



* SENIOR SAUNTERINGS *

August 2010

A newsletter of activities and events for senior adults 55-years and older Volume II Issue 8

MUSIC ENRICHES LIFE AT ANY AGE

By Paul and Peggy Hall

One Sunday morning I asked a group of 4th - 6th graders to tell me something about God. "God is holy," one said. When I asked how he knew he said, "The song said so." Then I asked what song? "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," was his reply. For about fifteen minutes those youngsters told me about their knowledge of God because of hymns and gospel songs they had learned. What a powerful, yet surreptitious teaching tool.

It is an encouragement to Peggy and me to see people of all ages, including seniors from BCOC and the community, at the Alabama Symphony Orchestra concerts. That such cultural events are important to you and to the community are refreshing.

So, what is it that we respond to when we hear the music of such a fine regional orchestra play? For one thing, it is abundantly apparent that great technical skill, acquired by years of training and experience, is required to pull off a performance deemed by the newspaper critic worthy of four or five stars; but, beyond that, our souls are enriched by aesthetic experience which gets us outside the everydayness of life. In fact, we say the concert was "beautiful."

So, what is it about beauty that we like so much? Peggy and I say that beauty is one of the attributes of God that we call absolute; i.e., God is "absolute beauty" - God is "absolute

truth" - God is "absolute goodness." Yes, but we all know that the concert was not "absolute beauty." That's right. We're not saying that any orchestra could ever play an "absolutely beautiful" program. What we are saying is that all attempts to perform beautifully, or to speak truthfully, or to be good are "approximations" of God's absoluteness. We'll never get anything that perfect. Musicians are never satisfied with their effort; they work and hope to keep improving. Peggy and I have said we want to improve our approximations.

Another thing about music and its power to enrich the soul is that it makes us feel good! There are times when music is not done well and we recoil appropriately. But when it touches us we feel better. How does this happen? Allow just a brief mention of the brain. It is in our frontal lobe (that part of the brain behind our eyes) where our pleasure center lies. There are not many people who recoil when the frontal lobe is activated by pleasurable stimuli. Music that we like stimulates our pleasure center. Music we don't like is simply ignored or the source, if electronic, is turned off. We do tend to move toward what we like and away from what we don't like.



From 1982-1992, the two of us directed and accompanied the semi-professional choir, the Samford Community Choir. It was a choir of 38 to 42 voices, all selected on the basis of their musical aptitude, vocal quality and music reading skill. Many had masters' degrees and a few had doctorates. Why would those folks give (it was voluntary) yet another night of their week and perform three concerts between September and June each year for 10 years? They were actually satisfying all three of the qualities we've mentioned. They were learning, they were making better approximations of the absolute, and they were helped to feel good because they were singing better, challenged by all the other good musicians in the choir.

Finally, music touches both of us in ways words simply cannot. We hear prayers, litanies and sermons every week that will compare with those offered up in any church; yet, somehow it is the power of music that connects us with the Spirit of Holiness which urges us forward to better living, empowered in a way neither of us can express. As a result, we feel motivated to seek justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with God.



Baptist Church of the Covenant

Scenes from visit to the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum.
Photos by Jackson Perry.



(left to right) Jack & Shirley Brymer, Sarah Wilson, Jerry & Jo Grantland, Mary Hines and Virginia Jackson



Senior Saunterings for August include visit to Deans' lake house, 5th Sunday at lunch

A return visit to the Logan Martin Lake house of Joe and Carol Dean is scheduled for Thursday, August 19. Following lunch the group, or as many as wish, will enjoy a boat ride on the lake. The Deans' hosted the group two years ago and many have looked forward to a return visit. The bus will leave the church 9:30 a.m. and return at 2:30 p.m. A signup sheet is in the Fellowship Hall. Please indicate the food you will bring (meat, vegetable, salad, dessert).

Sunday, August 29, seniors will enjoy a potluck luncheon at the church immediately following Sunday School. George Crear will provide the program. The meeting will conclude by 1 p.m. A signup sheet, including the type of food you plan to bring, will be posted in the Fellowship Hall later in the month.

Looking Ahead to 2010 Events

- August 19 (Thursday) Joe and Carol Dean's lake house; potluck lunch
- August 29 (Sunday) Potluck lunch at church; program by George Crear
- September 9 (Thurs) Islam Mosque in Hoover; lunch
- September 17 (Fri) Space Center, Huntsville
- October 7 (Thurs) Tannehill State Park; lunch
- October 28 (Thurs) WMU's Worldsong at Cook Springs
- October 31 (Sunday) Potluck at church
- November 18 (Thurs) Lovelady Center and lunch
- December 9 (Thurs) Christmas Lunch at Arlington Home

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