

# WOMEN'S VOICES RISING by the SEA

## ChoralFest at the Ferry Beach Retreat and Conference Center, Saco, ME



December 2020

### Looking ahead to 2021

Ferry Beach (FB) plans to be open next summer with a full schedule of their usual conferences.

- As in 2020, they will be guided by opinions from scientists on how to be in gatherings safely. As we are all hearing on the news, there is still much to be learned about whether those who have received the vaccine will still be able to spread Covid.
- FB will be particularly careful with their food service and will continue with regulations that worked well last summer and were well received by on-site conferees.
- With cutbacks on staff and volunteer help, they believe that if FB can bring in half of the usual income of a "normal" summer that they will generate enough profit to sustain them until the summer of 2022 when they hope to fully open up.
- Depending on the science, FB may continue to have attendees distanced in the dorms and limit who can use which bathrooms. They will also continue to have cleaners available in bathrooms for those in residence to use.
- As much as possible, information will be posted on the FB website, [www.ferrybeach.org](http://www.ferrybeach.org), by early February.

The ChoralFest Steering Committee will need to decide if the conference will be virtual, in person or a hybrid of the two.

- FB is suggesting that if conferences have both on-site and on-line components to their workshops, that one person coordinates each, so ChoralFest may be looking for attendees to help with coordination.
- There do not seem to be many results of scientific studies that have measured the number and size of particles that are emitted when people sing on line – at least to date. Those that are mentioned say that social distancing and good ventilation, i.e. outdoors, can make a difference as can volume and frequency of consonants.
- We found last summer that we could still connect and enjoy each other's company even if we were not singing. However, all would agree that we would need to be have some times to sing and learn new music as well.
- Once we are past the holidays and into the spring, we will be sending out more information as our plans are solidified. Members of the Steering Committee and some of the singers from last summer have been meeting via Zoom each month and will discuss opening up the calls to others as we put plans into place.

### Holiday message from our Conference Coordinator



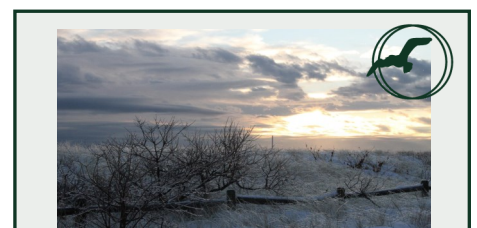
As we begin the celebration of the holidays, I am sure that all of you are mourning not being able to

sing in church choirs, choral concerts and Messiah sings. I am amazed at the creativity and technical wizardry that I have seen in my own church and on-line to mix voices and make videos, but I anticipate feeling nostalgic when I sit in front of a computer screen on Christmas Eve instead of singing my heart out in the sanctuary and looking out at the congregation crowded into the pews, their faces lit by candlelight. Like you, I need to remind myself that this will only be one holiday season without choir as usual and for some of us, being without our families as well.

In the meantime, we need to hold the memories of all of those other wonderful holiday seasons close to our hearts to sustain us. Just think how joyous next December will be!

Love and the blessings of peace to all of you. Stay safe.

*Suzanne*



**ChoralFest 2021**  
**July 17 to 23**

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