

# WOMEN'S VOICES RISING by the SEA

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



May 2020

### Ferry Beach will open in some form this summer

I know that all of you are wondering if ChoralFest will be able to schedule our conference for this summer given the continuing threat from COVID19. We are still hoping that we will be able to connect as a group during our week even if the program needs to be altered to keep us safe and meet state health requirements. Ferry Beach has created a Sustainability Task Force that has been meeting weekly. Relying on guidance from the CDC, state and local health officials and the American Camp Association, they have been exploring options to reopen this summer in some fashion if they can do so safely for their guests and staff. It is also possible that as currently proposed for July and August, the state of Maine might prohibit gatherings of more than 50 people and require that people entering into Maine from out of state observe a 14-day quarantine.

This Saturday Ferry Beach Executive Director Cathy Stackpole and staff will be sharing Ideas and program suggestions with the summer conference coordinators on a Zoom call. Since every conference is different, my plan is to bring these suggestions to our steering committee to see how some of these options might be implemented for our conference.

I hope that those of you who want to support ChoralFest and Ferry Beach will hold the week of July 11 through 17 open on your calendar as we work on ways that we can still be together to sing and connect to share conversations. Also watch your emails for a possible Zoom call in the weeks to come.

As the spring progresses, Ferry Beach is sharing information on a dedicated page on the Ferry Beach web site,

[ferrybeach.org/](http://ferrybeach.org/) COVID-19. Check there for up to date information each week. The Sustainability Task Force has been meeting weekly on Wednesday mornings. If you are interested in joining, call Cathy Stackpole at 207-282-4489 x 5.

### Ferry Beach receives federal aid to help with payroll

Ferry Beach received an SBA loan under the Payroll Protection Program. Working with Bangor Savings, they received \$129,600 to provide funding for staff salaries, utilities and mortgage in the hopes they will have a summer season.

### News from GAYLA

As those of you know who have attended ChoralFest, we count many of the brothers who attend GAYLA during our week as close friends. This spring we all lost three of these dear friends.



Tom Cowen, who was a staunch GAYLA champion and volunteer, lost his battle with cancer. He loved GAYLA and New England so much that he moved from Texas to Lowell, MA to be near his pals. Not only did he support GAYLA, but over the years as program changes were considered, he was ready to lead the fight if anyone hinted that GAYLA and ChoralFest might be separated. Now his heart is flying free...

ChoralFest and GAYLA also lost another dear brother, Steve Jorgensen. When we were a mixed chorus, Steve faithfully joined us to sing bass. Some of you may also remember Steve and his husband Dan as longtime



residents of Underwood the many years they were at Ferry Beach. Dan is Irene Gundlach's brother, so please send healing thoughts to him and Irene as you remember Steve.

GAYLA also lost Larry Firrantello who died after a long battle with COVID 19. Larry was pretty quiet but you might remember him playing the drum as the GAYLA brothers marched for their service of remembrance. As it turns out, Larry played Middle Eastern and African drums as well as keyboard. He and his husband Mick Brown were together for 40 years and married for 15. Mick tragically died of COVID just a few days after Larry.



On a happier note, David Tidyman who was Musician of the Week for many of the years that ChoralFest and GAYLA have been together, has officially retired after 54 years directing choirs and playing harpsichord, organ and piano. Many of us remember the first time that David, who was usually very serious, appeared as his alter-ego Beverly resplendent in a blond wig and colorful ball gown to conduct the GAYLA chorus. We wish David all the best.



**ChoralFest 2020**  
**July 11 to 17**

Suzanne Adams, Coordinator  
978-241-9450, [sue@gndhome.com](mailto:sue@gndhome.com)  
[www.ferrybeach.org/choralfest](http://www.ferrybeach.org/choralfest)