Greg Funfgeld – The Bach Choir’s first full-time artistic director and conductor

The board of managers, led by President Hal Black, approved the milestone decision to offer Greg full-time employment at its June board meeting, in anticipation of his retirement in June 2017. The Bach Choir’s first full-time artistic director and conductor, he was the heart and soul of the Bach Choir, the driving force behind the Choir’s musical transformation in the early 1990s through 2016. Greg is now able to devote additional attention to The Bach Choir as warranted by the tremendous expansion of Bach Choir programming under his tenure. Now in his 31st season, he has expanded the programs of The Bach Choir beyond the actual Bach Choir Circle’s traditional concert season of 11 concerts and educational programs for an audience of more than 20,000. We look forward to the continued growth of The Choir’s artistic excellence, educational outreach, community engagement, and national recognition under his consummate direction.

Jack Payne joins the board of managers.

We are very pleased to welcome Jack Payne to our Board of Managers. Jack is currently Senior Vice President of Finance & Operations at Ambassador Financial Group. Previously he spent 18 years at Chief Investment Officer for JoycePayne Partners with offices in Bethlehem, PA and Richmond, VA. Jack also spent nearly a decade with Abbott Products & Chemicals in Allentown, PA., serving in a variety of corporate finance functions ending with the title of Financial Risk Manager. Jack holds a BS in Finance from the Pennsylvania State University and an MBA from the University of Rochester. Away from the office, Jack enjoys golf, swimming, skiing, volleyball and being involved with music. He serves as Treasurer and Board of Director member for Youth Education in the Arts, an Allentown, PA. Jack is an active trumpet and melodphone player who matched with the steel-blue State Band Blue Band and Cadets during his college career. Jack especially cherishes his time with his wife Kelly and their sons Jack and Kelly enjoying attending Bach Choir events.

New Staff join the administrative team at Heckerwood House

Many of you know that in June, we said farewell to Joby Lee, the Board & Staff Director, and Bonnie Lindsey, accounting manager, after many years of excellent and devoted service. The Bach Choir is very thankful and very sorry to see Joby and Bonnie leave our small but highly capable team. We are tremendously grateful for all they contributed to advancing the mission and administration of The Bach Choir. Joby and Bonnie will be missed. We are very pleased to welcome two wonderful new staff members, Renee James and David Strain, in the newly structured positions of marketing director and finance & business manager. We also give a warm welcome to Wendy Lega, the new administrator of the Bel Canto Children’s Chorus of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

Renee James, marketing director, comes from a seasoned level marketing position at Rodale Press, where she worked for 27 years. She offers us many years of experience in strategizing and executing marketing programs both for Rodale and the many Fortune 500 clients she has managed over the years. She has a BA in English/Communications from Moravian College and her columns have been published in the Morning Call, Philadelphia Inquirer, Baltimore Sun, and Chicago Tribune. Her personal life has included supporting and “giving back” to many non-profit organizations. She is currently on the board of the State Theatre in Easton and has chaired the Freedy Awards Committee. She also recently concluded a nine-year term as a member of the Forum for Ethics in the Workplace at DeSales University. Classical music has been and remains an integral part of Renee’s life. She is an instrumentalist and pianist, and performed with ensembles while a student at Moravian College. Her three sons have all been vocalists in District and Regional Chorus and her oldest son studied classical voice at Boyer College of Music, Temple University and earned his MA in vocal performance and pedagogy from Steinhardt School at New York University.

David Strain, finance & business manager, comes to us from a five-year stay at Lake’s Hospital where he had worked as a Financial Analyst in the Finance Department since 2008. He has a B.S. in Management Science from Lehigh University and an MBA from St. John’s University College and an Associate’s degree in Accounting from DeSales University. Prior to St. Luke’s, he worked in the Membership Department of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, Bethlehem, PA (2000–2008) and in the Finance and Editorial Departments of the Express Times, Easton PA (1992–2006). He was the business manager of the Bethlehem Area Chamber of Commerce from 1995–1998 under President Bob Eschgo, and is the son of former Executive Director of the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, Richard Strain. David is passionate about all kinds of music, and recently moved to the area with his two brothers in the First Presbyterian Church Youth Choir under the direction of Greg Funfgeld. Personal interests and activities include songwriting, guitar, keyboard, ballet dancing, and being a Friendly Visitor Volunteer at Kirkland Village. He is delighted to return to a small office environment where he can make a larger impact on a worthy not-for-profit organization.

Fond Farewell to our Oldest Guarantor and Warm Welcome to our Youngest by Bridget George

Wendy Lega, Bel Canto administrator, has served as a volunteer, board member, and Parent Auxiliary Chair for the Bel Canto Children’s Chorus for over ten years. She spent the majority of her professional career at Sun Microsystems, Inc., an innovative computer manufacturer and software company. She was responsible for evangelizing and selling Sun’s groundbreaking, internet enabling technologies: As a Sales Technology, and subsequently the Northeast Area Technology Manager, she impacted approximately $1 billion in sales per year. Wendy is a customer interaction expert and has considerable skill at helping shrink the workforce to raise her children. Wendy has served as a Vestry member at Trinity Episcopal Church, Bethlehem, led the Strategic Development Committee of the Saucon Valley Foundation for Educational Innovation (SVFEI), Hellertown, and currently serves on the Moravian College's Leadership Council.

Guarantor Spotlight

Meet Tom and Judy Hall

TOM AND JUDY HALL met while they were students at The University of Arizona in the early 1960s. They could not have known then that half a century later they’d be retiring in the Northeastern Pennsylvania region enjoying the music of The Bach Choir of Bethlehem and become Guarantors and strong supporters of the arts in the region. Tom went to Rutgers University after graduation from Arizona, and stayed to earn a Ph.D and a law degree. After giving birth to four children, Judy returned to college, got her BSN at Trenton State and her MSN at Rutgers-Newark and worked in a variety of challenging nursing positions, retiring from the New Jersey Department of Health in 2008. Tom practiced law in northern and central New Jersey.

While they loved the mountains, lakes and people of Northeastern Pennsylvania, they were worried about leaving the cultural experience they enjoyed in New York and Philadelphia. That was one need – concern! Judy puts it this way: “With the Northeast Pennsylvania Philharmonic, The Bach Choir, and the many community theater and chamber groups in the region, we have a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the performing arts nearly every week.”

With their children spread throughout the world, the Halls enjoy a lot of travel. Describing one trip through the Bahia region which featured splendid concerts every night for two weeks as “a smorgasbord of creativity” the Halls thank long time Bach Choir Guarantor Peggy Fulmer for introducing them to The Choir, and reinforcing the need to support the arts, not only by coming to performances but also financially. The Halls enjoy performances support ing the arts are long gone," said Tom, “and governmental support for the arts – which we regard as essential for a complete life – is a small fraction of what is needed.” Judy noted, “If we don’t support the arts, our lives are poorer – and the chances for our children and grandchildren to hear this music are diminished.”

Eleanor Ann Davis, our youngest Guarantor, found her passion for the arts while attending Bucknell University from 1963–1967. Her grandparents Greg and Nanci Funfgeld, Eleanor’s mother’s side of the family, were major benefactors of the Bucknell University Choir in the 1930’s. Eleanor’s family was sponsored by proud Guarantors, Cassard and Molloy, the family who had been supporting the Chorus since the 1930’s. With a special gift from Rosa Lamousious, one month after the birth, she sang Leonard Bernstein’s Greeting during the fifth annual Bach Choir musical sales at the Hermann’s Inn. When she was born, the world stopped turning round. and takes its first breath with him.

When a girl is born, the world spins turning round, and keeps a mother’s husband. Every time a child is born, for the space of that brief instant, the world is paused.