be speaking first to instrumental teachers, then he will address the entire CMEA membership on Saturday! What an opportunity to hear this amazing speaker and get revved up for the last half of school.

**REMEMBER:** Our clinic/conference is growing. The events start first thing on Thursday morning, and run through Saturday afternoon. Try to plan to attend the entire conference this year! It will be well worth your time and investment!

The dates are January 25-27, 2001 at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. More information will be forthcoming in the Winter *String Vibrations* newsletter.