

CONCENTO

October 1st, 2018

Vol. 14, Issue 2

Overture

Last week's testimony of Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh has significance for us as music teachers. Below are some considerations from a liability perspective:

- Never, ever, ever be one-on-one with a student. There should always be another adult in the room, or at the very least within earshot. Make sure it is in your studio policy that you will not teach a lesson unless another adult is around. (Some insurance policies have requirements for parental supervision. You may want to check with your insurance company.)
- Always teach where there are windows and other adults could walk by.
- Consider having a camera record your lessons or your teaching area. You may want to include media release in your studio policy mentioning this.
- Always- ALWAYS- ask permission, every time, before touching a student, anywhere, even if it is just to adjust the simplest change in posture.
- Never make reference to a student's dress or physical appearance. Even positive comments can assign relevance to dress or appearance, and the point should always be to give such things no relevance or value.
- Keep accurate records and a very detailed calendar of what lessons you taught and at what times.
- Record anything that could even possibly be misconstrued down the road immediately in a journal.
- While we are mentors, we are not licensed psychologists or counselors. If a student seeks anything beyond a mentor or teacher role, encourage them and their parents to seek professional counseling.
- Lastly, while most of us are not legally mandated reporters, we do have an ethical duty to report any suspicions of abuse to authorities.

Kevin Peterson, editor

Next Chapter Meeting

The next chapter meeting will be on Tuesday, October 9th at 9:30 at Zion Lutheran Church in Kent. Our presenter will be Dr. Susanna Garcia, whose talk is titled "How eNovative Piano Changed My Life."

Chapter Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Please see the documents attached at the end of the newsletter for minutes from the September meeting and the current bank account status.

New Members- Update Your Yearbooks, and Lunch

Please welcome Svitlana Smaga, Amy Weller, and Lynnette Emme to our chapter! While Svitlana's contact information is already in your yearbook, please add Amy and Lynnette's:

Lynnette Emme: lynnetteemme@gmail.com (253) 736-3790
Amy Weller: solidfoundationpiano@gmail.com (206) 948-6837

In lieu of having refreshments at our November chapter meeting, we will go out for lunch afterwards at an area restaurant (likely near Trader Joe's in Kent). Final details will be in the November newsletter.

District Conference

The annual conference for WSMTA districts I and II will be on Saturday, October 13th from 9-4 at Marysville United Methodist Church. Please see the flyer attached to this newsletter for more information.

Yearbook Corrections

Please correct the following errors in your yearbook:

- Svitlana Smaga's email is smagas@att.net
- MAP deadline is December 20th (pg. 17)
- Scholarship presentation date is to be determined (pg. 24)

Thank you, Lisa!

At the September chapter meeting outgoing president (for four years!) Lisa Hogg was presented with a plaque and flowers with our heartfelt appreciation for her work and leadership. Thank you, Lisa!



Upcoming Events

- October 5-7: Fall Leadership Seminar, Hilton Garden Inn, Yakima (Karen Hollenback, chair)
- October 13: District I & II Conference
- October 15: Dues deadline for renewing members for participation in Music Artistry Program (Stephanie White, chair)
- October 19: District VI Conference, Richland Public Library, featuring Karen Savage
- October 20: District IV Conference, Centralia Church of the Nazarene, featuring Mary Kogen

New Composition

At the October chapter meeting, chapter member and composer Dr. Steve Nehrenberg will perform his latest composition, “Unicrom X: the Unicorn from Outer Space!” This herbivoric, whole tone experiment will make be making it’s earthly premier. Don’t miss this wondrous, one horned, extravaganza! Copies available for just two drachmas.

YAMS

The Young Artist Music Series (YAMS) will be October 12-14 with clinician Dr. Esther Wang (specifics are in the Yearbook). The deadline to sign up is October 1st. Fees for both sessions are due by the October chapter meeting. Please contact Julie Swienty with questions and to register your students.

Tuition Rates and Anti-Trust

Karen Thickstun had an excellent article in the most recent issue of MTNA’s magazine, “American Music Teacher,” relating to the MTNA anti-trust settlement and what teachers charge for lessons. In order to highlight its importance, please see a reprint in full attached to the end of this newsletter.

Happy Birthday in October!

Christine Szabadi
Maki Botkin
Wendy Kwong
Alison Dellicker
Ruriko Helkovsky

Music Artistry Program

What is the Music Artistry Program (MAP)?

For the Student:

- Set goals which encourages preparation beyond the normal weekly routine.
- The process is similar to sports: practice – games – tournaments.
- Perform for a highly-respected visiting artist
- Work one-on-one with the visiting artist to improve your performance
- Receive written comments and a certificate for your hard work

For the Parent:

- The Music Artistry Program serves as a goal for your child to prepare two memorized pieces
- Non-competitive format encourages learning, rather than comparison with others
- Visiting artists are experienced teachers with advanced training, have been carefully screened by WSMTA, are nationally certified by MTNA and many serve on college faculties around the Northwest

For the Teacher:

- Challenge yourself and your students to achieve goals
- Observe your students' lessons from a third-person perspective, often seeing new ways to approach difficult situations or unique problems
- Share ideas and questions with a supportive colleague during one-on-one time with the visiting artist after they has heard all your students
- Discover trends and areas which may need improvement

The Music Artistry Program (MAP) may be organized and carried out by chapters for piano, voice, organ, string, woodwind or brass by April 18. A preliminary report must be filed by November 1st with the MAP chair using an approved adjudicator from the WSMTA adjudicators list.

A non-WSMTA member may participate with a registration of \$125.00 plus student fees. Please contact WSMTA Executive Manager, Kirsten Carlson for registration instructions.

Information for the Teacher

- Procedural information and materials are available for each teacher and are listed below or through your local chapter MAP Chair.
- If you would like to register your students for the Music Artistry Program, please login to the Member Dashboard. You will need to fill out a “Student Registration” and a “Teacher Registration”.
- Do you have a student that needs financial help to enter the Music Artistry Program?
- Click on the link for the [WSMTA Music Artistry Program Subsidy Grant](#) to learn more and apply.

More information will be available at our upcoming chapter meeting!

Studio Openings

Sally Ramsden
Frances Honsberger
Amy Weller
Lynnette Emme
Deanna Dent
Julie Swienty
Svitlana Smaga

District I & II Conference

A Day of Inspiration, Reconnection, and Recharging
through presentations and discussions on various aspects of the

Artistry of Music and Teaching

with your colleagues of District I & II.

Saturday, October 13, 2018 · 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Marysville United Methodist Church · 5600 64th St. NE, Marysville, WA 98270

- **Mary Feagin:** *Entwining Music Therapy Thoughts with Teaching*
- **Ivona Kaminska:** *The Performance Practice of Bach on the Modern Piano*
- **RoseMarie Tamburri:** *From Practice Room to the Marketplace: Tips and Resources for the Professional Music Teacher*
- **Oksana Ezhokina:** *Haydn's Sonatas for an Intermediate Student: Wit, Wisdom and Virtuosity & Piano Master Class*



REGISTRATION FORM

Register by October 7, 2018 to guarantee lunch.

Name _____ Chapter _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration Fees

WSMTA Member \$45 · Non-Member \$50 · Student \$20 · After October 7, 2018 or Day-of-Event \$55

Mail this form with your check payable to **WSMTA District I** to:
Nicole Kim, District II VP, 15805 NE 27th Place, Bellevue, WA 98008

Questions? Contact Nicole Kim at nicoleykim@aol.com

SKC MTA Chapter Meeting - September 11th, 2018

Call to Order 9:53 am

Elena Aleksandrova (President) - Welcome

New Members:

Svitlana Smaga - Piano - Tacoma

Amy Weller - Piano -- Enumclaw

Lynnette Emme - Piano - Covington/Kent

9:57 Mary Kaye Owen- Job Opening in North Tacoma:

Church Accompanist 8K per year (or job sharing ~4K per year)

Conference: October 13th Marysville (Deadline to apply - Oct 7th)

9:59 Elena A. - Position Openings:

Ana Belen Elliott volunteers for Publicity help.

Statement: If anyone has a difficult task that they would like to share with a partner, inform the presidents so they can find someone.

10:01 Deanna Dent - Scheduling Problem for the Fundraiser Dinner:

St. John the Baptist in January: we may have to move to a later date at a different location)

10:04 Julie Swienty - Programs

- YAMS: October 12th - 14th deadline

Dr. Nyaho will run the program on Saturday.

If you want to participate in the convention, there are openings on Friday or Sunday.

[Check page 14 in the year book]

- MAPS: February 9-10th event dates

Contact Julie by November 1st if you are interested in participating

- CH Competition: If you wish to participate, you must have completed MAPS

10:07 Karen Hollenback (President-Elect) - Annual Conference

Reminder about the Annual Conference in March in Spokane

Early Bird registration Dec 5th

More Information will be sent to the Newsletter

10:08 Heather White - Chapter Meeting Speakers

October Meeting will have Dr. Garcia as our speaker

Jordan James speaking in January

Looking for requests and feedback on Presentations

10:10 Kevin Peterson - Newsletter

Please be timely with sending articles for the newsletters.

New Members: Send him your email addresses to be added to the list.

Books not sold at this meeting will be donated to UPS or PLU (Donations will go to the Scholarship

10:12 Svetlana - Student Recital:

Dec 1st Kent First Baptist Church (\$5 fee per student)

10:13 Steve Nehrenberg - MLP (Music Theory test)

1st Saturday in May

Go to the website for sample copies of the test

10:14 Sally R. - Sunshine Discussions

10:15 Hospitality Discussions:

Help needed: One person to help with refreshments for the May meeting. (2 people are in charge every month)

Suggestions for Location for Future Meetings should the need arise: Cafe or Restaurants

10:18 Former President Recognized

Lisa Hogg is presented with plaque recognizing her leadership as president in the previous years. We are all very appreciative.

10:19: Lisa Hogg - Finances

26 members are current on dues. (If you haven't renewed, please do so asap) If you are not current on your dues, you will not be able to participate in events.

10:21 Samantha Yeung- Website

Email Samantha if you would like to have your website linked on the page.

10:21 Upcoming Events:

- Opera Masterclass: Marco Nistico: Saturday September 29th 7pm: University Christian Church, Seattle. All tickets are at the door : \$20
- Performance: Two piano recital with Dr. William Chapman Nyaho and Susanna Garcia. September 30th Sunday 3pm at PLU (Lagerquist Concert Hall) \$8.00 tickets - Program: Billy the Kid Aaron Copland, West Side Story, Porgy and Bess

10:24 - Samantha Y.: Discussion on Proposed Amendment:

Proposed Amendment: All students who want to participate in CH Competition must participate in the chapter MAP.

Question raised: If Students participated in another chapter's MAP, can they participate in CHC? (If their chapter is non-competitive.) Answer: They would have to be representing SKC if they go to state.

Kevin P. Moves the adoption of the proposed amendment. Steven N. Seconds. The ayes have it and the motion is adopted

10:29 Meeting Adjourned

Professional Resources

It's All Your Business

Karen Thickstun

It's all Your Business

Money Matters: Setting And Raising Tuition

An essential ingredient in a profitable business is the amount it charges for its services. In any profession, supply and demand dictates what rates are viable in a particular area. A basic business principle states that tuition should be based on what the market will bear.

Antitrust Law

All businesses, in any profession, are prohibited by federal law from engaging in certain activities that affect the market place adversely, such as price-fixing or agreeing as a group to use only certain vendors. As studio owners, we are accountable to these same antitrust laws.

There are certain topics that should not be discussed by members of a profession:

- current prices/hourly rates
- current billing policies
- what constitutes a fair profit margin
- plans to increase or decrease prices
- agreements to allocate geographic areas or deal with only with certain suppliers
- policies regarding vacation/missed lessons
- terms and conditions, such as late charges or payment discounts

A full list is available in the *Antitrust Compliance Guide* on the MTNA website, www.mtna.org.

Antitrust law does not prohibit all conversation among members related to tuition. Permissible areas of discussion include:

- data on past pricing levels
- reports on general economic trends in the profession
- discussion on how members can become more profitable by acquiring better knowledge of their costs
- discussion on improvements of services
- education on various aspects of management

Setting Tuition

It can be challenging to determine an appropriate tuition amount for your area, for your product, for your target customer. There is likely a spectrum of prevailing rates and types of studios. Identify this range through market research. Investigate other studio websites or Facebook pages. Ask neighbors and family members what they pay. A local music teachers association may have compiled a tuition Survey.¹

Where should your studio fit on the spectrum? Take into account a variety of factors when choosing where to set your studio's tuition. A studio's tuition reflects more than just the offering of private lessons. Consider these factors:

- Location and parking, especially if highly convenient
- Teacher's education and expertise
- Teacher's level of experience
- Quality (or what you are known for—besides quality teaching, this might be a flexible schedule or engaging personality)
- Specialty or niche
- Premium service, such as traveling to student's home
- The need for teachers in your area
- Prevailing economic conditions and demographics

A common online discussion suggests figuring out what you need to earn to cover living expenses and then charging accordingly. This argument ignores what the market place is charging. It is quite possible that in your area you can charge more (than just enough to cover living expenses) because of demand for teachers or your location. It ignores that there is a limit to how many students one can *effectively* teach in a day. It ignores the impact that diversification of income can have on total income, especially during economic ups and downs.

A more useful strategy is to create a studio budget. Identify business expenses for the year and projected income for x students. Analyze if the projected business income is enough to cover business expenses and leave enough for your living expenses (assuming no other source of income). Depending on prevailing economics in your area, diversification of income may be necessary to reach your target income.

Raising Tuition

In most professions, annual adjustments to rates are typical and expected. Most consumers prefer small adjustments on a regular basis rather than one large adjustment after several years. Consumers do not like surprises (large price hikes without warning).

Consistency of adjustments and timing is important. Communicating when increases will happen and what the new tuition will be gives parents time to plan. Nine months in advance has worked well for me. In my January parent letter, I include a simple statement: "Effective with the fall semester, tuition will increase to __." As with all studio policy statements, the language should be simple and direct. No explanation is needed.

A minimum adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) ensures that you are keeping pace with inflation. The CPI is a measure of inflation and reflects the weighted average of basic goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. The CPI rose 2.1 percent during 2017.

Deal with individual family hardships on a case-by-case basis. Short-term challenges (temporary layoff or medical bills) might warrant a one-year-only tuition reduction. Need-based scholarships might be utilized for families below a certain income level. In rare cases, such as the 2008 recession, businesses might choose (and many did) to not raise prices at all.

Communicate Value

When setting or raising tuition, a priority should be to communicate *value*—all your studio is doing, all your students have accomplished, all you have done to improve your teaching. Communicate excitement, joy and other reasons why students joined your studio in the first place.

Parents buy benefits, not features. Parents do not eliminate activities that they perceive as adding value to their child's life. Help parents understand the benefits of music education by making *value* a primary theme in your studio marketing.

It is true that many parents look for the cheapest or closest teacher, valuing location and price over all else. The challenge is to identify the value that *your* studio provides. Why should a parent drive farther or pay higher tuition? Quotes from current parents are one strategy for answering this question.

A second strategy is to remind parents (often) of everything that tuition covers:

- an individualized course of study for each student
- written progress reports
- customized teaching materials for each student
- teacher training and experience
- preparation for recitals, festivals, competitions
- professional memberships
- continuing education
- lending library, listening lab or other specialized aspects of your studio

A third strategy is to remind parents (often) of the value received during the past year. Share studio accomplishments and activities through newsletters, email blasts or updates on your webpage, Facebook page and social media.

Regular communication of value and setting an appropriate tuition contribute significantly to any studio's financial health.

Notes

1. "Anti-Trust Compliance Guide for State and Local Music Teacher Associations, *Code of Ethics*," Music Teachers National Association, last modified August 11, 2017, accessed May 25, 2018, https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Explore_MTNA/Code_of_Ethics.aspx. According to antitrust guidelines, price surveys are acceptable if they meet certain conditions:

- Data is collected and compiled by an independent third party, such as the staff of a local or state music teacher association.
- Historical data (at least three months old), rather than current data, is collected.
- The survey should include a minimum of five participants. One should not be able to identify any particular teacher by looking at the results.



Karen Thickstun, NCTM, teaches piano pedagogy at Butler University and directs the Butler Community Arts School. She holds degrees in music, economics and business.

Karen Thickstun »