

SPRING 2020



NEW HORIZONS NEWS

A publication of the New Horizons International Music Association, Inc.

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WORKING FROM HOME IN WEST KELOWNA, BC

Finding the Silver Lining

By Nikki Attwell, Editor, New Horizons News

What a difference a few days make! And at this point, it would be fair to say what a difference an hour makes. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing us all to cope with an unprecedented reality, the consequences of which, in the short and long term, are hard to even imagine and may be devastating.

About two months ago, when I sent out the notice to the NHIMA membership that the Spring 2020 issue of the newsletter was upcoming and asking for submissions, the pandemic hadn't really impacted us directly in North America. For the most part, life was continuing on as it usually did.

And those submissions came in — stories and photos, cheery reports of concerts last summer, fall and Christmas, new start ups, notices of scheduled events for this spring.

And then everything changed.

So while it is certainly not my intention to appear tone deaf to our current reality by presenting a newsletter full of items that seem completely incongruous to our collective situation, neither can we ignore all the good things that happened and the positive news that are reported here. I hope you will read this newsletter through that lens.

To help us find the silver lining in this bad situation, I'd like to share some of the innovative, thoughtful actions that NHIMA members are devising to stay connected and helpful to friends in this era of social distance. Roy Ernst has been forwarding me these heartwarming reports as he receives them. Maybe they'll provide some inspiration for you and your ensembles.



Stay safe and stay healthy, and keep on making music!

Susan Miller, Band Committee Coordinator for the Eastman-Rochester New Horizons Music Program in Rochester, NY, reports that many NH "chefs" have signed up to cook and deliver a meal to any NH member requesting one. She also suggests creating online book circles. "With libraries closed this might necessitate paying for online books on Kindle or Nook if a book is unavailable on Overdrive from the library. Still, we could propose a variety of titles; readers could choose a title that appeals to them, read, and participate with other readers of that book in an email discussion chain."

Other projects underway in Rochester include an Art Therapy/NH Stories Project spearheaded by Laura Teoli, trumpet in Concert Band and an Art Therapy instructor at Nazareth College. Her wonderful idea sees NH members signing up to be interviewed by phone or online by an art therapy student on two topics: a) Their stories about Rochester through the years, b) How has creativity influenced their life? The students will illustrate the stories, which will be compiled into a book.

See SILVER LINING continued on page 3

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Birth Announcements

ASHEVILLE NEW HORIZONS BAND, NC

Submitted by Bonnie Gordon

We are proud to announce the birth of the Asheville New Horizons Band.

Asheville is a medium sized city in the mountains of western North Carolina with an active, culturally diverse music scene. This area is a favorite destination for vacationers and retirees with wonderful community support for all types of music. The Asheville NHB is the seventh NH organization in the state.

Conductor Len Allman, a retired band teacher, came from Catawba Valley NHB in Hickory. Bonnie Gordon, a retired professor, assumed the managerial duties and contacted Len about forming a new entry level band for adults.

After working through some start-up challenges, we began rehearsals in September 2019. We're off and running! Today we have 18 regulars and meet weekly at a local church.

At Christmas we played our first concert at the Family YMCA. A repeat performance was presented at a local retirement community. Our hosts provided a delicious potluck, the kids danced to "Frosty" and the adults sang "Rudolph" at full voice. We all had a wonderful time!

For May, we are preparing a Concert in the Park with patriotic music and folk tunes. Imagine a Norman Rockwell scene of the village band under the gazebo. True Americana. Won't you play along?

Currently our rehearsals are on a COVID-19 hiatus but we will resume our regular schedule in September. You can contact us at AshevilleNHB@yahoo.com.

THE MUSIC DEN NH ENSEMBLE, RANDOLPH, NJ

Submitted by Jo Ann Bartschat

Our chapter of New Horizons started in February of 2019. We are still in the forming stages but are having a great time learning and growing. We started with just five members, but are now a 10-member ensemble. We will hopefully be adding a few new players in April. Our group is comprised of members that have never played before or have started a secondary instrument. We performed our first concert on The Music Den's Holiday recital. We are working on music for our next performance this Spring.



SILVER LINING continued from page 1

Rochester trumpet mentor Tierney McLean has launched an impressive project called “Daily Duets with Tierney.” Every day she posts two videos to YouTube, one in which she plays the bottom line of a duet, and the other playing the top. Band members access the sheet music through Rochester’s website, and play along with the videos to substitute ensemble playing.

Tierney is also developing an on-line music theory teaser tool — [CLICK HERE](#) to check one out, but she warns that “homework may be required!” — and a Pen Pal Plan to pair up artists/musicians/freelancers to correspond with NH members during this time of social distancing. Those same young people are happy to write notes to seniors in various retirement communities for whom visitors are restricted right now.

NHIMA board member Edie Shillitoe has formed “Quarantine Quartets” amongst her members, setting them up in quartets and

trios by ability. Individual players are working on the music on their own now and can look forward to a chamber music event once the dust settles and rehearsals resume. Since face-to-face meetings are prohibited, Edie can offer assistance through Skype or FaceTime when needed.

Another board member, Russ Grazier, reports that he has had two “virtual” rehearsals this week using Zoom. “Though the lag time doesn’t allow us to all play together successfully (we tried!), everyone was super appreciative of the ability to gather online and spend some much needed time together.”

And finally, NHIMA president Irene Cohen and NHIMA communication board member Michael Plaut have been distributing daily iContacts. Members of NHIMA provide suggestions for music related topics to be shared during these trying times. “NHIMA is very interested in spreading the news about good ideas.”

NHIMA
New Horizons International Music Association
Music. For Life.

NEW HORIZONS MUSIC

Fun Activities for New Horizons Members

NHIMA is suggesting some fun activities during these trying times. We are welcoming ideas that can be shared with your New Horizons colleagues in the US, Canada and the rest of the world. Let us stay connected musically - NHIMA will assist and support your ideas. If you have questions or ideas, please send them to Irene Cohen, President of NHIMA.

- Go to <http://newhorizonsmusic.org>
- Click on: Contact Us
- Click on Ask the President.

This is a great example of staying connected musically:
Tierney McLean is the trumpet mentor for the New Horizons Rochester, NY Concert Band and Symphonic Band and she directs the New Horizons Antique Brass Ensemble in Rochester. She has made a video clip with some basic music theory about major scales. It is 13 minutes long and well worth watching. At the end she suggests to email her- which was just meant for her Rochester groups. So, we have not included her email address in this iContact.

Please, watch:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xtTSivrNr8>

Thank you and stay connected.
Irene Cohen President NHIMA

This communication is sent to members of New Horizons International Music Association (NHIMA). The information is potentially of interest to all participants in New Horizons Groups, so we encourage you to forward this to other members of your band or orchestra.
NHIMA Communications Committee

IMPORTANT NOTICE

[CLICK HERE](#) for the latest updates on coming events

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic NHIMA is postponing several planned camps and considering postponing others. We hope our members will stay healthy and will contribute to good public health by following the recommendations of national, regional, and local governments in all of the countries where we are represented.

If you have questions about an individual camp, please get in touch with the organizers.

- ▶ The South Puget Sound New Horizons Band Camp has been postponed until a future year.
- ▶ The Ireland Tour has been postponed until 2021. Those already registered will have their registration and fees rolled over to 2021.

NHIMA currently plans that both the Mt. Tremblant camp and the Lakeside Chautauqua camp will take place as scheduled, in October and August respectively. We may need to change these plans, however, so we have postponed the registration dates in hopes of having better information later. This postponement will allow us to adjust camp plans as needed with minimal disruption.

AUGUST 24–25, 2020 | Lakeside Chautauqua Band Camp, Lakeside Chautauqua, Ohio
Registration will open at noon EDT on May 15, 2020.

OCTOBER 19–23, 2020 | Mt Tremblant Band & Orchestra Camp, Mt Tremblat, Quebec
Registration will open at noon EDT on June 22, 2020

FROM CASCADE HORIZON BAND, BEND, OR – TO COSTA RICA

Hot Jazz

By Helen L. Keefe

The Papagayo is on the prowl. This Costa Rican wind reminds me of growing up in Southern California with the “East Wind,” or the Santa Anas, exquisitely, accurately nailed by detective writer Raymond Chandler:

“There was a desert wind blowing that night. It was one of those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch.”



There is Papagayo this day, and all last night, carrying the village’s flotsam and jetsam down the dirt road. A bedraggled palm frond, a coffee-colored coconut husk, a few banana leaves, some sugar cane ash, a harried chicken or two.

My itchy skin tells me it’s time to practice.

I drag out the old trumpet. A decade ago I brought it here during our yearly trip so I can keep up with my Cascade Horizon band mates in Central Oregon. It was my younger brother George’s trumpet, and shows the scars of traveling around with a middle schooler. The bell is crimped and dented, the lacquer pockmarked, the mouthpiece surprisingly usable despite its scraggly appearance.



The case, to match the trumpet, is that standard student case — a burlap-looking surface that has been worn through at every edge. Hardware is rusted to a drab dusty gold. The latches still latch, though their springs are shot.

Inside the case, the red velveteen is ratty, the trumpet shape imprinted, the form somewhat crumpled, but it still smells the way the band room did when an older brother took his 10-year-old sister to high school band practice with him — and I was hooked.

I thought George acquired the horn new, until I went down the rabbit hole of online research. It took a while to make out the legend on the bell:

*Ambassador – Made by – F.E. OLDS & SON. –
Los Angeles – Calif*

George started band in 1960, yet Olds moved its factory to Fullerton in the mid 1950s. If it were new, should it have been labeled “Fullerton”? Any input from trumpet gurus out there is appreciated. I can only agree with these comments on trumpetherald.com, a forum for us horn aficionados, describing the Olds Ambassador:

“This is one of the easiest playing, most responsive horns I have ever played.”

“The Ambassador was the Sherman tank of trumpets.”

The fancy print on the bell looks like it was pinpricked onto the metal and reading is made more difficult by the age and condition. So it is a perfect candidate for New Horizon music — a well worn 50-plus, showing its age but quite eager to play.

See HOT JAZZ continued on page 5

HOT JAZZ continued from page 4

And oh, does it play.

Every year when I open the case and blow that first note, I am surprised by the mellow tone it produces for me. Perhaps it is the horn. Perhaps it is the hot and humid weather.

Perhaps I am my truest trumpet self here. I've always been a timid player but Costa Rica does not let me be. My wife calls it a very acoustically live place.

Building materials for this tropical climate are as light as the clothing, so sound travels and music seeps and dances from every open door and window. There is a "national beat" that is impossible to put into words, but which every one of you percussionists would be itching to play within minutes.

Small businesses come and go like the tide in this gritty little tourist town. One year a tiny building next to the grocery store mysteriously became the "Costa Rican School of Music." I took the old horn down and stood on the gravel driveway for a photo.

From grade school through high school I played trom-

I recall the few times I played a piece, or a run, or even one note, as perfectly as I am able, and I feel again how that felt. I sit with my mentors, present and past and am grateful. Our instruments are so much more than the materials from which they are made. We hold them and play them. They hold us and carry us along on roads we couldn't imagine in sixth grade.

bone. But I was intrigued by George's trumpet, which sat around tempting me. As George transitioned from band to sports, I snagged the horn and learned the basic old B-flat scale from his lesson books.

I put my trombone away after high school, dragging it out a few times for pep bands at schools where I taught. When I turned 50, I knew I wanted to play more. But I wanted something lighter to lug around than that trombone.

About that time, my aunt gave me her student trumpet — a Conn Symphony 26B from around 1927. I learned



enough more to play a few hymns at church and decided to get serious, take a few lessons, and join the community band. That led to a New Horizons group, and that led to a jazz band. When we moved to a different state, I looked up the local New Horizons Band, and found some trumpet mentors along the way. I go to jazz camp every year, and dream that my sound will be as hot as that Costa Rican horn.

Just as there is muscle memory in our fingers when we play, there is music memory in our heart as well. When I play I hear everyone who played my horn before me. I recall my band mates from grade school and high school.

I remember my band teacher, and my parents who must have paid for our horns through many installments while raising seven kids. I see and listen to my aunt as a 12-year-old marching and joking with her friends.

I recall the few times I played a piece, or a run, or even one note, as perfectly as I am able, and I feel again how that felt. I sit with my mentors, present and past and am grateful. Our instruments are so much more than the materials from which they are made. We hold them and play them. They hold us and carry us along on roads we couldn't imagine in sixth grade.

It's a mighty wind that blows through town, and a beautiful one that flows through us.

FIDDLE FOLKS OF OAK HAMMOCK, GAINESVILLE, FL

A Unique Chamber Group Spin-off

Submitted by Michael Plaut

Probably most of us who play in New Horizons groups have seen smaller groups break off to play solos, duets, or pieces for a small wind or string ensemble. Our Oak Hammock Chamber Players in Gainesville have often experienced that as well, even though our total membership is only about 20. Recently, however, we experienced a spin-off of a very different kind.

Normally, our chamber players focus on classical music by a variety of composers. A couple of years ago, however, a violinist expressed interest in joining the group. She played well by ear but had never learned to read music. Her excellent demonstration of fiddle music was captivating, and spawned a smaller group that went off in a very different direction. A few of our chamber players began playing traditional fiddle music at the home of one of our members.

They purchased the *Fiddle Fake Book* by David Brody (Oak Publications, 1983), which contains over 300 fiddle tunes from Scotland, Canada, New England and other locations. A couple of the members play different instruments in the fiddle group than they do in the chamber group. Two of our flutists play autoharp and accordion. Other instruments currently include violin, viola, double bass, guitar, and dulcimer. They tend to play in one or two keys, which makes it easier for those who cannot read music to memorize the pieces after hearing them a few times.

The group now numbers eight, includes two who are not members of the chamber group itself, and they are hoping that more people will join in the fun. They have now graduated to a larger space, and they recently had their third jam in a community setting.



“you can just show up where fiddlers are and join them. The simplicity and openness appeals to me. We just enjoy playing for the joy of it in that moment.”

What they seem to love most about the group is the spontaneity. As one of them said, “you can just show up where fiddlers are and join them. The simplicity and openness appeals to me. We just enjoy playing for the joy of it in that moment.”

20th Anniversary of New Horizons at Western University in London, ON



On December 1, 2019, Western's New Horizons Band performed a special concert to celebrate 20 years. Special guest conductor was Dr. Roy Ernst, LLD'09, founder of the New Horizons Program.

The concert involved 230 players in six bands. Says Roy, “I took a selfie during the concert to be outrageous and I told the audience, ‘I need to show my kids that I’m trying to keep up.’”

Click on Roy's image at left to see the entire album of photos from the event.

© Don Wright Faculty of Music

NEW HORIZONS BANDS OF NORTHERN NEW YORK

A Banner Year in Northern New York

Submitted by Carol Kissam

This has undoubtedly been a banner year for The New Horizons Bands of Northern New York, Inc. (NHBNNY)! Celebrating its ten years in existence, the NHBNNY hosted a Fare and Share (musical presentations and pot luck) in the fall with none other than Roy Ernst and his wife Pat Dugan in attendance; had its swing band featured in a public radio news show; welcomed seven new members; performed with the Crane School of Music Symphonic Band; saw its Founding Director Ron Berry conduct the Crane Symphonic Band, and celebrated Ron as he retires from his post this spring.

On September 20, 2019, band members welcomed a visit from the person who founded New Horizons, Dr. Roy Ernst. Not only did Ernst speak to the entire concert band and swing band during our regular Friday rehearsals, but he attended a fete at Ron Berry's home that very afternoon. Band members played in small groups and individually, and we got to hear Roy play three sambas on his flute before enjoying assorted and delicious foods prepared by band members. Roy spent the evening talking with us and regaling us with stories of his travels and experiences with New Horizons groups all around the US and Canada.

To the delight of our swing band members, on November 15, Doyle Dean, production manager of North Country Public Radio, our NPR affiliate, captured video and interviewed band members and their director Theresa Witmer for a feature story. The video and story aired and shared with the public the learning experiences and excitement New Horizons has offered area seniors for the past ten years. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the video.

Also in November, band members were invited to join SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music students to perform two musical selections alongside the Crane Symphonic Band directed by Dr. Brian Doyle. Those who were able to do so remarked about what a thrill it was to be part of the concert and to share such a great experience side-by-side with the Crane students. Dr. Doyle also asked Ron Berry to conduct one of the band's pieces. As Ron didn't know how to conduct when he started the NHBNNY group and learned 'on the job' (assisted by lessons funded by NHBNNY) to keep us going, the privilege of being able to conduct this prestigious wind ensemble was not lost on band members, and certainly not on Ron. He was dressed



to the nines for the concert and did a terrific job of conducting. His excitement was palpable.

Clearly, for all of us who have gained from the experience Ron Berry has provided for us, his announcement about his plans to retire from the music directorship in April came as a shock. Ron said he intends to continue playing with the group and will be called upon occasionally to conduct, but he is ready to step back and let others take on the leadership.

At a special recognition event held in February by the band, Ron was serenaded by band members with reworded lines from the ABBA song, "Thank You for the Music" and was presented with a custom-made music-themed quilt created by Jill Josephs, one of our charter members. And indeed, we all thank Ron for the music he has given each of us to enhance our lives, to forge new friendships, to support one another during tough and exciting times, and to share the joy of learning, practicing, rehearsing and performing.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Don't Fret About Aging: Benefits of Music for the Aging Brain

Kathleen Hupfeld, B.S. & Rachael Seidler, PhD

Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears—it is a remedy, a tonic, orange juice for the ear. But for many of my neurological patients, music is even more—it can provide access, even when no medication can, to movement, to speech, to life.” OLIVER SACKS, MD (MUSICOPHILIA)

In his book, *Musicophilia*, world-renowned neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks describes the power of music for his patients. He tells of a man whose memory spans only seven seconds for everything except music. He recounts Parkinson's patients who can barely move, except in response to music. He recalls stroke survivors who cannot speak but retain the ability to sing. While these stories focus on those with neurological problems, one might also ask: does music benefit the healthy brain? Is playing music “good” for healthy older people? In this article, we examine these questions from the perspective of neuroscience. We discuss the benefits of music for maintaining movement and thinking abilities in older age. We also talk about brain imaging studies that illustrate how music can affect brain structure and function. This review may convince you that music is good not only for the soul, but also for the mind.

MUSIC AS A COMPLEX MULTISENSORY TASK Even a simple activity like humming along to your favorite song requires a complicated cascade of brain processes (see Figure 1). When you hear a song, these sounds are converted into neural impulses by your inner ear. This information travels through several brainstem pit stops and then upwards to the auditory cortex in your brain, which helps to decode and represent sounds. This information then interacts with other parts of your brain. Your frontal cortex can help to decide if you have heard this song before. Your orbitofrontal cortex can determine if you have an emotional connection with this song. Your motor cortex will assist with planning and producing movements in response to the

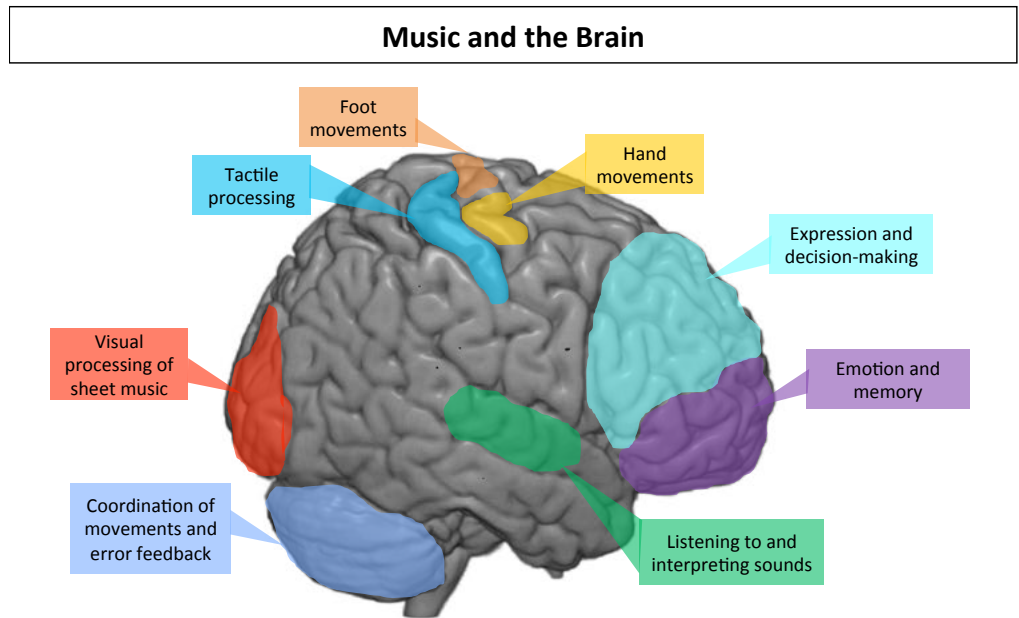


Figure 1. Primary brain regions involved in processing and playing music.

music, like tapping your foot. If you pick up an instrument and start to play along, sensory mechanisms will help you to monitor your performance in real-time. Reading sheet music adds in yet another level of complexity; your brain works overtime to convert abstract symbols into complex patterns of notes at a remarkable speed. Altogether, listening to or playing music can be quite a workout for many different parts of your brain.

HOW COULD MUSIC AFFECT MY BRAIN IN OLDER AGE? Learning to play a new instrument, practicing a difficult song, or working as a group to master a new piece are challenging feats. The brain thrives on challenge. This is particularly true in older age. Difficult activities and new experiences can induce *neuroplasticity*. This is the ability of our brains to change throughout life—to reorganize pathways and form new connections. Plasticity can occur because of injuries (e.g., a stroke), or because of exposure to enriching environments. Playing music can induce neuroplasticity. It can strengthen existing connections within the brain and form new connections,¹ even in older age.²

See *BENEFITS OF MUSIC* continued on page 9



Far left and middle: Rachael Seidler testing out a current study in the lab that measures brain activity during tennis play.

Right: Kathleen Hupfeld carries out a brain stimulation (“transcranial magnetic stimulation”) on another graduate student

BENEFITS OF MUSIC continued from page 8

Musical training can help you to develop a larger cognitive reserve. Cognitive reserve is the idea that, if you have more brain resources, your brain will be more resistant to declines. The more functioning brain cells and brain connections you have, the longer your brain will be able to put up a good fight against conditions like Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Regular physical exercise helps you to combat the effects of aging on your muscle mass, bones, and joints. In a similar way, challenging your brain with activities like music, art, puzzles, and reading can increase your cognitive reserve. This will give you a better starting point if you should face memory declines or other brain diseases.

BENEFITS OF MUSIC FOR BEHAVIOR AND THE BRAIN Here we describe some of the benefits that playing music regularly can offer toward your abilities and your brain. We particularly focus on how music is beneficial for older individuals.

Benefit #1: Improving and Maintaining Motor Coordination

First off, practicing an instrument will make you better at that instrument. If you work at learning a new song, you will get better at playing that song. However, beyond this, there is evidence that playing music transfers to other skills. Playing music regularly can slow down age-related declines in motor coordination. One study tested 135 individuals age 60–80 years old who had less than three years of previous musical training.³ These individuals completed 16 weeks of either piano lessons, percussion lessons, or guided listening to music.³ Each group did 45 minutes of group classes plus three hours of independent practice per week.³ The study reported that—in comparison to folks who only listened to music—those in the piano and percussion groups improved their bimanual coordination (i.e., how well the two hands can work together to complete certain movements).³ Overall, findings like these suggest that practicing an instrument can improve not only your

ability to play that instrument, but can also help your hand coordination more generally, which could perhaps transfer to tasks like shoe tying, buttoning a shirt, and so on.

Benefit #2: Improving and Maintaining Cognitive Function

Music is thought to benefit a variety of cognitive abilities, such as your thinking, memory, and problem solving skills. Musical training can improve abilities directly related to music, such as improving how efficiently your brain processes sounds. Although aging can cause slowing of neural responses to speech, one study found that the brainstems of 45–65 year-old lifelong musicians responded to speech sounds just as well as the brainstems of 18–32 year-olds.⁴ This was not the case for 45–65 year-old non-musicians.⁴ Similarly, another study of 18–91 year-olds found that—despite normal hearing declines with older age—lifelong musicians performed better than age-matched non-musicians on certain measures (e.g., detecting a mistuned harmonic). Lifelong musicians also showed slower age-related declines in other auditory tasks (e.g., being able to interpret speech among background noise).⁵

Music may also improve cognitive skills that are not directly related to processing sounds. One study tested 70 adults age 60–83 who had at least ten years of musical experience.⁶ Compared to non-musicians, these individuals performed better on a variety of cognitive tasks, including memory, movement speed, movement sequences, and cognitive flexibility.^{6,7} This suggests that musical training can help your thinking skills beyond those specifically needed for playing music.

Regular participation in music programs may even reduce your risk of age-related brain diseases. One study tracked participation in leisure activities for 469 individuals age 75+ over five years.⁸ Over this time period, 124 participants developed dementia.⁸ However, those who regularly played a musical instrument, danced, read, or

See BENEFITS OF MUSIC continued on page 10

BENEFITS OF MUSIC continued from page 9

played board games were less likely to develop dementia than those who did not engage in these types of challenging free time activities.⁸

Together, these studies suggest that keeping your brain active—such as with playing an instrument—may improve a variety of cognitive abilities and may make you better prepared to fight off brain diseases such as dementia.

Benefit #3: Improving Brain Structure

There is also evidence supporting that music practice changes your brain's structure and function. These are changes that can only be seen with technology like magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Past studies have found differences in the size of brain structures in professional musicians compared to non-musicians. These include a larger anterior corpus callosum (i.e., the brain pathway that connects the left and right halves of the brain).⁹ This suggests that professional musicians may have superior communication between the two halves of the brain.⁹ This could, for instance, help one more effectively coordinate their left and right hands when playing a melody and harmony on the piano.⁹

Other brain differences are specific to the movements needed to play an instrument. One study found that wind players have greater cortical thickness (i.e., more dense brain tissue) for brain regions related to controlling lip movements.¹⁰ Another study found that string instrument players had bigger brain representations for the left hand and left fingers.¹¹ That is, they had more brain devoted to controlling the hand and fingers that are needed to perform the most precise movements on string instruments.¹¹

Importantly, this structural brain plasticity is not limited to professional musicians who may have started playing music at a very young age. One study found increases in brain volumes in areas that control finger movements among older adults who started to play the violin or who increased their instrument practice later in life.¹²

Finally, another study found that 17–39 year-old musicians have “younger-looking” brains than non-musicians who are the same chronological age.¹³ This effect was the largest when comparing amateur musicians (i.e., those who regularly played an instrument but had a profession separate from music) to non-musicians.¹³ This suggests that moderate engagement with music may be the most beneficial for the brain, as opposed to a potentially stressful career as a professional musician.¹³

Taken together, we can conclude that there are nota-

ble differences in brain structure between folks who play music and those who do not. These differences are often in areas related to playing instruments, like those responsible for moving the hands, fingers, and mouth, as well as the pathways responsible for the communication between the two sides of the brain. These differences appear to be a direct result of learning and practicing an instrument and likely help you to play your instrument better. It is possible for these brain changes to take place not only in young musicians, but even in those who do not start playing an instrument until they are older. Finally, music playing seems to be overall beneficial for keeping your brain structure more “youth-like.”

Benefit #4: Improving Brain Function

In addition to structural differences in the brains of musicians, a growing body of evidence has also found differences in brain function (i.e., how the brain *works*). Compared to non-musicians, one study found that professional pianists produce *less* brain activity during tasks that required precisely moving both of their hands at the same time.¹⁴ That is, we think that it takes musician brains “less work” to do the same activity as someone else.¹⁴

Other research has found increased connectivity between motor and sensory parts of the brain in musicians compared to non-musicians.¹⁵ This suggests that these parts of the brain may communicate more efficiently for musicians and might be a result of long-term musical training.¹⁵

Studies have also found differences in how the brain responds to sounds when comparing both professional and amateur musicians to non-musicians.¹⁶ This suggests that even moderate amounts of musical training can induce functional plasticity in the brain.¹⁶

The functional MRI technique used in these studies is a newer technology. Thus, we expect that more future research studies will continue exploring these questions regarding how musical training affects brain function. Right now, based on current work, we can say that musical training may improve efficiency and communication within the parts of the brain related to playing music.

SHOULD MY GRANDCHILDREN LEARN AN INSTRUMENT?

Absolutely! Increasing evidence is suggesting that lifelong engagement in music is beneficial for the brain, as well as for many skills. For instance, compared to a singing control group, six year-old children who received 15 months

See BENEFITS OF MUSIC continued on page 11

BENEFITS OF MUSIC continued from page 10

of instrument training showed increased volume (i.e., more brain) in their motor cortex, auditory cortex, and corpus callosum.¹⁷ Those kids who saw greater brain changes had greater improvements in their motor and auditory skills, suggesting that these brain changes were directly related to kids' performance.¹⁷ There is also evidence that early musical training may improve other cognitive abilities for kids, such as vocabulary knowledge,¹⁸ executive function,¹⁸ reading,¹⁹ and linguistic pitch processing.¹⁹

Such benefits may extend throughout the lifetime. One study compared folks age 55–76 with no past musical training to those who received between four and 14 years of musical training as a child, but then did not touch an instrument for more than 40 years.²⁰ Those with childhood music exposure had more efficient neural auditory function compared to those without any previous musical training.²⁰

Thus, early engagement in music may be beneficial for development and potentially across the lifespan. If possible, encourage the young people in your life to learn an instrument!

WHAT IF I ONLY RECENTLY STARTED PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT?

That's okay! Starting a new instrument as an older adult seems to also be beneficial. One study found that six months of intensive piano lessons for 60–85 year olds resulted in better cognitive function.⁷ Given that new learning in older age can enhance cognitive reserve, we think it is particularly good to keep challenging yourself with new instruments, new music, and so on.

TAKE-AWAY MESSAGES

Regularly engaging with music across the entire lifespan appears to have numerous benefits for abilities that range beyond your direct musical talents, as well as for brain structure and function. Playing an instrument can improve motor coordination and cognitive functions. Playing music results in specific changes to brain structure and function. While it is not that music simply makes a person's brain "bigger" and therefore "better," musical training appears to induce neuroplastic changes in important parts of the brain, like those that support hearing and motor functions. Just as exercise helps to work out your muscles, music is an important way that you can work out your brain. New experiences and new learning throughout your entire life and especially in older age can help to increase your cognitive reserve. This can help to stave off disease like Alzheimer's and enhance your health span—in addition to being fun! Play on!

About the Authors

Kathleen Hupfeld (khupfeld@ufl.edu) is a doctoral student at the University of Florida. Her dissertation work examines how brain changes with older age relate to motor abilities like walking and balance. Dr. Rachael Seidler (rachaelseidler@ufl.edu) is a professor at the University of Florida. Over the last two decades, Dr. Seidler's research has investigated how factors like spaceflight, older age, and neurologic disease alter one's brain and their ability to control their movements.



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NEW HORIZONS BAND DUPAGE, NAPERVILLE, IL

Christmas Highlights from the NHB DuPage

Submitted Betty Jensen – Publicity

The members of New Horizons Band DuPage thoroughly enjoyed their 2019 sessions under the direction of Maryann Flock, celebrating the end of the season with several memorable concerts:

- ▶ On December 8 the band had the pleasure of performing holiday favorites at Bethany Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL. The concert was well attended and the concert goers enjoyed festive music along with refreshments and holiday goodies prepared by the band members.
- ▶ On December 9, the band was invited to perform for the residents of Oak Trace Senior Living in Downers Grove, IL. The residents were invited to join in several sing-alongs and were very enthusiastic about the selection of music. The December performance is one of many that the band has performed at this venue.
- ▶ On December 16, the band was welcomed back to the Macy's Center Court area at Fox Valley Mall in Aurora, IL. The shoppers were entertained with holiday music and the chance to relax from the woes of shopping while listening to classic favorites. This venue is also an "annual" event for the band.



- ▶ The band had the pleasure of having two guest performers for their Christmas concerts: Quinn Kelly (son of our director, Maryann Flock), percussion and Charles Detske, guitar. Both "youngsters" are very talented and performed exceptionally well.

NHB DuPage still offers beginner (Me Too) and intermediate (NHB Too) classes. Numbers are growing in these Park District classes. Many individuals participate in multiple groups. A good time is had by all—whether it be a parade, concert, or merely meeting each other weekly for the pleasure, challenge and camaraderie of making music together. As the band says: "It's Never Too Late to Toot Your Own Horn".

The power of music, My Way

Dave Scott, a horn player with the F/M Golden Notes New Horizons Band in Moorhead, MN/Fargo, ND, recently read the following article in a local media outlet. He shares it with all NHIMA members, with the following encouragement:

"A thought, methinks, to keep in mind when we are playing at care centers and other non-traditional venues. Our music, indeed, is often therapeutic, whether or not we are able to note or measure the impact."

The Week (Vol. 20, Issue 962, February 14, 2020). week.com

"An 83-year old Scottish woman with dementia has become an unlikely pop star after recording a spot-on rendition of Frank Sinatra's 'My Way.' Margaraet Mackie struggles to remember names, but during a Christmas party at her Edinburgh care home, she stunned staff and fellow residents by performing a word- and note-perfect duet of the Ol' Blue Eyes classic with caregiver Jamie Lee Morley. After a video of the performance went viral online, Morley, 31, arranged some studio time for the pair. Their single reached No. 4 on the U.K. chart, with all proceeds going to two dementia charities. 'Mackie comes alive when she sings,' said Morley. 'It is the power of music.'"



▲ Click on the image to watch the video.

NEW HORIZONS MUSIC OF WESTCHESTER, WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY

New Horizons Music is Born in Westchester County

Submitted by Marc Seldin, Director of Band/Founder – New Horizons Music of Westchester



On January 2, 2020, The Mount Pleasant Community Bands organization of Westchester County, New York (sponsored by the Town of Mount Pleasant–Recreation & Parks Department), officially transitioned into a New Horizons Music organization. The band organization already consists of the Mount Pleasant Community Band, a Jazz Band, and Beginner Band class. Now known as New Horizons Music of Westchester, the organization is the official chapter for Westchester County, New York. Its home base for rehearsals is in Valhalla, NY (within Westchester County and Town of Mount Pleasant, NY) where they remain proudly sponsored by the Town of Mount Pleasant (Recreation & Parks Department).

The Mount Pleasant Community Band (Intermediate-Advanced skill level) is directed by Marc Seldin and consists of 20+ members of all ages and skill levels. The band is no stranger to Westchester County and was previously the longtime Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department Concert/Marching Band from 1935 until late 2017 when the band changed sponsors.

Becoming the Westchester chapter for New Horizons Music was a very natural transition for the (previously known as) Mount Pleasant Community Bands organization. In 2019, The Mount Pleasant Community Band soon developed a spinoff Jazz Band, which performed in May of 2019 at the Mount Pleasant Community Center for senior citizens at the “Senior Prom” dance. Likewise, a Beginner Band class for woodwinds and brass musicians later began

Mount Pleasant Community Band (of New Horizons Music of Westchester), celebrates the 2nd birthday of Jeremy Seldin during their social break at the February 27, 2020 rehearsal. Jeremy is the Band Mascot and son of Marc Seldin (director) and Beth Seldin (1st flute).

in the fall of 2019. As a result of these developments, it was not long until a seamless and inspired transition occurred for becoming New Horizons Music of Westchester.

New Horizons Music of Westchester performs for town-sponsored events, public concerts at the Mount Pleasant Community Center, nursing homes and much more! Furthermore, the organization enjoys their breaks during rehearsals, which has allowed for increased opportunity to socialize while further developing as a team. The newly revamped band organization looks forward to further expanding its membership and also developing new ensembles as part of the wonderful New Horizons International Music Association for many years to come!

The newly revamped band organization looks forward to... developing new ensembles as part of the wonderful New Horizons International Music Association...

NEW HORIZONS BAND, GRAND FORKS, ND

Second Wind Band Plays for GF Retired Teachers

Submitted by Ginny Bollman

The Second Wind Band (under the umbrella of New Horizons Band) played a concert for the Greater Grand Forks Retired Teachers Association at their February 18, 2020, meeting at the GF Ramada Inn. About 60 GGFRTA members enjoyed watching the mostly retired band members and listening to their variety of tunes from classical

to contemporary. There was a little singing and dancing thrown into the mix. Fun was had by all!

Director Don Craig invited everyone to join the band and make music for life.

Check out our Facebook page—Second Wind Band (New Horizons).



A new commissioned piece for Madison, Wisconsin NHB

Our Madison New Horizons Band has commissioned Michael 'Mike' Leckrone, recently retired director of the University of Wisconsin Bands for 50 years, to compose a piece for us.

Mike visited us during one of our weekly practice sessions to get to know us and learn our level of ability. Additionally, band members were given the opportunity to share ideas and suggestions for the work. They might be musical suggestions, or thoughts and ideas that may inspire the new composition. These ideas were gathered and sent to Mike to integrate as he wishes. We expect to have our special piece by September so we have time to get it ready for our Christmas Holiday concert. Mike will direct the piece at the concert.

Mike is a beloved and well known person in the Madison community and we are pleased and proud that he will compose a piece for our band.



Left to right: Professor Michael Leckrone, Glenn Nielsen, Director, and co-directors Kathy Punwar and Mark Saltzman

SUBMITTED BY MURIEL FILER GILBERT
(MADISON NEW HORIZONS)

NEW HORIZONS BAND OF CINCINNATI, OH

A 20th Anniversary Celebration

Submitted by Frank Mercurio, clarinet

Overwhelmed is the best word to express the band's emotions at the end of our performance. Overwhelmed, and elated. The audience, in excess of 500 strong, clapped, and stood, and clapped some more. What a wonderful reward for all the hard work and preparation by so many for the past year.

The New Horizons Band of Cincinnati celebrated its



20th anniversary with a special concert held at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Madeira, Ohio, on Sunday, October 27, 2019.

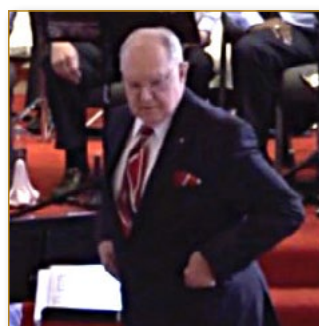
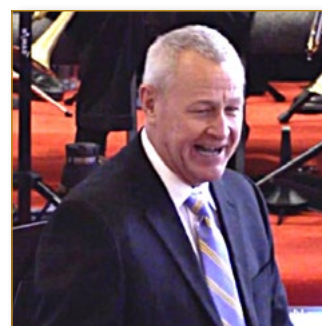
The playlist included three special guest conductors. The founder of the New Horizons Music Program, Dr. Roy Ernst, led the band in a Vaughan Williams selection, "Flourish for Wind Bands." David Shaffer, noted international composer and arranger, wrote and directed a piece especially for the occasion, "Fanfare Cincinnati." Pete Metzger, founder and first conductor of the New Horizons Band of Cincinnati led the band in Beethoven's Finale, from *Symphony No. 5*. It was exciting to experience these three exceptional conductors working their magic. The remainder of the program was directed by the band's three present conductors—yes, we have three very talented conductors. Afterwards, as one band member explained, "Wow, I felt like I was playing in the Cincinnati Symphony"! Tom H., an observer from Milford, Ohio excitingly exclaimed, "You guys never sounded so good." Yes, the band and the audience were pumped.

What did it take to get all this accomplished? Certainly, more than can be written in a short article. For a year and a half, the band's board members met to study the possibility for our 20th anniversary and work out all the details. They started with dividing up the tasks into

special categories, contacting and inviting guests, designing and ordering award plaques for special guests—folks that helped us along the way. Since we wanted to have food, beverages and a special desert (large sheet cakes emblazoned with our band's logo) many members stepped up to handle this important aspect of the party. Our conductors, with some help, devised a playlist for the celebration and

ensured the band's success by providing many hours of rehearsal time. To get the word out we created special invitations for friends and family members, wrote press releases to our contacts, and even had our band president conduct a radio on-air presentation. A program was created and

printed for the audience. And so, it went—countless hours of the minutia that allows this kind of endeavor to happen. So many people lending a hand wherever possible.



Three guest conductors:
top left, Dr. Roy Ernst
top right, David Shaffer
bottom, Pete Metzger

The New Horizons Band of Cincinnati has grown from the first rehearsal of eight people in 1999 to a concert band of sixty-five musicians who play marches, oldies, show

See CINCINNATI continued on page 16

CINCINNATI continued from page 15

tunes, and light classics for their own pleasure and for audiences across the region.

It took real imagination to envision the possibilities back in January 1999 when a few willing seniors gathered for an inaugural rehearsal at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Montgomery, Ohio. One of those visionaries was Pete Metzger, the organization's founder, and first musical director.

“Wow, I felt like I was playing in the Cincinnati Symphony”!

“Our first rehearsal brought out about eight people,” Metzger recalls. “We had to start out with fifth and sixth-grade music, playing whole notes and half notes, since some of our ‘bandsmen’ hadn’t

played for decades or had never touched an instrument.

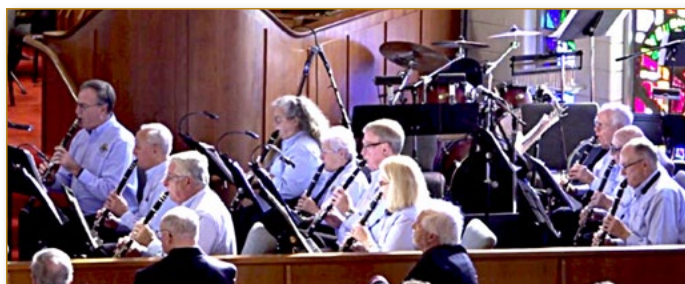
It has been a long journey getting to where we are now as a performing concert band. We continue to learn and develop our skills individually and as a group. Today, we have also broadened out into specialty groups. Besides the concert band, we boast a Dixieland Band, a Swing Band, and an Oompah Band. At the time of writing, there are other smaller groups working to become independent—a clarinet quintet, a classical chamber group, and a brass ensemble—there is no limit to the many possibilities.

The success of our 20th anniversary celebration, as well as the success of our band over all these years, is possible due to the dedication of our members. Our president, board, conductors, and individual band members work many hours to bring about our success and we look forward to another wonderful, and enjoyable, twenty years of comradery, making music together.

We rehearse two mornings each week at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Montgomery, Ohio. The band is currently led by a team of three directors.

For more information or to see some of our members and groups, visit our website:

<https://newhorizonsbandcincinnati.org>



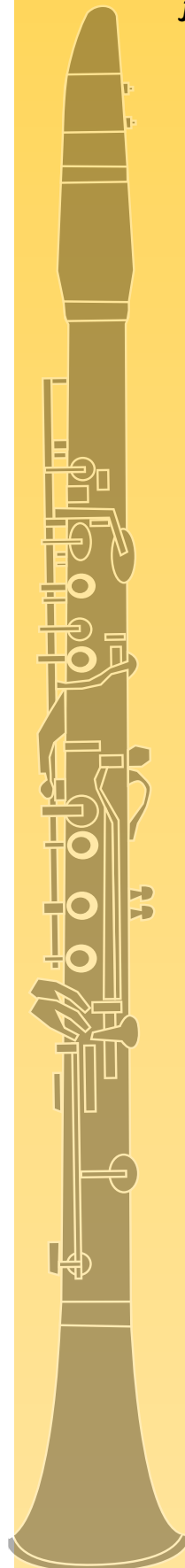
You Can Join the Clarinet Choir

for the Chronologically Superior at the International Clarinet Association's ClarinetFest in Reno, NV!

Calling all older adult clarinetists to participate in the first ICA conference clarinet Choir, created especially for older people. Participants will meet each day of the ClarinetFest from June 24-28, 2020 in Reno, Nevada, and will perform at the end of the conference.

The choir will be sampling an eclectic mix of styles and genres under the direction of Dr. Alan Woy, Professor Emeritus of the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. Woy is the current conductor of the Eastman-Rochester New Horizons Clarinet Choir, and is currently on the faculty of the Eastman Community Music School in Rochester, New York. The ERNHCC has performed four times at the ICA ClarinetFest; Austin, Texas in 2010, Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2014, Orlando, Florida in 2017, and Knoxville, Tennessee in 2019. Woy also conducted the ClarinetFest Festival Choir at the conference in Orlando. A former conductor of the Eastman-Rochester New Horizons bands, Dr. Woy has also conducted bands at the NH Chautauqua Music Camp.

The conference clarinet choir for the chronologically superior is being jointly sponsored by the International Clarinet Association and New Horizons International. New Horizons International members will be able to take advantage of a special reduced membership fee for the International Clarinet Association. For more information, visit the ICA website at clarinet.org.



GUELPH NEW HORIZONS BAND, GUELPH, ON

Day Camp for Adults Who Like to Play

Submitted by Terry Peach

In October 2019, the Guelph New Horizons Band hosted its second annual Day Camp in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Ninety New Horizons Band Members from across Ontario joined together at Centennial Collegiate in Guelph to play together for the day. Members came from bands in Ottawa, Peterborough, Markham, Toronto, North York, Burlington, London, Waterloo, and host group Guelph.

According to Brent Rowan, Musical Director for NHB Guelph and the Camp Director, “Our goal was to provide a day of fun, inspirational music, dynamic conductors, good food, and learning opportunities. We wanted to provide a wide variety of musical experiences with diverse and novel workshops.”

The morning was spent in a concert band, either Red Level (grade 2–3) or Blue level (grade 3–4). The afternoon was spent in a wide variety small group workshops. Topics included Big Band Jazz, Brass Ensemble, Woodwind Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Vocal Improv, Song Creation, and Funk Bucket.

The camp staff was composed of experienced professional musicians from around the area, and each brought their unique skills and engaging approach to provide for fun experiential learning. A group of high school music students volunteered to help everyone find where they were going and ensure a smooth flow to the day.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing a wish to return if another Day Camp is offered. Some further comments from participants:

- ▶ “Seeing people and meeting new people and the challenge of playing pieces I’ve never seen before.”
- ▶ “The Band Camp was very well organized, from the advanced communications... to the actual event — really appreciated all of the hard work put into the event.”
- ▶ “Amazing variety of leadership styles — leaders all up-beat, encouraging, inspiring.”
- ▶ “Really enjoyed the whole day. I’m so very glad I went. I hope you have another one, I’ll be there!!!”

Along with the efforts of Brent Rowan, an enthusiastic team of NHB volunteers worked to plan, organize and execute this very successful event.

“It was great to be together with different people and to experience different leaders and play different types of music. Organization and facilities worked well” — Camp Participant

“My favourite part of camp: Playing with other musicians and getting to know others that play the same instrument and talk about their experiences and instruments.” — Camp Participant

▶
*Woodwind
Ensemble
conducted by
Jennifer
Rodriguez*



▶
*Blue Band
conducted by
Donna Dupuy of
Toronto's NHB*



“This was our second consecutive year hosting an NHB Day Camp. We were so delighted with the outcome and enthusiasm of the participants that we will consider making this an annual event!” said Brent.

NEWHORIZONSMUSIC.ORG/BUSINESS-MEMBERS/

Support Our Business Members

Since the founding of the first New Horizons Band in 1991, Dr. Ernst's continuous organizing efforts have attracted the interest of businesses in the music field. Our board of directors seeks to cultivate business memberships alongside the individuals who support the organization. Business memberships in NHIMA enrich the environment for New Horizons players by bringing us tried and true instrument techniques, useful products, study methods, printed music, and all sorts of ancillary support goods and services. All the companies below are listed on NHIMA's web site. NHIMA would like to thank these business members for their participation.



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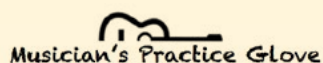
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New Horizons News is the newsletter of the New Horizons International Music Association (NHIMA), Inc., 840 Virginia Street, #110, Dunedin, FL 34698. Nikki Attwell, editor.

Published twice yearly (Spring and Fall), submissions can be sent to the editor at any time or by each issue's deadline, March 1 and October 1 respectively.

Submissions — updates, reports, stories, photos, articles from other sources (with permission to reprint if applicable) — are welcome and encouraged. Please send MS Word or TextEdit files (rather than PDFs or Publisher files), and be sure to include your location and state. Limit stories to 600 words, and provide a caption for photos, identifying the subject or activity. Send pictures or images (high-resolution photos if

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