

# The SACRED HARP PUBLISHING COMPANY *Newsletter*

VOL. I, NO. I Stories about singers and singings, our music and traditions, and Sacred Harp's present-day growth.

MAR. 2012

## Sacred Harp Comes to Belfast, Northern Ireland

Text by Robert Wedgbury, photographs by Ewan Paterson | Cork, Ireland



Sacred Harp singers gathered in Belfast pose for a group picture.

THE evening of Friday, October 14th, 2011 marked the beginning of a weekend of Sacred Harp singing in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The singing was held at Rosemary Hall, right next to Belfast's All Souls Church. The weekend of events had been co-organised by American expat Barton Creeth and William Duddy of the Belfast Trad society. Barton, who had already been in contact with the Cork Sacred Harp singers, had arranged with New York City-based singing master Aldo Ceresa to put on a workshop, which would be followed by an informal all-day singing on the Saturday. The Cork All-Day Singing would be held the following weekend.

Earlier that Friday afternoon, sixteen of the regular Cork singers set off in four cars and traveled the five hour journey to the north of Ireland. By the time the cars from Cork had arrived at 9 pm, Aldo was already in full swing with his workshop. There were approximately twenty people in attendance—seated in the traditional four-part, hollow square seating arrangement. Three quarters of those present were from Belfast. All were completely new to Sacred Harp singing, with the exception of Barton and his wife Jaime

Also in attendance were a few singers who had travelled up from Dublin and Waterford, and three other U.S. singers, Patrick Paglen, Al McCready and Mike Nord. Al had traveled to Ireland for the Cork All-Day Singing and Mike attended after having first dropped in on the Cork singers' weekly singing a few days earlier.

Instead of the passing a basket for donations, there was an admission charge for the workshop and all-day singing. Though this is a relatively common practice at singing schools and workshops, it was a surprise to many of the visiting singers to be asked to pay for admission to the all-day

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## Introducing the Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter

Jesse P. Karlsberg | Atlanta, GA

I am happy to announce the first issue of the *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter*—a web-based publication that will feature items such as trip reports from Sacred Harp conventions and singing schools, short biographical pieces on Sacred Harp singers, other news of interest to Sacred Harp singers, and reprints of memorable articles from the *National Sacred Harp Newsletter* the Pub. Co. published in the 1980s and 1990s. This issue includes accounts of singing schools held last fall in Germany and Northern Ireland, an update on the forthcoming enlarged *Georgian Harmony* featuring the music of Raymond C. Hamrick, a reflection by Karen Rollins on her father, Lonnie L. Rogers, and an article from 1985 on the dedication of a historical marker to B. F. White in Hamilton, Georgia.

We hope you find these articles interesting and enjoyable, but regardless of what you think, we want your feedback! There is a space online ([originalsacredharp.com/newsletter](http://originalsacredharp.com/newsletter)) where you can comment on any of the articles we publish. We also invite you to write in to [jesse@originalsacredharp.com](mailto:jesse@originalsacredharp.com) with news, questions, corrections, and ideas for future articles—whether you want to write them yourself or not! ■

### Editorial Information

Date published: March 2012

Editor: Jesse P. Karlsberg

Editorial email:

[jesse@originalsacredharp.com](mailto:jesse@originalsacredharp.com)

Design: Leigh Cooper

### Sacred Harp Comes to Belfast ◀ cont from 1



Aldo Ceresa leads a singing school in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

singing. The fee may have been due to the fact that the event had been organized through a trad music society rather than an established Sacred Harp singing community.

By the time all the Cork singers had arrived Aldo had finished running through the beginning rudiments and had just started leading the group in singing songs from *The Sacred Harp*. The Cork singers' arrival added momentum to the flow of the workshop and, of course, contributed substantially to the volume of the singing! Enthusiasm took over the class as the evening wore on and by the time the workshop ended at approximately 10:30 pm, some of the more experienced American and Irish singers were taking turns leading examples of the different types of song in the book, at Aldo's request. The Belfast newcomers and the Dublin contingent had both decided by the end of the night to try and start their own groups as soon as they could, with core members from each city eager to begin making plans.

The following morning at 10:30 am the all-day singing began with a continuation of the singing school during the morning session. Only a handful of Belfast singers had turned out for the singing school, but this certainly did not dampen the mood of those in attendance. After lunch Aldo went

through a few more songs at the request of the remaining Belfast contingent and an informal singing then began. Aldo called the leaders beginning with the bass section and continuing around the square. With a short pause for a recess in the middle of the afternoon, and after singing twenty-eight songs, the group finished around 4:45 pm with "Parting Friend" (p. 414 in *The Sacred Harp*).

Eager to keep on singing the group discussed the idea with William Duddy of Belfast Trad and decided to meet up again at 11 am the following morning. William also told us that Reverend Chris Hudson from All Souls Church had heard the singing earlier in the day and had invited us to sing Sacred Harp at the end of his service the following morning for the congregation to experience.

The next morning we ran over eight songs that Aldo had suggested for the service. We then walked across the grounds through the back of the church and the Reverend introduced us to the congregation. We sang standing on the altar in a semicircle and the sound was incredible. The whole church was filled with Sacred Harp music. Being involved in the performance was quite moving and the exultant feeling took us all by surprise. There was a very warm response from the highly receptive and



## Singing Report

# German Singing Schools: Sacred Harp Comes to the Land of J. S. Bach

Michael Walker | London, U.K.

**I**N October of 2011 I organized a weekend concert tour in Germany with a group of Sacred Harp tourists from the United Kingdom. Our trip itinerary included touring a medieval city and UNESCO world heritage site, looking in at an erstwhile Cistercian abbey which is now a prison, sampling local sausage in country inns in northern Bavaria, and—last but not least—assisting at two singing schools in Würzburg and Frankfurt taught by New York City-based singing master Aldo Ceresa, a good friend of mine.

Sacred Harp singing schools in the land of Bach? It all started in early 2010, when Ms. Jutta Pflugmacher contacted me to inquire about the prospect of bringing shape note singing workshops to Germany. Ms. Pflugmacher, who had lived in the U.K. during the mid-1990s and had encountered shape note music there (in the context of some of the early all-day singings held in the U.K.), had been reintroduced to the music at *Northern Harmony* concerts in Switzerland. She believed that shape note music could be a success in the German-speaking world.

In early 2011, local organizer Keith Macdonald (who ultimately assumed the role of chief organizer on the German side) and I discussed how and where we might hold Sacred Harp singing schools in Germany. We ultimately agreed to hold two all-day singing schools (each with an introductory demonstration singing) in the towns of Würzburg (a



Sacred Harp singers Aldo, Ian, Jacqui, Cath, Judy, Helen, Ted, Dave, and Michael in the German Countryside Photograph by Ian West.

university town in Northern Bavaria) and Frankfurt (a major town in west-central Germany and the home of Germany's largest international airport). Thus, in late October 2011, Aldo, Ian, Jacqui, Cath, Judy, Helen, Ted, Dave and I found ourselves in the German countryside, where we visited and sang in the famous pilgrimage church in Franconia, Northern Bavaria of Maria im Weingarten, Volkach, toured the medieval city of Bamberg for an afternoon, and acted as "ringers" at the singing schools.

We were joined in Würzburg and Frankfurt by Alison Mitchell Zunklei, a singer from Alabama who now lives in Germany, and Fynn Titford-Mock, an English singer who was also living in Germany at the time.

At the Würzburg singing school we had roughly thirty attendees, including singer Harald Grundner with an entourage of singers from the local weekly Sacred Harp singing he founded in Bremen, Germany.

At the end of the Würzburg singing school, a local friend of mine and I conducted a guided tour of the town for the attendees, and we then all went for a meal together. The next morning saw the British group packing up for an early start to drive to Frankfurt for the second all-day singing school.

Germany—just as other places in continental Europe where Sacred Harp

In an effort to help Sacred Harp singers abroad obtain songbooks despite prohibitively high shipping costs, the Sacred Harp Publishing Company is offering a discount on international orders for a case of books (6). The price per case is now the same as for a U.S. order: \$135.00. Please note: this rate applies to case sales only (not individual orders). Please contact the ordering team at [ordering@originalsacredharp.com](mailto:ordering@originalsacredharp.com) with any questions.

## National Newsletter

## Citizen of the Month: Lonnie Rogers

Karen Rollins | Bowdon, Georgia

**Editor's Note:** Life-long Sacred Harp singer and much-loved resident of Ephesus, Georgia, Lonnie Rogers passed away on February 15, 2012 just a few months short of his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. His daughter, Karen Rollins, wrote about her father for the June 1988 issue of the National Sacred Harp Newsletter. To honor the memory of Mr. Lonnie we are reprinting this article, and have asked Karen Rollins to write a new reflection on her father, posted below.

Lonnie Lee Rogers was one of 14 children born to George Franklin "Frank" Rogers and Tessie Word Rogers. He was born on May 3, 1916, and he has spent most of his life in the community of Ephesus in Heard County, Georgia. Lonnie was introduced to Sacred Harp at an early age, for he was born into a singing family. Singing has been a very important part of his life. He met his wife, Vivian Denney, at a Sacred Harp singing, and their love of singing and singers carries them to singings throughout the year.

Lonnie is still active in building and selling lumber; he was recently named Agri-business leader of the year. He is also active in his community, for he has a strong sense that serving God includes serving our fellow man. He has long been a member of the Lions Club and Farm Bureau; he is a past-president of both groups. For twenty-two years, he has served as the first and only mayor of Ephesus. He also acts as Chairman of the Heard County Board of Education, for he is vitally interested in making the world a better place for our youth.

Lonnie and Vivian have five children: Karen Rollins, Karleen Williams, Paige Harrod, Sherry Lovvorn, and Denney Rogers. Both stay busy working, enjoying their grandchildren, furthering the cause of Sacred Harp, traveling and attending meetings. Lonnie is known for his willingness to lend a helping hand; his friendly manner; his belief in the preservation of our heritage; his love of God, family, America, Sacred Harp, and mankind; and his penchant for telling funny (?) jokes.

—Karen Rollins

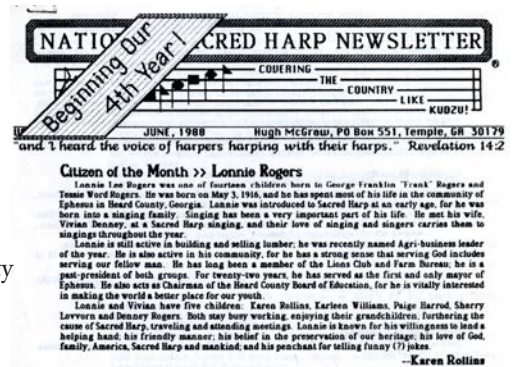
(From Vol. 4, No. 1 of the  
*National Sacred Harp Newsletter*)

## A Reflection, 14 Years On

WHEN I wrote the blurb about Dad for the newsletter in 1988, I thought, paradoxically, that he was an "old man" and that he would always be with us. I have a different perspective since his recent death.

Dad was born in the small community of Ephesus as the seventh of fourteen children. He worked hard and helped his parents survive the Depression. He never went to college, and he did not amass much money. He spent the last few years of his life as a semi-invalid, confined to his home under the care of his family and sitters. Despite his failing body, his mind stayed clear and his outlook remained positive. Even though most of his contemporaries were gone, he received cards, calls, letters, and visits daily. These warmed his heart, blessed his life, and kept him going. When he did pass on just a few months shy of ninety-six years, more than a thousand people came to pay their respects at his visitation and funeral.

How did someone who lived all his life in a small community, never moving more than two miles from where he was born, make so many friends? Part of the answer lies in the loving community of Sacred Harp. Dad loved to sing and he loved the singers. They, in turn, were unbelievably kind to him. After he was unable to travel to singings, the singers came to sing for him. They drove many miles on numerous occasions to sit around his chair and sing. They stayed in touch, sang for him at singings, and sent cards and letters. They let him know that he was not forgotten. The loving circle of people that forms this community kept him in the loop. As a family, we



can not thank you enough for that. Your kindness to him gave him a reason for living and made his days worthwhile.

A man who desires friends must show himself friendly. Being friendly came easy for Dad. He loved all people, especially old people and poor people. He felt that his mission on earth was to serve God by serving and helping his fellow man. In his early thirties, dad had to spend sixteen months of his life on bed rest at a tuberculosis hospital. He made decisions there that shaped the rest of his life. He was thankful to God for restoring his health so that he could return to his young family. He praised God by singing and he served God by serving others. Doing so blessed his life.

Several years ago, dad was asked in an interview to use one word to describe himself. He thought for a while, and then answered "happy." That never changed. He was a happy person throughout his long life. ■

—Karen Rollins



## National Newsletter

## Dedication of the B. F. White Historical Marker

**Editor's note:** With each new collection of posts we will be featuring articles from past issues of the National Sacred Harp Newsletter—a feature we are calling “National Newsletter.” The article below was originally printed on pages 4–5 of Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1985) of the Newsletter. It has been edited to correct typos, and a photograph has been added, but otherwise I have left just as it appeared.

ON Saturday, October 27, 1984 at 10:00 a.m., a group of approximately 150 gathered at Hamilton, Georgia on the town square to pay tribute to Benjamin Franklin White, author of *The Sacred Harp*, 1844. A historic marker was placed in the city park in his honor.

Hugh McGraw, Master of Ceremonies, welcomed the group and, opened the dedication by singing “Holy Manna,” p. 59. After singing the first verse, the group was asked to stand and sing the fifth verse. Scripture and prayer was then led from Psalm 100 by Rev. Mabry Collins, Pastor of Hamilton Baptist Church. Hugh McGraw then led “Webster,” p. 31b; “Look Out” by B. F. White, 1842, p. 90; “Lenox,” p. 40; and “Mear,” p. 49b.

The descendants of B. F. White were then recognized. Some descendants were hearing Sacred Harp music for the first time.

William Steis, from the City of Hamilton, then welcomed everyone on behalf of the city. The mayor was unable to attend the ceremony due to other obligations. While the speaker system was being repaired, “New Britain,” p. 45t was conducted by Hugh McGraw. The first, second, fourth, and fifth verses were sung. Hugh then recognized Joe Mahan, Jr., Historic Preservation planner for the lower Chattahoochee Planning Commission for his efforts in establishing the marker.

Katie H. Mahan, Ph.D. Musicologist, Columbus College, Columbus, Georgia, then spoke on B. F. White—“One Man Can Make a Difference.”

Hugh McGraw then welcomed Douglas C. Purcell, Executive Director of the Historic Chattahoochee Commission, Eufaula, Alabama.

Singing resumed with Hugh McGraw



directing “Burk” by B. F. White, 1843, p. 92; “Idumea,” p. 47b; “The Lone Pilgrim” composed by B. F. White while at the grave of a friend, 1850, p. 34i; and “Beach Spring,” p. 8rt. Hugh then spoke on “Why Sacred Harp singing will never die.”

Dr. William J. Reynolds, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Church Music, Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, was then introduced. Dr. Reynolds gave a very interesting and inspiring speech on the life and times of B. F. White.

Joseph B. Mahan then gave a short talk.

The preparation for the unveiling of the marker was then made. Hugh introduced B. F. White’s great-great grandson, Donald S. Clarke, who unveiled the marker. The descendants of B. F. White gathered around the marker for pictures.

Hugh McGraw then led “The Morning Trumpet,” 1847, p. 85; “Send a Blessing,” 1859, p. 369; “Help Me to Sing,” 1859, p. 376 and “The Hill of Zion,” p. 565, all by B. F. White.

Hugh then asked the group to rise and sing “Parting Hand,” p. 62—only the words were sung. During the song members of the group greeted their



**Top:** Singers gather around the B. F. White historical marker in Hamilton, October 1, 2005. Photograph by James Robert Chambliss.

**Bottom:** The B. F. White Historical Marker in Hamilton Georgia. Photograph by Rivers Langley, 2011.

neighbor and took the traditional “parting hand.”

Hugh then thanked everyone so graciously for coming and making this historical day an event to be remembered.

(You may obtain a copy of Dr. William J. Reynolds’ speech on the life and times of B. F. White for \$2.00.) ■

**Sacred Harp Comes to Belfast ◀ cont from 2**

appreciative members of the church congregation.

After the service we were given tea, coffee, sandwiches, and cakes and made to feel very welcome. The excellent coffee was especially well received and appreciated after a long day of singing and a late evening the night before! We then gathered in the car park on the grounds of the church and sang three more songs in the blissful sunshine. This was followed by lunch and another afternoon of informal yet highly enjoyable Sacred Harp singing.

The whole weekend was intended to introduce Sacred Harp singing to Belfast and was very much a trial run for the local singers and organizers. Many plans were made to start weekly singings in Belfast and Dublin and overall the feeling was that the friendships formed and connections made during the weekend would help further the development of Sacred Harp singing on the island. We all wish Barton and the singers in Belfast the very best with their future singing. I'm sure the music will bring as much joy to you as it has done to us in Cork. Lastly, Rosemary Hall proved to be a wonderful singing venue and could be a possible consideration as the location for an Ireland Convention over the coming years. Watch this space!

Many thanks to Barton Creeth, William Duddy, and Aldo Ceresa for putting together the weekend, to Eimear O'Donovan for taking the minutes, to Ewan Paterson for allowing us to include his photographs with this piece, and to all the singers who made the trip to Belfast. Shout on! ■



**Top:** Sadhbh O'Flynn and Vicky Langan, both of Cork Ireland, sing in the sunshine.

**Bottom:** Mike Morrisoe, of Cork, Ireland, and Mike Nord, of Northampton, United States, lead at the Belfast all-day singing.

**German Singing Schools ◀ cont from 3**

singing has gained a foothold in recent years (Poland, France)—is a country with its own rich indigenous linguistic, cultural, musical, and religious heritage. Sacred Harp singing is clearly a foreign import in these places. This distinguishes Germany and Poland from the U.K. and (arguably) Ireland, where there are natural points of connection with the British/Celtic origins of many of the tunes and with the religious poetry of the Sacred Harp.

Nevertheless, Jutta Pflugmacher may be proven right. Already in January 2012, the local group of singers in Bremen, Germany hosted roughly thirty singers (including me) from Ireland, Poland and the U.K. for a weekend of singing and fellowship at their singing space in Bremen—a World War II bunker.

Some of the German singers attended the Irish Convention in Cork in March 2012, along with many British singers. Dozens of singers from all of the European singing communities are planning to attend the U.K. Convention in September, Camp Fasola Europe (held the following week near Gdansk, Poland), as well as the Polish Sacred Harp Convention which will immediately follow the European session of Camp.

Through reciprocal travel between the various European Sacred Harp communities European singers are forming relationships while helping to support each other's growing singings. These inter-European relationships mirror the personal and community ties created between singers in across the United States in the 1980s and 1990s when southern singers traveled out of their home regions to support new singings in distant parts of the United States and members of new singing groups began traveling to the South and to each other's singings. It is an exciting time for Sacred Harp in Europe. Come sing with us! ■



## News

## New Edition of the Georgian Harmony Planned

John Hollingsworth | Ila, Georgia

ABOUT the time *The Georgian Harmony*—a collection of ninety-two songs by Sacred Harp composer Raymond C. Hamrick of Macon, Georgia—was printed in 2008, Raymond found more of the music he had written earlier and of course I have type-set it. It had not been checked in detail as were the songs included in the first *Georgian Harmony*, and to help him edit the music people from at least eight states (and one European country), at various locations and times, sang and recorded most of these songs. The comments were collected and discussed with Raymond, and changes and corrections have been made. A few songs have not yet been sung, but we plan to do that soon.

Instead of printing a second volume, we currently plan to publish a second combined edition containing about two hundred-fifty pages of music. Bill Hollingsworth has set the first weekend in September as the target date for the debut of the second edition, and I will try very hard to meet that deadline.

We are making available a limited number of first edition *Georgian Harmony* songbooks, autographed by Raymond and Hugh McGraw (on the page of the pen and ink drawing of the two by Saro Lynch-Thomason). These books are available for \$50.00 (plus shipping) and will go to help defray the cost of printing the second edition. If you are interested in purchasing one of these, please contact me, John Hollingsworth.

The next all day singing from the current edition of *The Georgian Harmony*, will be at the Raymond Hamrick Birthday Singing held on the Saturday before the second Sunday of June (the 9th) at the Civic Center in Roberta, Georgia.

The help of the community in singing and commenting on the music is much appreciated by all of us. ■

## Sightings

## Bruce Springsteen's Sacred Harp Sample

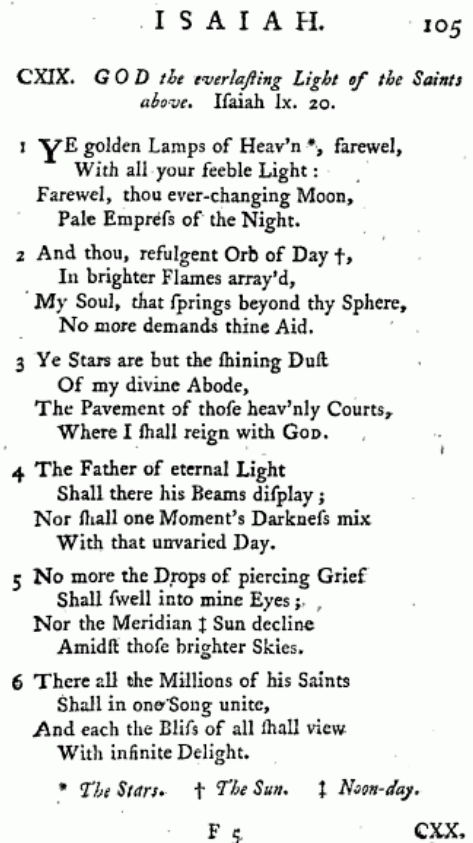
John Plunkett and Jesse P. Karlsberg | Tucker and Atlanta, Georgia

BRUCE Springsteen's new song "Death to My Hometown" samples "The Last Words of Copernicus" from the 1869 *Sacred Harp*, by Sarah Lancaster of Buena Vista, Georgia. The source for the sample is Alan Lomax's recording of the 1959 United convention at Corinth Baptist Church in Fyffe, Alabama, which was reissued in 1997 by Rounder Records and is now available online through the Association for Cultural Equity Online Archive.

You can hear the sample in the musical intro to the song and in the musical breaks after every repetition of the song's chorus. What you hear is mostly the song's alto line at the start of the fuge, which was added to the song by S. M. Denson in 1911 (it was a 3-liner in the 1869 book). It appears this alto was adapted from the alto written by James Landrum White for his 1909 Fifth Edition of *The Sacred Harp*.

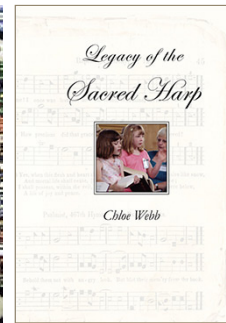
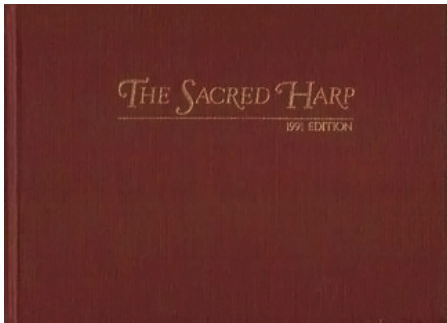
Lancaster chose to set her tune to the first two stanzas of a 1755 hymn text by Philip Doddridge. The title of Doddridge's hymn was "God the everlasting Light of the Saints above." It was based on Isaiah 60:20. Sarah Lancaster associated these words with the sixteenth-century astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus in titling her composition.

One more bit of trivia: When it was first included in *The Sacred Harp*, Sarah Lancaster's song had the designation "For the Organ," which referred to a newspaper published by B. F. White from 1852–1862. If that designation is correct, Lancaster probably wrote the song either just before or during the Civil War. ■



The Sacred Harp Publishing Company is a non-profit organization that promotes traditional Sacred Harp singing, community, and culture across the United States and around the world. SHPC publishes *The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition* and other books, recordings, and resources that support Sacred Harp singing.

Books available



<b><i>The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition</i></b>	The best collection of sacred songs, hymns, odes, and anthems ever offered the singing public for general use.
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For additional issues of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter plus audio and video extras. Visit [originalsacredharp.com/newsletter/](http://originalsacredharp.com/newsletter/).

Find a singing in your area and learn more about Sacred Harp singing. Annual singings are held almost every weekend of the year, and there are monthly or weekly practice singings in most US states and several other countries. All welcome beginners! Visit [fasola.org/singings](http://fasola.org/singings) for a singing directory.

Consider attending Camp Fasola, a weeklong all-ages summer camp teaching Sacred Harp singing and traditions. Visit [campfasola.org](http://campfasola.org) for more information.

