

June 29, 2015

SERNATS Summer 2015 Newsletter

Dear Colleagues:

It's hard to believe that half of this year has already flown by us! We are all so busy with our various activities, but please allow me to interrupt your summer for an important update on the events in the Southeast region and in our organization as a whole.

Looking back:

Last March, we enjoyed a successful student auditions event at Auburn University in Alabama. One of our points of discussion at our annual SERNATS Business Meeting was the clear need to expand our auditions event beyond our current 2-day schedule. **We received 475 audition registrations** for the 2015 SERNATS auditions, which was an increase of 85 from the 2014 event. I'm confident that we will continue to see strong participation in our regional auditions with the advent of the National level Student Auditions, for which the regional auditions finals serve as the initial qualifying rounds. Further, I think many of our teachers and students would enjoy attending events such as master classes, poster sessions, artist recitals, and other presentations while we're all together for the auditions weekend. **Expanding our format to 3 days** would free up some time in the schedule for such events, resulting in a SERNATS Conference, rather than solely an auditions event, which is something other regions with 400-500 auditions per event are already enjoying. The regional cabinet, the 2016 host school (Stetson University), and I are considering our options for an event that begins Thursday rather than Friday, so stay tuned and keep an open mind! I foresee our event evolving in the coming year to enrich the experience and showcase the talents and scholarship of our member teachers and students. It is my hope that SNATS will have a worthy place in our expanded format over the coming years as we endeavor to develop the future membership and leadership of this organization.

Every chapter hosted auditions and some other type of event during the last year, so we're all continuing to promote great singing and scholarly study – thanks to all those who volunteer so many hours at the chapter level. This is the strength of our organization, I believe, and were we most directly interact with our students – the future of this organization! The South Florida and Intracoastal chapters are finalizing their merger into a single chapter (retaining the name South Florida chapter), forming one larger chapter with more resources. Scott Bracken-Tripp and Suzanne Galer-Wert have provided strong leadership during this transition, as has Florida District Governor, Kimberly Saunders-Randall.

Craig Maddox (Stetson University) is our SERNATS Governor-Elect, following his election last spring. Join me in congratulating Dr. Maddox and wishing him all success when he becomes the SERNATS governor in July, 2016.

THE BIG NEWS ITEM!

24 student singers from our region earned 25 spots in the Student Auditions National level semi-final round (one singer placed in 2 categories), which will be held beginning July 7 in conjunction with the NATS Summer workshop in Greensboro, N.C. I know you join me in congratulating these students and their teachers, and in wishing them the best as they perform next week! Results will follow soon!

Looking ahead: (Keep reading -Don't miss this part!)

THE REALLY, REALLY BIG NEWS ITEM!!

The annual NATS National Board Meeting just concluded in Jacksonville, FL. You will hear of several items of business that were addressed during this meeting (watch for a vote on some proposed by-laws changes, for example), but the most significant thing, which will affect every NATS chapter and region, is the **FINAL APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF THE STUDENT AUDITIONS REGULATIONS, WHICH WILL STANDARDIZE OUR AUDITIONS PRACTICES THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION!** (This was the project about which Allen Henderson led the “Q & A” session at the SERNATS auditions in March.) After a few final tweaks to the document, the new NATS auditions guidelines will be made available to the membership. Several months and countless hours of meetings, edits, distributing and reading response from surveys, and consideration of best practices have gone into the crafting of these standardized regulations. A brief video will soon be available orienting members to the new regulations, the information will appear on the SERNATS and all the chapter websites ASAP, and the NATS officers stand ready to assist as we make this change. **Bottom line: there are only minor changes in repertoire requirements from the NSA repertoire requirements already in place for 2015, but we all need to get up to speed on the new adjudication process and the category descriptions ASAP, as these are the areas in which the biggest changes lie for our chapters and region as a whole.** I was honored to serve on the committee who drafted this document, so I can attest to the diligence with which we strived to produce a clear and “user-friendly” document. Even so, there are bound to be questions among chapters about the new system - as there always were with each of our myriad former systems. I look forward to working with our chapter and regional leadership over the coming months as we employ these auditions regulations for the first time. Future goals include a centralized registration system (no more mailing in forms with your check!) and the ability to compare your student’s scores against his/her peers across the organization; it is unknown at this point if these features will be ready for our use in 2016, but they are on the horizon.

Looking farther ahead...

1. 2016 NATS Winter Workshop/NOA Conference: January 6 – 10, 2016; Conrad Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana.
2. SERNATS Conference/Auditions, NATSAA: March 17-19, 2016; Stetson University, Deland, FL
3. 54th National Conference 2016: July 8-12, 2016, Marriott Magnificent Mile, Chicago, Illinois **(You’ll want to be in Chicago for this! Special rates will be available for our students, too.)**

Best wishes for a great summer, everyone. Please take a moment to double check the accuracy of your contact information with NATS (you can do this via the website), put these upcoming dates down on your calendar, and make a “note to self” to watch out for the NATS Student Auditions Regulations coming soon to a website and Facebook page near you!!

Melanie Williams, Governor
Southeastern Region, National Association of Teachers of Singing

CC:

Allen Henderson, Executive Director

Norman Spivey, President

Dan Johnson-Wilmot, Chair, NATS Student Auditions Regulations Committee

