**Presidents Message Annual Meeting 2015 for August 17, 2015**

WELCOME BACK!

We are heading into a “Gala Year” and I couldn’t be more excited about our Journey ahead! I took a lot of PRIDE home with me from GALA 2012, in fact it’s what inspired me to run for President of the HGMC after we returned from Denver that year. I am so proud of what WE have accomplished as a Chorus these past three years. I am very excited to get back to GALA with Adam as our Artistic Director. Adam has helped refine and polish our sound in ways I wasn’t sure was possible, and I know there is a lot of hard work ahead as we continue to grow, but I am confident the HGMC is up for the challenge.

**The HGMC Board has four spots open for election**; **Eddie Diel** is running for another year as **Vice President**. Eddie has been a tremendous help in his support as VP and he has been the leader in establishing our October and February fundraisers as successful and FUN ways for the HGMC to meet their Annual Financial Goals. Eddie has been my Partner on the Board for virtually my entire Presidency. There is no one I would rather have as my VP!

**Kevin Wagner** is also running again, for a second term as **Treasurer**. To say that Kevin is the hardest working, most responsible, and best organized member of the Board is an understatement. As our Treasurer the past two years, (And PR Chair for significantly longer) Kevin is responsible for helping the HGMC to attain the most solid financial footing in its history. I give Kevin my highest endorsement.

We have two or more positions open for **Member at Large** under the current Board Policy. New Chorus Member **Doug Wentz** is running for one position, Doug has proven himself a valuable member of the HGMC right from the start. Doug has been generous in helping with initiatives with the Pride Committee, PR and Member Recruitment, and he single handedly jump-started our Social Committee this past July by hosting an end of the season reception for the Chorus at he and his Partner Lewis’ lovely home in Lancaster. We are very fortunate to have someone as invested in the success of the HGMC as Doug is, and I am confident Doug will make an exceptional Member of the HGMC Board.

If you are interested in running for a position on the Board please contact me ASAP so I can put you on the ballot. We hope to have one other candidate for Member at Large before the Annual Meeting.

We will be taking a few minutes at the beginning of our Board Meeting to recognize **John Folby** (Or as I like to refer to him, our very own Glinda the Good Witch) for his significant contributions to the HGMC. Over the past three years, John has raised over $3000. For the HGMC with his generous Gift Basket Raffle Ticket Sales. John puts these Baskets together himself, and we are truly fortunate to have this Good Fairy-Godmother looking out for us! Please join me in Thanking John for all his efforts. Thanks to all of you as well, for supporting the HGMC with so many Raffle Ticket purchases.

**There are two voting issues for the Annual Meeting**. A document to update **Board Member Policies** and a vote to change **Board Member Term Limits**. Adam, our Secretary Bill Sprout and myself formed a subcommittee at last June’s HGMC Strategic Planning meeting to work on a list of Board Member Policies. The list has been approved by the Executive Board. I am hopeful that this list of expectations for Board members will be helpful in ensuring a productive Board for the HGMC’s future. It will be up to the Boards discretion to enforce policies as needed.

**Position FOR a Bylaw Change to Term Limits (Resolution 2015-01)**

In 2010 the board had a conversation about limiting the number of terms board members could hold consecutively. Paul Foltz, board president at the time, and I, board secretary at the time, began that discussion. I was also the board member responsive for drafting the resolution that made that change with member approval.

There were three basic reasons I believed this was necessary:

1. I felt that people should be required to take a break, thus avoiding burnout;

2. Paul felt that requiring individuals to leave after four years would encourage others to step up to the plate, with which I agreed; and,

3. Enacting this change appeased at least two members who objected to what they thought was a take-over of the organization leadership by “the Triad,” Paul, Kevin Wagner and me. I do not bring up this third point to be petty. First, it’s part of our history and all members, new and long-standing, need to be aware of this. Second, this point is the reason I put forth another change to the bylaws that year, which clearly stipulates our policy when partners or spouses hold board positions at the same time.

However, after nearly five years of application I now disagree with my reasoning and Paul’s on this topic.

Point #1: It seems counterproductive to force someone off the board and out of their office when they don't want to leave, they aren’t burned out and they are doing an amazing job. I’d like now to think that we are all adults here and no one is going to be forced to serve where they don’t want to be.

Point #2: The problem with forcing a qualified, effective individual out of his/her position when they are doing a stellar job is that we run the risk of someone far less qualified or motivated taking over that position due to popularity, not talent, for the position.

Point #3: This objection, as evidenced by the pro-comments coming from me and the con-response coming from Paul, is meritless, in addition to the track record the three of us have for the success of the Chorus.

Jeff has made it clear he would not run for another term even if he was able to do so and I respect that. But what if he or a future president or other board member would like to continue in their position for another two or four years? Why shouldn't s/he be allowed to?

Here’s another point of logic of this topic: If we won’t allow board members to serve more than two consecutive two-year terms, then why doesn’t the same rule of thought apply to the many other positions, such as mine as annual campaign manager? If the thinking of this rule is valid then I should not be able to serve in my capacity after the 2015-16 season. Granted, this section of our bylaws applies only to our elected or appointed board members. But, if the feeling of the board and members is that a board member is “done” after four years then I believe we should apply to all volunteers.

I firmly believe that the changes Paul and I fought for have had enough time to play out; and, I don't believe they have played out well. I strongly urge you to eliminate the term limits.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration, Terry Drew Karanen, July 31, 2015.

**Position AGAINST a Bylaw Change to Term Limits (Resolution 2015-01)**

(This is how the Bylaw reads now)

**Recognizing that to facilitate new faces and energy, and to prevent burnout, the Board, with the approval of the membership, revised the Section 5.7.B (Terms of Office/Term Limitations) to read:**

***Individuals may serve only two (2) full terms, e.g., four (4) years. At the end of such period, the individual must rotate off the board for at least one (1) year. The exception to this rule pertains to the Past President, as outlined in Section 5.8. At the end of his/her one-year ex-officio Board status the one-year rule applies;***

***and, Further recognizing that consistency in the leadership of board positions has greatly contributed***

***to the financial success and expansion of the HGMC into new areas; and,***

***Acknowledging that any member in good standing can run for open Board positions; and,***

***Further acknowledging that requiring a qualified individual, willing to continue in his/her position on the Board beyond two terms, which would require a winning vote of the entire membership to occur;***

The primary reasons for having term limits have not changed since they were enacted several years ago.

A Board of Directors must have the regular infusion of new energy in order to fulfill its sole mission as a dynamic caretaker of an organization. Dynamism is what keeps an organization healthy, keeps it fiscally sound and makes certain that it progresses in the development of its mission. If a Board is allowed to become codified into a particular group of individuals, it limits the organization’s potential to only what that particular group of individuals wants to do, how they want to see things done, how and where they want to see the organization grow/progress. Potentially, permanent Boards can become stagnant and can damage an organization by crafting policies and following procedures that are easy and comfortable for themselves but may not be the most productive for the organization.

The point of a Board is not just functional. It is also legal, and that legal burden needs to be relinquished from time to time. This is in the board member's best interest because they should not be expected to assume the long-term legal responsibilities of an organization. It is also in the organization's best interest because the organization should be allowed to steer itself in other legal directions, which becomes very difficult so long as a board consists of long-standing members.

Politically, lack of term limits leads to a board hierarchy that compromises the very purpose of a board, which is to objectively work to allow the organization to fulfill its mission. If we are serving the will of one or a few long-standing board members, which tends to naturally happen in this scenario, a new person, brave enough to come onto such a Board doesn't want to upset the people who have been around and seemingly know everything that is best for the organization. Consequently we are no longer serving the organization but rather the members of the Board. A similar scenario can play out in the artistic life of the organization. An Artistic Director gets too comfortable with the long standing Board who he is able to convince to allow him to program as he wishes. All resistance to his ideas vanishes; all reasons to explore artistically are gone. Also gone is any need to justify questionable choices, any expansion of taste level, knowledge sets or questions and you are left with the same Christmas routine year after year and you’ll watch your audience dwindle away.

Term limits prevents the potential of ‘rule by a few’ which is exactly the type of Board this organization has had to deal with in the past. The same people populated the Board seats for years on end until they were so used up that they refused to serve any longer and then were replaced by carefully selected candidates for election that would simply agree with the senior majority who themselves bowed to the whims of the Artistic Director of the time. This also led to a financial meltdown in the organization due to perceived, if not actual, illicit money dealings that became one of the primary causes of the chorus having to take a performance “sabbatical”.

Another primary duty of a Board is to find qualified candidates to fill Board seats that share the vision of the organization and want to help further it. Seeking out and vetting new candidates should be an ongoing process for the Board not one that is relegated, as it is at present, to about a month before the annual meeting when there is a scramble to find people to fill the upcoming open seats. This is no way to develop a healthy Board. The Board has the power to appoint members or they may be elected. Our Board has to move away from the singer dominated structure and toward the community member selected model and one of the first questions that a potential community person will pose after being asked to serve is ‘how long of a commitment is it’ The response they will be looking for is a specific “2 year term with a max commitment for two terms or 4 years total”. What they will not agree to is a nebulous “as long as you’d like to stay with us”.

The “consistency in the leadership of board positions” mentioned above, I contend, is something that has come about because of the term limitations that were instituted seven years ago. Long standing members were required to cycle off the Board making room for new people to come onto the Board and the cycling off forced the general chorus member to give serious thought to stepping up to a position or see their organization begin to falter. There is an implied fallacy in the proposed change. It is that having a person cycle off the Board precludes that person from serving in a new or continuing to serve in any capacity. If the Board wants them to serve and they are willing to do it, then there is nothing in the by-laws that prevents that from happening. The person simply loses the vote privilege and title of “Board person”. If someone is an ace bookkeeper for example, it could be argued that the Board has the power to have that person do all the chorus’ business paperwork and as long as the Treasurer reviews and approves it, the Treasurer would still be fulfilling the spirit of the bylaw defining his/her job duties.

Term limits are standard practice for non-profit Boards and I hope that the membership will see the virtue of them and vote to reject this amendment to the By-Laws.

**Submitted by Paul R. Foltz with additional input from Adam Gustafson, A.D.**

Please take a look at all the sides of the term limit issue before you make your decision.\*

Our **2015/16 Annual Budget** has already been approved by the Board thanks to Kevin Wagner’s diligence and efficiency. I have provided a copy of the Annual Budget for your perusal.

The 2015/16 HGMC Calendar SO FAR:

First Full Rehearsal Mon. Aug. 24 7pm/ Auditions at 6:30

No Rehearsal Monday Sept. 7-Labor Day Holiday

Saturday October 31, Halloween Fundraiser at 704 Lounge

Wed. December 2 DRESS REHEARSAL DATE, PLEASE RESERVE

Friday, December 4, 2015 7:30 First Reform Church Lancaster, Winter Concert Preview

Sunday, December 6, 4pm UU Clover Lane WINTER CONCERT 2015

Friday, December 11, 2015. 7:30 HCC York, Winter Concert, Encore

Sunday, December 13, 4pm Unity, Enola, Winter Concert, Encore

Monday January 25, 2016 start of Spring Season

Sunday February 7, 2016 February Fundraiser 704 Lounge

Wednesday, May 4 DRESS REHEARSAL DATE, PLEASE RESERVE

Saturday May 7, 7:30 pm HCC York, Spring Concert Preview

Sat/Sun. May 14/15 8pm/2pm SPRING CONCERT Penn State Harrisburg

July 2-6, 2016 GALA

July 29/30 Voices United-Harrisburg Pride

I am still waiting to hear back from Centerplate and Penn State Lavender Grad. for dates, and we are talking about doing a HGMC Pub Crawl to promote our Winter and/or Spring Concerts, so write those (and THESE) dates in your calendar as they come available. We will need to “Pay the Rent” one or two Sundays for the UU’s as well.

**PLEASE MARK ALL DATES IN YOUR CALENDAR** DRESS REHEARSALS ARE CRITICALLY IMPROTANT for on-time commitment. NO ONE SHOULD BE MISSING OR LATE TO DRESS REHEARSALS. Exact times for Dress Rehearsals will be shared ASAP.

**Let’s start off this year on STRONG FOOTING.** I am committed to devoting significant time of my own every week to reviewing our music, identifying the areas I need to work on, and being prepared to make each rehearsal productive. If we invest the time we need during the week, each Monday rehearsal should be an opportunity to have a rewarding time making music together. We are going to have a great year with Adam leading us. Let’s bring our A GAME to Denver in 2016!

**Next Board Meeting is Sunday September 27, 6pm UU Meeting Room**

Thank you all for your attention at the Annual Meeting!

Jeff Mitchell

President HGMC