



Metro/Religion

Beaverton church hosts old English program

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A city block of Beaverton is turning back the clock to the turn-of-the-century Old England. During the second week of December Allen Boulevard in Beaverton will experience a time change. This alteration is not done with a clock, but with the senses.

Beaverton Christian Church, 13600 SW Allen Boulevard in Beaverton is calling over six hundred of the congregation's 2000 members to bake, to paint, to sing, to act, to host, to share a segment of this Old English Christmas program with the community. The event is Celebrate the Joy, and will be presented at Beaverton Christian Church December 10 through December 13, 7:00 p.m., with an additional performance at 3:00 p.m. Saturday, December 11.

"We want guests to experience England as it was in the days of Charles Dickens" states Jim Lacy, creator of the program, and Pastor of Ministering Arts at the Beaverton Church. Lacy, who has served in this capacity for three years shares the concept of the program. "Guests will be greeted by valets dressed in top hats, gloves and capes. A horse-drawn carriage will be available to give rides to those entering the church. Once inside, children will be encouraged to sit at the feet of an old English story lady for a Christmas story. The story lady will be seated on the front porch of a life-size gingerbread house, and various rooms of a traditional Old English home will be postured throughout the spacious atrium. Scenes of an Old English kitchen, a library, and a parlor that would be found in an English home of the 1800's will be part of the "sights" of this transformation. Artists will be drawing hand made Christmas cards and will entertain guests as Old English street vendors peddle their goods throughout the atrium.

Jim Lacy continues, "As guests enter the auditorium Old English lanterns will line the walkways. Costumed characters including a seven foot gingerbread man, Frosty the Snowman and his wife, Mrs. Frosty and toy soldiers will serve to add to

the magic of the moment."

"We want this event to be an experience for the entire community" states Clark Tanner, senior pastor of Beaverton Christian. "We recognize the need for wholesome entertainment, and we are striving to provide the finest program possible to celebrate the birthday of birthdays."

The main program is an original two-act musical, featuring a 130-voice costumed choir as well as full orchestra. The story line shares the events of a typical English town, Portland Manor, at the turn of the century. The community is anxious about the unknown elements of the new century, the consequences of not being prepared for the changes that will come in the year 1900, and how the town can prepare for these changes.

Lacy states, "There will be music that will appeal to practically every musical taste, from the traditional to the contemporary, both secular and sacred music." State-of-the-art technology will be incorporated in the two hour program, and during intermission guests will enjoy samples of wassail, a traditional English drink and gingerbread cookies.

The program has an added appeal to the community in that the church will be hosting several charity groups of the community at the event. These groups will include The House of Ruth, Letty Owens Center, Albertina Kerr Center, and Parry Center for Children. Clark Tanner states, "members of these organizations will receive VIP treatment, complete with a reception and preferred seating for the program. Beaverton Christian Church recognizes the impact these groups have on the community through the year. It is our desire to say thanks to these Organizations." The work of pregnancy Resource Center will be recognized as well, and the organization will have an Information booth in the atrium.

Beaverton Christian church is a non-denominational fellowship that offers a style of music, worship and teaching that is culturally relevant and focuses on the Christian life. Worship services are held at 9 and 11 a.m. on Sundays. Complimentary tickets for this event are available by phone, 503-646-2151, ext. 237, or by web, www.bcc.org

Mathis & Winans celebrate the season



Johnny Mathis & CeCe Winans 'Listen! It's Christmas'

Singers celebrate with Hallmark's "Listen! Its Christmas"

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Johnny Mathis and CeCe Winans, recall fond memories on Hallmark Christmas album.

Legendary vocalist Johnny Mathis and gospel's leading female voice CeCe Winans have come together for the first time to record a Hallmark Christmas album entitled "Listen! It's Christmas" which is available

exclusively at the more than 5,000 Hallmark card shops that dot the globe. Both singers come from large families and cherish their holiday memories.

"I come from a large family," says Johnny who has six siblings. One of his fondest memories was Christmas 1950 when he was 15 years old. "We got very practical things like clothing or shoes. The little kids got a lot of junk like foodstuffs and stocking stuffers. But mostly I remember my mom would make sure I had a really nice sweater to wear. I started singing on stage when I was twelve or thirteen and I really didn't have any stage clothes. The look was just a pair of

khakis and a nice sweater. I do remember a green cashmere sweater that blew my mind. It was the hippest thing at the time that could happen to me and I couldn't believe that my mom went for the cashmere sweater because I was accustomed to much less. But she always made sure that I had something really nice to go on stage with and that's the thing I really remember at that particular Christmas was a speckled green cashmere sweater and I think I wore it to death." With nine siblings, CeCe's parent couldn't afford a lot of presents either. "Since it wasn't possible to buy gifts for all ten of their children, my parents decided that rather than spend money on toys that would be broken by February, they would put on a holiday concert for gospel lovers," CeCe recalls. "There was always much to do for the concert: we had to learn how to pull of a concert on a meager budget. Things like finding music, rehearsing until the wee hours of the morning, renting sound equipment, running off programs, and buying or having mom make inexpensive outfits kept us too busy to bicker or to stay mad at one another. We had to cooperate in order to meet our goals. Sponsoring those concerts was the greatest gift Mom and Dad ever gave us"

One thing the Mathis and Winans household shared was a love for the Christmas meal. "We weren't poor," Johnny smiles. "We just didn't have any money was the main thing. So food played a big part of what we did at the holidays. My mom and dad were professional cooks so all my brothers and sisters and I learned to cook at an early age. Out of the seven of us there are three really good cooks and the rest are passable," he laughs. He's one of the three. "I've had more practice because I started cooking on the road because when I started to

travel to the foreign countries and the United States some 40 odd years ago. The food just wasn't that spectacular. So I used a lot of my guiles as far as getting hot plates and things like that to cook in hotel rooms and over the years its become defined and redefined. Finally, they have a few chains of hotels that have kitchens in them, so I've been practicing over the years and it's gotten very good." Mom Winans would spend hours in the kitchen and the family would go to church to celebrate Christmas. "Some of my fondest memories involve food," CeCe laughs. "Fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, homemade rolls, dressing, gravy, green string beans, and ice cream for dessert were all a part of the feast. The great food and great people made church a wonderful and safe place for me as a child."

As for the new album, Johnny & CeCe have a mutual admiration society going. CeCe gushes, "What can I say? The man is a legend and he does not age! He is such a gentleman and such a pleasure to work with." As for Johnny, he says, "The thing that really excited me about making the recording was I got a chance to record with CeCe who has been over the last ten years one of my favorite singers. When they said she would be a part of the production I said, 'let's go, let's do it.' And she was absolutely delightful. I've been fortunate over the years. I made my first duet with Deniece Williams and then Jane Oliver who are both beautiful voices. Then I went on to sing with people like Patti Austin and Gladys Knight. Regina Belle and Dionne Warwick. But with CeCe it just kept getting better and better and better so it was a joy to be with her and to be a part of this recording. I was just so happy to meet her and we had a lovely time together."

Lanterns: A memoir of mentors

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

O God, I thank You for the lanterns in my life who illumined dark and uncertain paths calmed and stilled debilitating doubts and fears with encouraging words, wise lessons, gentle touches, firm nudges, and faithful actions along my journey of life and back to You.

I was born in the sturdy white wood parsonage at 119 Cheraw Street in Bennettsville, South Carolina as the last of five children of Rev. Arthur Jerome and Maggie Leola Bowen Wright. My birth house is now a Children's Defense Fund office.

I have always felt so blessed to be born who I was, where I was, when I was, and with the parents I had. As a Black girl child growing up in a small segregated southern town, I could never take anything for granted and never for a moment lacked a purpose worth fighting, living, and dying for, or an opportunity to make a difference if I wanted to. I was richly blessed with parents and community elders who nurtured me and other children and tried to live what they preached. They believed in God, in family, in education, and in helping others.

I did not come into or get through life alone. Neither did you. Our mothers had to push to get us here. And our fathers had to help too. My parents needed and got help in raising me and my sister and three brothers from neighbors and friends in their church and community. They tried unceasingly to protect children from the unfair assaults of southern racial segregation and injustice by weaving a tight family and community fabric of love around us.

The challenge faced by Black parents when I was growing up was daunting. They had to affirm and help us children internalize our sanctity as children of God, as valued members of our family, of the Black community, of the American community, and of the entire human race.

Leading military power, cannot keep its own children safe. We have to make this a top priority of our national

agenda. CDF's report shows that the number of children dying from gunfire has declined, but still 4,205 children and teens lost their lives in the latest year for which figures are available. That means that in America a child dies every two hours from gunfire—nearly a dozen children a day and a classroom full every two days.

At a nation we have been horrified by the events in Littleton, Colorado; Conyers, Georgia, West Padueah, Kentucky; and elsewhere. But these

statistics show that these highly publicized tragedies are simply the latest wake-up call for what has been happening in America every day for a very long time.

Of the states studied that have enacted Child Firearm Access Prevention (CAP) laws since 1989, there was a 23% drop in accidental shootings of children. Seventeen states have now adopted these laws, and all states must do so.

It is time for every adult to take responsibility for protecting children

instead of guns. Local, state, and federal officials must support common sense gun safety measures that will keep firearms out of the hands of children. Parents, grandparents, educators, and religious leaders must speak up for children, provide them positive alternatives to the streets, and be better examples by not acting violently against children or others. For a copy of the report, please contact the Children's Defense Fund's Publications Department at 202-662-3652 (fax: 202-628-8331).

Obituaries

In loving memory of

George Walter

Age 62. Survived by his significant other, Ginger Weis; son Stephen, wife Julie, grandson Matthew Robert and almost-grandson Jonathan Water; daughter Susan; daughter Kristin Brennan-Padden, husband Chris, and soon-to-be Baby Padden; daughter Kelly and finance Doug Feick; sister Mary Brennan Williams and family; sister Margaret Brennan Shaw, husband Jack and family; and many friends. Memorial Mass was held Friday, December 3, at The Mission Church, University of Santa Clara. The family prefers donations to Santa Clara University Alumni Family Scholarship Fund. c/o Jerry Kerr, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, Ca 95053

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