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2009-2010**

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**AKTA Open House**

Plan to attend the annual open house at the Keyboard Cache on

**Friday, September 11th, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

There will be food, wine, soft drinks, door prizes, and fun conversations!

For more information, contact Christine Kastanopolous, (907) 345-5811  
[ckastan@gci.net](mailto:ckastan@gci.net)



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Deadlines:**

**September 15** - MTNA Competition registration due, [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)

**Special Events:**

**September 11, 6-8 p.m.** - AKTA Open House at the Keyboard Cache

**November 7-8** - MTNA Strings competition

**November 14-15** - MTNA Piano competition

**November 16-20** - AMTA Fall Adjudications

**December 6th and 20th** - Museum Performance (see page 4)

**May 3-7, 2010** - AMTA Spring Adjudications

**August 13-14, 2010** - AMTA Conference in Sitka with Jennifer Linn

**Board Meetings:** September 25, October 30, December 4, January 29, February 26, March 26, April 30 (special meeting, TBA) at 9:00-11:00 AM at Chris Kastanopolous, 13810 Mainsail Drive. All members are welcome to attend.

**Why I Teach Music**

*Not because I expect you to major in music....(even though I hope you do, the rewards are incomparable)*

*Not because I expect you to play or sing all of your life..... (even though you can if you want to)*

*Not so you can relax...(even though it reduces stress and creates healthy minds, souls and bodies)*

*Not so you can have fun....(even though you can)*

*But so you will be human,  
so you recognize beauty,  
so you will be sensitive,  
so you will have something to cling to in times of trouble, a rock in the storm, an anchor for your life.....  
and so you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good – in short, more life.*

Lynda Lybeck of Unalaska sent this inspiring contribution to the newsletter. The author is unknown.

## From the President of AKTA

August 14 & 15th were the dates of the annual AMTA state conference. Each year one of the local organization in AMTA hosts the conference. Last year Fairbanks was the host, this year Anchorage, and next year Sitka.

Forty teachers from all over Alaska attended the conference where Randall Faber was the principle presenter.

*Chris,  
You really need a HUGE hug and pat on the back for putting together such a wonderful program over the last two days. I was so impressed with Randy Faber; his knowledge, personal skills, humor and professionalism were amazing. What a wonderful presenter to have for our annual meeting!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

*My hat is off to you and the AKTA board for a wonderful job!*

*Cheers!*

*Sherry Dugan*

greatest" publication, but explained the why and how-to of the Faber publications. He was amazing.

We were also privileged to have the Executive Director and CEO of MTNA, Dr. Gary Ingle, present AMTA with a plaque signifying 30 years of membership in MTNA. He explained how MTNA works, and why MTNA Certification is a strong asset

for any teacher to possess. He was warm, charming and totally approachable.

Adam Grove, N.D. of Anchorage also presented on how the brain and music function. He also added humor and great knowledge for everyone present.

As you can see, every moment of the conference was "Food for the Hungry". If you missed the event, you missed a real gem.

Plan to attend next August's conference in Sitka. Start saving now and have a great adventure with fellow teachers in South East Alaska. How often do you get to travel and write off the expense on your IRS tax forms? Talk to your accountant, but this is a real possibility. Plan now for Sitka.

### AKTA General Meetings

The question keeps coming up – **What happened to the General Monthly Meetings?**

The bare truth – attendance at the general meetings is too low. For a number of years AKTA held the meeting with only board members and 2 or 3 other members attending. The time and work needed to organize the meetings, get speakers, refreshments ... etc. made doing monthly meeting ineffective in cost and time spent. When we hire a speaker and only a few people out of a membership of 40 or more attend – it is down right embarrassing. That is why the monthly meetings stopped.

As a solution to requests for meetings, there will be a short meeting during the half hour before each workshop. This year the AKTA Board is presenting three workshops for teachers. Two will be with the adjudicators who arrive in November and May. A third will be after the beginning of the New Year. The third presenter has not been chosen yet. If you have suggestions or ideas, please contact a board member. Read your newsletter for more details as they become available.

Christine Kastanopolous

## Music Theory Classes

**Presented by the Steinway Piano Gallery of Alaska Music School**

For students at all levels, studying piano, voice and orchestra instruments

A placement test is recommended

45 minute group classes every Monday at the Steinway Piano Gallery of Alaska

637 A Street in Anchorage

1st semester 9/14/09 - 12/14/09

2nd semester 2/1/10 - 5/17/10

\$230 per semester

If you are interested please call:

677-1193 or 360-2915



### Sitka MTA News:

Bonnie Harris is moving to Ketchikan to teach band in a small private Christian School. That makes the SMTA back to 3 members! We are going to put on a fantastic AMTA Conference in 2010 with guest presenter Jennifer Linn and the Hal Leonard Publishing Company. Everyone, start planning now. We are looking forward to it! SMTA will be having their first meeting of the new 2009-2010 year in September.

Jammie Wileman, NCTM  
SMTA President

### AMTA Conference Notes

Randall Faber gave a fabulous conference on August 14th and 15th. He explained in detail some of his books for very young beginners, and discussed numerous teaching ideas for all ages. Here are some highlights from his presentations.

#### My First Piano Adventure: Exploration of the Faber Publications

Mr. Faber began the conference with an introduction to the "My First Piano Adventure" books for very young students. This was his opportunity to promote the Faber & Faber materials, but he also gave us a detailed overview of some of the teaching techniques used in these books. He showed video examples of himself and his wife, Nancy Faber, teaching in their studio. He focused mainly on the first level in the three-part series, Lesson Book A and Writing Book A, and touched more briefly on levels B and C. Levels A, B, and C can replace the "Piano Adventures, Primer Level" books; after completing all three levels, a student

can go straight to "Piano Adventures, Level 1."

#### Notes:

- Young students need to internalize rhythm, not just learn how to count. Repetition and variation of rhythmic patterns helps them internalize.
- Sitting the correct distance from the piano is important. A good way for students to check their distance is to make sure their fists reach the fallboard.
- Let the fist "bloom" on the keyboard to create a good hand position.
- Roll the wrists while playing to keep them flexible; stopping wrist movement produces tension. Use the "cat back" motion: move the wrist up to keep the fingers and wrist flexible.
- If a student starts playing a note with tension, ask him or her to relax after striking the note.
- If a student does not like a certain piece, change the words or dynamics.
- Teach two 30 minute lessons each week for the first two or three books, then go to one 45 minute lesson per week.

(continued on page 4)

### Strategies To Improve Your Studio

With the school year just around the corner, MTNA would like to help you to develop strategies to improve your studios and profits.

MTNA has formed a partnership with Nova Merchant Services, which allows members' businesses to begin to accept credit cards for payments. This service will ensure consistent payment cycles and will improve your billing process for both your studio and your students. For more information on the potential benefits of taking advantage of this partnership, visit <http://www.mtna.org/Programs/MerchantServices/tabid/598/Default.aspx>

Another way to sustain business is to increase services and develop creative marketing strategies like branching out into Recreational Music Making (RMM). This concept focuses on teaching retirees or adults with some disposable income and time. Along with expanding your studio, you also can branch out to this market by visiting country clubs, retirement communities, nursing homes and so on. For more information, check out the special focus on the RMM program and the adult learner at the 2010 MTNA National Conference. More information about this track will be available soon.

To promote excitement with current students eager to learn and to retain those in your studio who may be ambivalent about continuing, look to develop new programs. Check out MTNA's "Music for Everyone Programs." Maybe you can develop a studio festival or extra recital program! Visit this link for information <http://www.mtna.org/Programs/MusicForEveryone/tabid/280/Default.aspx>

MTNA continues to work on your behalf as the national mouthpiece for the importance of music. In times like these, it is important to remind the decision makers that music and the arts have an important and necessary position in all lives. MTNA will work to assist you in whatever we can and offer ideas and solutions to the independent music teacher.

Also, be sure to attend the 2010 MTNA National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This will be MTNA's 124th National Conference and will once again be the largest gathering of independent and collegiate music teachers in the country. To find out more about the conference or to register, visit <http://members.mtna.org/conference2010/index.html> and check out the December/January MTNA Conference Preview Issue of *American Music Teacher*.

## Annual Museum Holiday Performance

The Anchorage Museum has invited students of the Anchorage Keyboard Teachers Association to play seasonal and other appropriate music at the museum on two occasions: December 6, 2009 from 2:15 – 3:00 p.m. and December 20 from 1:30 – 2:15 p.m. On each Sunday afternoon in December, the museum opens its doors to varied holiday musical programs provided by Anchorage performers.

Students at the late Elementary II level or above may participate. The museum is looking for a diversity of styles that is not limited to carols but may also include classical, Chanukah, Kwaanza, etc. Solos and duets are allowed; also piano accompanying another instrument. Although pieces do not need to be memorized they need to be thoroughly prepared to meet the museum's expectations of performance. Dress requirements include dress pants and shirt for boys and dress or dressy outfit for girls appropriate for piano performance. Jeans are not appropriate attire.

There will be three 15 minute slots available to teachers on each of the performance days. Teachers will be responsible to fill that time with students performing 1–2 pieces. Slots are available on a first come, first serve basis.

The deadline to enter is **October 10, 2009**. By **November 20**, I will need the names of the performing students and their selections. Please submit to:

Connie McFarlane  
5620 E. 98th Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99507

You may contact me at [Kmcfar747@aol.com](mailto:Kmcfar747@aol.com) or 333-4970 for further information or to reserve a slot.

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Date for Performance: \_\_\_\_\_

(AMTA Conference Notes, continued)

### Stages of Talent Development

#### Ages 4-6: Exploratory Stage

- Fun
- Spirit of play
- Curiosity
- Involvement

#### Ages 7-13: Industry Stage

- Keep lessons positive and encouraging even when student is not improving.
- Find areas where student shines.
- Support self-esteem.

#### Ages 13-20: Identity Stage

- Students can have competition between music and other identities. These do not always have to conflict.
- One student grew up on a farm, and saw music as a way to learn something larger.
- Skill-based identity can balance out imitation of peers in drinking, tattoos, etc. "I am good at piano so I identify and am passionate about it."
- Identity versus identity diffusion
- Nurturing leads to competence, identity, passion. Nurturing needs to continue through college.
- Find ways to embellish a simple piece.
- Adapt to each student's needs and learning style.

#### Age-Appropriate Teaching

- For all levels, use ACE=Analysis-Creativity-Expression
- Use various ways to teach note direction: move a toy up and down, then over the keyboard. or play notes on a xylophone.

- Encourage and be positive even when students get something wrong. Acknowledge each attempt. Notice when the child gets tired or distracted, and limit the focus to one concept.
- Very young students (age 4-6) just enjoy the experience.
- Somewhat older students (7-13) enjoy self accomplishment. Incorporate praise, encouragement, high expectations, and be business-like during lessons.
- Children like to be in the teacher position. If a child gets discouraged, immediately give them tools to success.
- Identify feelings of lack of ability versus lack of effort. Help your students find the same conclusion as you would find.
- Remind students that learning is a process.
- Make up stories to help students compose.
- Teach 5-finger positions for transposing.
- Develop pride in students – invite them in.
- Be aware of "teachable moments" – go where the student leads you, rather than always following a set curriculum.

At the end of the first day of the conference, Mr. Faber led a parent-student-teacher discussion. Due to limited space, the rest of the conference overview will appear in next month's newsletter.

Compiled by Freya Wardlaw-Bailey

## Guidelines for Organ Scholarships at Anchorage Lutheran Church

### I. Purpose of Organ Lesson Scholarships

- a. To encourage qualified young people in grades 6-12 to study organ and to develop the skills and commitment to serve as church musicians.
- b. To accomplish the above by offering qualified applicants a limited number of scholarships for free instruction in organ playing, the equivalent of 15 weeks of half-hour lessons.

### II. Qualifications

- a. Piano Repertory
  1. Student should be playing at least at the level of Clementi Sonatinas.
  2. Student should play with accuracy, rhythmic security, expressiveness, and appropriate interpretation.
- b. Piano Technique
  1. Student must be able to play two-octave scales and two-octave arpeggios.
  2. Emphasis should be on accuracy, steady rhythm, and correct fingering – not on speed.

### III. Terms of the Scholarships

- a. Instruction
  1. Student will receive one free 30-minute lesson every week for a period of 15 weeks.
  2. The lesson is to be scheduled at a time convenient to both teacher and student, as well as the calendar of Anchorage Lutheran Church.
  3. If either teacher or student misses a lesson because of illness or other valid reason, a makeup lesson MAY be scheduled at the teacher's discretion.
- b. Practice
  1. Student must arrange for practice time on an organ with at least two manuals and a 32-note pedal board.
  2. Student will practice weekly an amount of time to be decided with the teacher.
  3. Student is to follow the teacher's instructions and prepare lessons to the best of his/her ability.
- c. Organ Shoes and Music Books  
The student is responsible for providing teacher-approved organ shoes and all music assigned by the teacher.
- d. Subsequent Study  
If the student wishes to continue studying with the teacher beyond the 15-week scholarship period, he/she may do so by consent of the teacher and by paying the teacher's standard fee for lessons from that time on.

- e. Termination  
If the student misses more than two lessons without good reason, or in other ways fails to honor the terms of the scholarship, the scholarship may be terminated at the teacher's discretion, upon consultation with the governing body of ALC.
- f. Culmination expectation  
At the end of fifteen weeks of lessons the student will be expected to play one piece for a service at Anchorage Lutheran Church. Time and date can be negotiated, but it is suggested that this happen soon after or at the very end of the fifteen weeks.

### IV. Application for Scholarship – Lessons begin in January, 2010. Scholarship applicants and winner will be notified by mid-December, 2009.

- a. Deadline: **November 30, 2009**
- b. Contact **Marcia Stratman**, Director of Music, for information:  
**Anchorage Lutheran Church, 1420 N Street,  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907.272.5323 or 907.248.6112  
mdstratman@alaska.com**
- c. Application form
  1. Student's name, address, telephone, and e-mail address.
  2. Parent or guardian's name, address, telephone, and e-mail address.
  3. Student's age and grade in school.
- d. Musical experience
  1. Piano – number of years studied.
  2. Any other instruments – number of years studied.
  3. Voice experience (school chorus, church choir, lessons) – number of years studied.
  4. Essay- Why do you want to study organ?
  5. Statement of Commitment –  
Signed by student, parents, and current piano teacher.
    1. Commitment to practice.
    2. Commitment to attend lessons and to notify teacher in advance of any legitimate reason for missing a lesson.
    3. Commitment to follow teacher's instructions.
    4. Understanding that if a student fails to honor terms of the scholarship, the scholarship may be terminated at the teacher's discretion, upon consultation with the governing body of ALC.
    5. Recommendation from current piano teacher.
- e. Audition (by CD or tape to be submitted with application)
  1. Applicant will play two piano pieces, one of them from memory, if possible.
  2. Applicant will play 2 two-octave scales and 1 two-octave arpeggio of his/her choosing.

### “Concerts at Anchorage Lutheran”

**has three performing groups on the calendar so far for the Fall.**

Sunday, October 4, at 4 p.m. – Glacier Brass Quintet

Sunday, November 8, at 4 p.m. – Oboist Sharman Piper in recital

Sunday, November 15, at 4 p.m. – The Crow Creek Pipes and Drums

Please mark them on your calendar and plan to attend. These are excellent opportunities to bring family and friends to hear outstanding local musicians. Admission is free, but donations are gratefully accepted.

## **Virginia Waring International Piano Competition**

I am writing to you from the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, held in Palm Desert, California and I would appreciate your passing on this email about our upcoming Junior (12 and under) and Intermediate (13 - 17) Divisions Competition which will take place in March of 2011.

Our Board of Directors and our Artistic Director, Dr. Patricia Taylor Lee, are interested in exploring new ways of reaching teachers of younger students at a local and state level. We have a Junior and Intermediate Competition every four years, and a Senior (18 - 35) Competition every four years. We just finished a Senior Competition this year, so our next will be the Junior and Intermediate Divisions in 2011.

We are an international competition, attracting contestants from the US, Canada, China, Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand (Junior and Intermediate), in addition to many European countries, Russia, Ukraine, etc. as well, in the Senior Division.

Our judges and master class teachers are well-known performers and pedagogues from all over the world and have included Nelita True, Boris Berman, Jane Bastien, Norma Fisher, Ick Choo Moon, Robert Weirich, Thomas Schumacher, Ann Schein, and Dubravka Tomsic, to name just a few.

We would like teachers in your state who have serious piano students to know about our competition, which offers a variety of cash and performance prizes and has been instrumental in advancing the careers and performance opportunities of our past winners.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Gayle Smithson  
Artistic Liaison for  
Dr. Patricia Taylor Lee

760 773 2575  
[info@vwipc.org](mailto:info@vwipc.org)

## **Anchorage Keyboard Teachers Association**

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