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### Hope for the Holidays

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus  
*presents*

# *Hope for the Holidays*



*Friday, December 12, 2008, 8pm*  
*Unitarian Universalist*  
*Church of Buffalo*  
*695 Elmwood Ave*  
*Buffalo*

*Saturday, December 13, 2008, 8pm*  
*Trinity Episcopal Church*  
*371 Delaware Ave*  
*Buffalo*  
*Signed for the hearing impaired*

*Sunday, December 14, 2008, 4 pm*  
*Hamburg United Methodist Church*  
*116 Union Street*  
*Hamburg*

**BgMC**  
The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

Barbara Wagner, Artistic Director  
Debi Overton, Accompanist  
[www.buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.org)  
716-883-1277

*Seating starts 1 hour prior to concert*  
*Adults \$20*  
*Seniors and Disabled \$18*

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sunday noon-5



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**BGM**

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

**Office:**

695 Elmwood Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14222  
716.883.1277

[www.buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.org)

A NEW YORK NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

*Our Mission*

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to producing vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing.

We seek through song not only to entertain, but also to enlighten.

We sing to create harmony as we celebrate pride in our communities and in ourselves.



## CITY OF BUFFALO

BYRON W. BROWN  
MAYOR



November 24, 2008

Members and Supporters of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus:

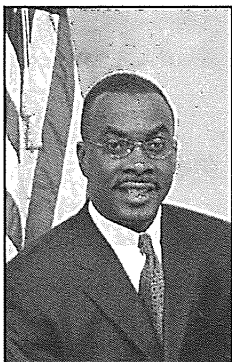
Greetings and salutations to the BGMC on the occasion of your first holiday season concert of song!

We send warm wishes on behalf of the City of Buffalo as you present "Hope for the Holidays" at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo on December 12<sup>th</sup> and at Trinity Episcopal Church on December 13<sup>th</sup>. We also wish you success with your appearance at the Hamburg United Methodist Church on December 14<sup>th</sup>, and look forward to your engagement with 88.7 FM WBFO's Wednesday Night Concert on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

Your continued success under the direction of Barbara Wagner represents all that is best about the arts in our region: beauty, harmony and excellence!

While we listen to your "vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing," we know your sounds are the fruit of hard work and many long rehearsals.

Congratulations on your previous successes, and best wishes as you continue to enlighten and entertain in our "City of Good Neighbors!"



Sincerely,

Byron W. Brown  
Mayor

65 NIAGARA SQUARE / 201 CITY HALL / BUFFALO, NY 14202-3392 / (716) 851-4841 FAX: (716) 851-4360 / [www.city-buffalo.com](http://www.city-buffalo.com)

## Special Thanks

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Our Friday Hosts             | Rev. Joel Miller and the Unitarian<br>Universalist Church of Buffalo              |
| Our Saturday Hosts           | Rev. Cameron Miller and the<br>Trinity Episcopal Church                           |
| Our Sunday Hosts             | Rev. Jay Roberts, Rev. Vivian Waltz<br>and the Hamburg United<br>Methodist Church |
| Advertising                  | Dave Batt, Russ Link and Andrew<br>Pollard  |
| Program Cover Artwork        | Michael Gillis  |
| Program Design and Layout    | Vilardo Printing  |
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| Photography                  | Mike Longo  |
| House Manager                | Damian Tremblay   |
| Tickets                      | Paul Cassavaugh and Linda Reznick   |
| Ushers                       | Buffalo Front Runners and<br>Front Walkers  |
| Web Master                   | Norm Duttweiler   |
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| Recording Coordinator        | Michael Styn  |
| Recording Producer           | Mark Custom Recording Service, Inc.   |
- Steel Crazy and Sweet Tooth for their donations of "food, glorious food" for the Chorus and our guests.
- Please feel free to notify the Chorus of any changes or corrections for future programs at [www.buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.org) or by letter to the Chorus at 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo 14222.
- BGMC has "gone green". Please recycle your concert program if you do not wish to keep it as a souvenir. You will find collection boxes at the rear of the concert hall. Thank you!

## Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

From all of the BGMC Family, a very special and heartfelt thank you to the Friends of the BGMC. Your generosity allows us to bring enlightenment, inspiration, healing and harmony to the greater community and to all of us. We are most grateful that you have added your "voices" to ours.

*The Friends of the BGMC listed in this program are those whose contributions were received between June 1, 2008 and November 25, 2008.*

### Maestro \$1,000 - \$2,999

Anonymous

### Virtuoso \$500 - \$999

Paul A. Cassavaugh

William and Marjorie Gardner, *In memory of James D. Haynes*

David Mathewson and Merrill Lynch Foundation

*(Matching funds)*

Roger Parris and Mike Longo

Robert B. Race, *For a friend*

Key Bank

### Conductor \$200 - \$499

Thomas R. Alcamo

David Batt

Peter and Belmore Bridgford,

*Honoring Barbara Wagner,*

*David Mathewson and Russell Link*

Dr. and Mrs. David S. Clifford,

*Honoring Jason A. Ward*

Francis J. Felser and David H. Shaver

David C. Hetherly

Jim Jagow

Nicholas E. Marchelus

Ramón Meléndez

Alice Palazzetti Minion

Jeffrey H. Platt

Linda Reznick, *"To all my dear friends at BGMC"*

Denise and Bob Scheig

Timothy P. Socha and Robert F.

Carlson

Barbara A. Wagner, *Honoring*

*William G. Wagner*

Michael Warner

### Soloist \$100 - \$199

Michael J. Bonilla

Will and Bonnie Botsford,

*Honoring our friends, Frank and Monty, Michael and Paul, Dave and Mike and, especially, CB*

Martin A. and Sheila P. Casey

Colvin Cleaners

Charles A. Deacon

James and Mary Frances Derby

Sharon A. Corrigan and Michelle L. Eschborn

Tricia M. Grace

Terry M. Griggs

Jeanne M. Gunby

Marylouise Hewitt

Ronald Houk, *"Honoring my family, with Love"*

Glenn Hufnagel

Karen Keil and Family

Norma Jean Lamb

Kathleen S. Ludwig

James Mack

Sam Maislin, Attorney

Marie A. Marshall

R. Mark Meyer

Dr. Edwin A. Mirand

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*Honoring Bill Coplton and Michael Duclos*

Debi Overton and Kathleen Niles

Arthur J. Picogna, *In memory of Arthur E. Neeb*

Richard W. Price

John Rex

Bob and Luann Roberts

Alan D. and Paula Alcalá Rosner, *Honoring Russell Link*

Brian Rotach and Cheryl Bird

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Eunice Stuart, *Honoring Mark Meyer and Del Milander*

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Urban Valet Dry Cleaners and Eric Pyne

Cynthia M. Van Ness, *Honoring OUTspoken For Marriage*

Joseph Vuich

Edward J. Witul

### Singer \$30 - \$99

Andy Anselmo

D. Jeanne Aydelotte, *Honoring Russell Link*

Virginia Barron

LaVerne M. Behr

Alan B. Block

Alexander and Pamela S. Borok, *Honoring Jason Ward*

Ruth L. Bury

Paul Carroll, *In memory of Jim Cain*

Judith Clarke and Alan Dozoretz

Ruth Cohan

James N. Connelly

Dave Davis

Florence Davis and Clarence A. Davis, Jr.

William G. Englebrecht

Irene M. Enright and Family

Dom DeFillippo and Arlan Peters

William J. Fay

John Fleischman, Jr.

Marcia Frankel, *Honoring Glen Adam and Lucy Mayo Cohen-Frankel*

Elaine Gardner and Curt Steinzor

Marion and Bob Gibbon

Clara Gillies

**Singer \$30 - \$99 (Continued)**

Lynne B. Giroux  
 Claire Goldberg  
 Carl and Eloise Granger  
 Robert P. Graves  
 Peter G. Hart  
 Jack Hogan  
 Barbara D. Holender  
 Robert Hughes and Margaret Fisher,  
*In Memoriam, Carolyn Grove Hughes*  
 Paula, Ellen and Douglas Jack  
 Doris Jones  
 Edward W. Koryl  
 John P. and Jennifer C. Lane  
 Dorothy M. Lien, *Honoring Mark Faltyn*  
 Mark G. Littlefield  
 Marjorie Lord, *Honoring Donald Savage*  
 Peter and Mary McNally  
 Dr. Horace Mann  
 Sandra Marshall, *Honoring Christopher Proffitt*  
 Kathryn A. Meyer  
 R. Mark Meyer and Delwyn P. Milander, *In memory of James D. Haynes*  
 Karen and Buz Miranda  
 Louis M. Molisani, *Honoring Orlando Del Zoppo, my partner for 31 years*

Russell A. Newbert  
 Don and Andrea Oswald  
 Ellen, Paula and Douglas Jack  
 John Pellegrini  
 Thekla Putnam, *In memory of John Putnam, Jr.*  
 Hon. Gregory P. Rabb, *President, Jamestown City Council*  
 Renovatio Physical Therapy, P. C.  
 Jennifer and Tony Scarozza  
 Debbie M. Sheehan, *Honoring members of the military*  
 Eunice Stuart, *Honoring Mark Meyer and Del Milander*  
 Paul and Gloria Stuart  
 Summer Street Cat Clinic  
 Frank N. Summit and Monty Hale  
 John and Elaine Swaine  
 Joanne Tarnowski  
 Mary G. Therrien  
 Alan R. Thompson  
 Dom Trapani  
 Johanne Haberstro Trotter, *Honoring Barbara Wagner*  
 Edward K. and Shirley Y. Tuttle  
 John and Noreen Visone  
 Robert A. Wiechman and John R. Molinaro

***Our Gratitude for a Special Grant,  
 GALA Choruses, Inc., Grantor***

We were proud to sing the world-premier performances of "Yes!" at our June 2008 concerts. The text is based on the poem, "Tableau", published in the collection, "Color", by Countee Cullen\*. It tells the story of two boyhood friends, one black, the other white, openly sharing their friendship in the racially hostile environment of a southern community of the early 1900's.

"Yes!" was composed in 2007 by Adolphus Hailstork, a world-famous composer, on BGMC's commissioning of the work.\*\* BGMC has commissioned and introduced a number of new musical compositions. The Chorus is proud that "Yes!" was one of them.

In July, the Chorus attended the GALA Choruses, Inc. week-long international gathering of member choruses in Miami (3,500 to 5,000 singers present), where it introduced "Yes!" to the international music community.

GALA Choruses, Inc. encourages the commissioning by its members of new musical works. At the Miami convention, GALA Choruses honored BGMC's role in the creation and presentation of "Yes!" to the GALA Choruses' repertoire with a \$3,500 grant toward BGMC's expenses. BGMC gratefully acknowledges this gift.

\* "Tableau" by Countee Cullen© 1925  
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\*\* "Yes!" by Adolphus Hailstork© 2007  
 Commissioned by Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.,  
 with support from GALA Choruses, Inc., the international association  
 of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender choral movement.

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**Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS)**

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 the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus  
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## Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

The meteoric artistic growth and audience expansion of this region's only all-male chorus led to its nomination and award as 2008's Outstanding Arts Organization. This award is given annually by the Arts Council of Erie and Niagara County. Under the professional direction of Barbara Wagner, the all-volunteer chorus presents a wide ranging repertoire including classical, contemporary, Broadway, pop and multi-cultural music that can only be produced by an established gathering of well trained male voices.

Entering their eighth year of performing, the chorus draws thousands of people to four major sold-out concerts annually. In 2008 – 2009, the chorus will expand its concert series to nine concerts. The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra has invited the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus to perform with the orchestra on two occasions; under the baton of Associate Conductor, Ron Spiegelman in 2003 and in 2006 under the direction of Maestra JoAnn Falletta. The chorus has also performed as part of the Ars Nova Viva Vivaldi Series, conducted by Mary Louise Nanna. In 2007, the chorus recorded a double CD entitled "Celebrate!" to celebrate their fifth anniversary.

The chorus regularly donates its services to help fundraisers or simply to entertain at community-wide and gay community events. They have performed at benefits for the music program at the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Church, the restoration of Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church, the annual World AIDS Day Memorial Service and the AIDS Community Services fundraiser, Cause for Celebration, to name only a few. In 2005, they were recognized by the Empire State Pride Agenda Foundation with a prestigious community service award for "..... excellence of the music, raising awareness and their dedication to the (gay) community."

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to act as a positive model to those in the community who may be grappling with the negative connotations some people in our society place on gay people. To that end, they are committed to producing vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing.



## Hope for the Holidays

G. Michael Liska, President



I believe **Hope for the Holidays** is the most appropriate topic for us to consider in these trying times. With so many changes taking place affecting us all, the time for examining one's inner self is greater than ever before. Perhaps the market conditions are a necessary evil, probably long overdue, forcing us to open our eyes to what really matters. Whichever way we choose to look at it, change is required.

**Hope for the Holidays** offers so much for us to ponder. We can take time to remember the simpler life of days gone by, days that had no cell phones or computers. *Happy Days* on TV, *I Love Lucy*, and Grandfather Clock on *Captain Kangaroo*, Porky Pig and the Wabbit! Many will know and smile reflecting back to these special times. The world has changed so dramatically. What seems to be yesterday, is actually a lifetime gone by. Kids today have missed the innocence and the wholesome family life of Ward and June Cleaver, of Ozzie and Harriet. And who can forget *Romper Room* and Miss Barbara? Well, from these memories, I have dated myself terribly.

That being said, I would like to offer my thoughts and hopes for all of you to consider. As I have taken just seconds to think back to my childhood, I suggest that you take a minute or two, from each of the days ahead to stroll down memory lane. Remember what has made you happy in the past. Life has become a juggling act. We have to do this, and then we have to do that, and so on and so on. While life has placed its never ending demands on each of us, the only way to resolve the situation is to simplify. Why do we feel it necessary to fill every minute of the day with a task, project or event? With so little time available when we are not running like chickens with their heads cut off, we have little or none left for the really important things in our lives.

When was the last time you actually sat down to a family dinner and discussed what happened to each family member during the day? When did you pick up the phone and place that call you have been putting off because there was something more important that couldn't wait? Have you recently driven past an old friend's home and just stopped in to say they have been in your thoughts? Where have the days of surprise flowers or cards or a homemade gift gone? Along with having no time, we have lost the ability to be considerate and spontaneous. Even if finances do not allow for an occasional special gift to show someone your appreciation, a hug, an unexpected touch or kiss, or a thank you for being there costs nothing.

As many of us consider what the market has done to our futures, having absolutely no control over the situation has left us angry and frustrated. Professionals dealing with feelings will always say we must face the situation, accept what is, and move on as best we can. Perhaps now more than ever is the time we can make changes for the better. This market has offered us a golden opportunity to get back to the things that really should have greater importance in our lives.

Family and friends are the greatest treasures we have. Make the effort to mend fences and repair damages that may have come from a misunderstanding, or being too proud to admit we might have been wrong about something. This is valuable time lost that we can never get back.

Communication is the one area we all seem to fall short in. With computers, e-mails and text messaging, we have lost the ability to just listen to what someone is saying or appreciate just how they are saying it. Make the effort to go out of your way to schedule and **keep** the time to share with the ones you love. As most of us know from past experiences, tomorrow may not be there for a near and dear person. Don't miss the chance to share a laugh or drink or special time with the ones that play important roles in our lives. **Take time to make time be important!**

**Our Hope for the Holidays** program will definitely lift your spirits. Try to open your heart to make the changes necessary to deal with the uncertainty we all face. The BGMC Family appreciates your support for the work we do in our community. Without great patrons, we could not afford to continue our work toward acceptance of all people, tolerance and understanding of the differences that make this life so diverse and unique. We welcome your thoughts and comments as we experience the excitement the new year brings.

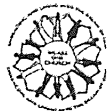
So during this holiday season, I wish for peace in your hearts, joys of great music we share, and the chance to be part of everything wonderful this great life has to offer.

Sincerely,  
G. Michael Liska (Spike)



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
Keep making music

The Rt. Rev. J. Michael Garrison, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Western New York



## *Hope for the Holidays*

Barbara Wagner, Artistic Director

Dear Friends and Music Lovers,



This evening I'm delighted to tell you that you are about to experience our very first Holiday Concert. I must admit I dug in my heels a bit before I felt comfortable saying, "OK, let's do it, but, only if we sing my all time favorite holiday song, 'Do You Hear What I Hear?'" I guess a whole bunch of my boys love that song, too. There was no argument and we were off and we all began searching for our favorite holiday music. There are a couple of songs on this program that I didn't even know: "Hard Candy Christmas," for one, is a revelation in beautiful music and gorgeous singing. Then there is "Thankful", commissioned by one of our singers, Jason Higbee, for TTBB Chorus, Trumpet and Piano. The text seems eminently appropriate for these days of pain and often hopelessness. As the poet urges us, we need to look beyond ourselves at the sorrow around us and know that it's far too late to cry tomorrow. Each of us has to find our own truth. It's up to US to be the change, and even though this world needs so much more, there's much to be thankful for. We think about this every time we sing this poignant song of hope and we pray for the strength to continue to help bring about change. We're singing Charlie Beale's (AD of New York City GMC) nostalgic Bing Crosby arrangement of White Christmas. It's just like in the movie!!! What fun. As we take a look at the myriad ways we celebrate the holidays, you'll hear "Baby, It's Cold Outside" and even "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" a la BGMC and a joyous Chanukah song, "Ocho Kandelikas", Eight Candles, composed by a Jewish mother who was intent on preserving and passing on the traditions of her heritage to her children. We look to the songs that tell of the birth of a baby and finally, if you listen carefully to the words of our last song, we hope that your hearts will be touched as ours have been by the hope it embodies. And so, with love, we dedicate "Finally Here" to everyone who has and will travel with us as we continue our journey to justice, recognition and equality for all.

With love and hope for the holidays,  
Barb



## The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

### Tenor 1

Robert Black  
Robert C. Donner  
Shaun Doyle, Jr.  
Norm Duttweiler, Jr. \*  
Joseph Grieco  
Ronald Houk  
Dion Johnson  
'Spike' Michael Liska \*  
Randy McWharf  
Cliff Moore III  
John Rex  
Robert J. Szustak \*\*  
Hanford Searl, Jr.  
Kevin Thompson  
Jeff Wilson  
Michael Zito

### Bass 1

Franklin Ball  
Dave Batt \*  
Paul Berglund  
Denis Bolton  
William H. Gardner \*  
Andrew Giarrizzo  
Jeffrey C. Hunt  
Darrin Kahn \*  
Ramón 'Ray' Meléndez  
Raymond Neil  
Andy Newbert \*\*  
Andrew C. Pollard  
Joe Puma  
Jimmy Rigo  
Robert Rose  
Sherwood 'Woody' Sipprell  
Peter C. Smith  
Dennis C. Stuart \*

### Tenor 2

Dave Gannon  
Donald Behr  
Paul Brundage  
Edward Ciszek Jr.  
William C. Hardy  
Gerry Klein  
Delwyn Milander  
Nelson A. Neels  
Roger Parris  
Mark J. Peszko  
Nathan E. Phillips \*\*  
Michael Rogers  
Michael Styn  
Cedric 'Flip' Taporco \*\*  
Jason A. Ward  
James Wieland

### Bass 2

Christopher Babbitt \*  
Jaime Stephan Goldfuss  
Jason Higbee \*  
Jim Jagow  
Russell C. Link  
Timothy H. Mahiques  
Mark Marquardsen  
David K. Mathewson \* \*\*  
Ryan J. McKane \*  
L. Martin Palcic  
Brian Rotach  
Joseph A. Zimmerman

\*\* Section Leader  
\*Board of Directors

## The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (continued)

### **Non-Singing Members**

Michael Gillis  
Michael Hunter  
John Jubulis  
Michael Longo  
Ryan McDonald  
Mark Meyer  
Kyler Miller  
Ben Phillips  
Linda Reznick  
Michael Shanahan

### **Artistic Director**

Barbara Wagner

### **Accompanist**

Debi Overton

### **Board of Directors**

G. Michael Liska, President  
Christopher Babbitt, Vice President  
Jason Higbee, Secretary  
William H. Gardner, Treasurer  
David Batt  
Norm Duttweiler, Jr.  
Darrin Kahn  
Ryan McKane  
David Mathewson  
Dennis Stuart, *ex officio*

### **News & Information Director**

Kathleen Bryce Niles

### **Archivist**

Chuck Alaimo



## COME JOIN US IN SONG

The BGMC thanks all its members, volunteers, and audiences, past, present and future, and extends a sincere wish for a joyous holiday season. We also extend to the entire Western New York community an invitation to join our organization as either a volunteer or singer. We welcome new singers with open arms. And, as always, we welcome any man, straight or gay, who wishes to not only sing but to join our mission to seek through song to enlighten as well as to entertain.



Phone our Artistic Director, Barbara Wagner,  
at 668-1124, or 359-1854  
to make an appointment for an audition.



## *Hope for the Holidays*

- In the Bleak Midwinter** Music: Gustav Holst  
Poem: Christina Rossetti
- Velvet Shoes** Music: Randall Thompson  
Poem: Elinor Wylie
- Bel Bambino** Italian Carol  
Arranged by C. Alexander Peloquin
- Ocho Kandelikas** Music and Text: Flory Jagoda  
Arranged by J.A. Kawarsky
- 
- A Christmas Song** Mel Torme and R. Wells  
**Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas**  
Hugh Morton & Ralph Blane  
Barbara Levy with Jerry Livingston, Bass
- 
- Lift a Glass to Friendship** Music: Norman Luboff  
Lyrics: Marilyn Keith and Alan Bergman
- Feliz Navidad** Music and Words: José Feliciano  
Arranged by Tom Gentry
- The Sleigh** Music and Words: Richard Kountz  
Arranged by R. Baldwin

### *Intermission*

- Thankful** Music and Lyrics: David Foster,  
Carole Bayer Sager and Richard Page  
Arranged by Chad Weirick  
Jason Higbee, Trumpet
- Baby, It's Cold Outside** Music and Words: Frank Loesser

### **You're a Mean One Mister Grinch**

Music: Albert Hague  
Lyrics: Dr. Seuss  
Arranged by Jeff Funk

### **Carol of the Bells**

Music: M. Leontovich  
Lyrics and Arranged by Peter J. Wilhousky

### **I Wonder as I Wander**

Appalachian Carol  
Arranged by Larry Moore  
Collected by John Jacob Niles from Murphy, Cherokee County,  
North Carolina, 1912

### **The Snow Lay on the Ground**

Music: David Conte  
Anonymous 19th Century Text  
Peter Smith, Harp

### **Hard Candy Christmas**

Music and Lyrics: Carol Hall

### **White Christmas**

Music and Lyrics: Irving Berlin  
Arranged by Charles Beal

### **Do You Hear What I Hear?**

Music and Lyrics:  
Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne

### **Finally Here**

Music and Lyrics: Eric Helmut  
BGMC dedicates the performance of "Finally Here" to the memory of Dr. James Haynes and in appreciation of his years of service to the GLBT communities in Buffalo and the State of New York. Jim died on November 9, 2008. He was a leader in many GLBT organizations, a spokesman for justice and human rights, inspiring teacher, compassionate counselor, loving companion Don Licht and a dear friend to many.

Christopher Hart, Percussion  
Timothy Mroz, Bass



*Please join us for a Reception  
immediately following the Performance.*



*This concert is made possible in part by the  
Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County with public funds from  
the New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Program.*

## *Music Notes*

Barbara Wagner and Jason Ward

### **In the Bleak Midwinter**                      Gustav Holst; Christina Rossetti

This lovely poem, written before 1872, is in the posthumous collection "Poetical Works," 1904, of Christina Rossetti, the deeply religious daughter of an Italian émigrée academic and an English mother. Composed by well known composer, Gustav Holst (1874-1934), the tune "Cranham" was paired with Rossetti's poem in The English Hymnal, 1906.

Although Christmas was linked by the 4<sup>th</sup> century church with December 25 as part of a strategy to Christianize various mid-winter solstice pagan festivals, there is no biblical association of the birth of Jesus with mid-winter.

### **Velvet Shoes**                                      Randall Thompson; Elinor Wylie

Randall Thompson achieved extraordinary success not only as the nation's pre-eminent composer of choral music, but also as a highly respected educator who was instrumental in establishing the great choral masterpieces as standard repertoire for fine college, university and community choruses. I daresay that Thompson's work inspired many of our church musicians to look long and hard at the caliber of choral music they offered their congregations each week. Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Barber were among his students during a two year stint as director of the Curtis Institute. Elinor Wylie was born in 1885 in Philadelphia to a very wealthy family. Well known for her beauty, she was privately educated. She was married three times and divorced twice. She spent much of her life in an unsuccessful search for her true soul mate. Elinor's poetry was distinctive for its irony, grace, elegant and subtle imagination and crystalline lucidity. I think you'll find a bit of each of those characteristics in her lovely poem, "Velvet Shoes."

### **Bel Bambino**                                      Alexander Peloquin; Paul Claudel

"Bel Bambino" was arranged by late composer and former music Minister of the Rhode Island Catholic Cathedral, Dr. C. Alexander Peloquin. Translated from a poem by French author Paul Claudel, it was said that Claudel had lost his faith, and later experienced a conversion while attending a service and listening to a choir sing vespers at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on Christmas Day.

### **Ocho Kandelikas**                                      Flory Jagoda

Flory Jagoda (1925 - \_\_\_) maintains one of Judaism's rarest and richest cultural traditions through her perform once of authentic as well as original compositions of Sephardic songs. Flory grew up in the Sephardic tradition in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Known as the Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Lights, Chanukah celebrates the victory of the Jewish people over the Syrian Greeks in 165 B.C.E. and the miracle of a small cruse of oil burning for eighth nights.

Chanukah is celebrated with gifts, burning candles, parties and delicious food.

### **Lift a Glass to Friendship**                      Norman Luboff

This rollicking drinking song, better known to Buffalonians of Polish descent as whoo pie, shoo pie, began its life 200 years ago as a Polish army song. Norman Luboff's arrangement has the men of the village drinking the night away, along with Mayor Drobney. We're not quite sure how Laszlo got in there, but he is having a grand time with his Polish friends.

### **Feliz Navidad**                                      José Feliciano

This song is one of the most popular and often-heard songs of the holiday season. It was written and recorded by the Puerto Rican Feliciano in 1970. The words come from a common holiday greeting, "Feliz Navidad, prospero año y felicidad", and are meant to wish us all a prosperous year and happiness.

### **The Sleigh**    Richard KuntzKountz

You'll think you're listening to the laughter and joy of a Russian sleigh ride, when you hear this rollicking song by Richard Kountz. Believe it or not, it was composed in 1926. Just for fun, try saying "with a hey, hah, hah, hah, ho, hah, ho" 5 times as fast as you can, and see what kind of trouble you'll get into.

### **Thankful**    David Foster, Carol Bayer Sager and Richard Page

This song was composed by David Foster, Carole Bayer Sager, and Richard Page and had its debut on Josh Groban's 2007 holiday album entitled 'Noel'. It reminds us of how easy it is to get caught up in ourselves and lose sight of 'the joy that surrounds us' and that 'there is so much to be thankful for'.

**Baby, It's Cold Outside**

Frank Loesser

Frank Loesser wrote this pop standard in 1944 and premiered it with his wife at their housewarming party. Loesser sold the rights to MGM in 1948 after years of informally performing the song on various occasions. It was used in the 1949 film, 'Neptune's Daughter' which featured two performances of the song: one by Ricardo Montalban and Esther Williams, and the other by Red Skelton and Betty Garrett. The performances earned Loesser an Academy Award for Best Original Song.

**You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch**

Albert Hague

From the 1966 cartoon special 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas', the singing credit for this song is often mistakenly attributed to Boris Karloff. Though Karloff served as the narrator and speaking voice of the Grinch in the special, the lyrics were actually performed by Thurl Ravenscroft who was not listed in the closing credits. The lyrics were written by Theodore Seuss Geisel, who is better known to children all over the world as Dr. Seuss, and the music was written by Albert Hague.

**Carol of the Bells**

Mykola Leontovych

This choral miniature work was originally composed by the Ukrainian composer and orthodox priest, Mykola Leontovych. Although it has become a popular holiday tune, the original lyrics had nothing to do with Christmas. It was a winter well-wishing song titled 'Shchedryk' (which translated means 'bountiful') and told the tale of a swallow calling out to the master of a home and telling him of all the wealth he will possess in the coming year – healthy livestock, money, and a beautiful wife. American choir director and arranger Peter Wilhousky wrote new lyrics for the song because it reminded him of bells. It has since become associated with Christmas because of the new lyrics, which include references to silver bells, caroling, and the line 'merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas'.

**I Wonder As I Wander**

Appalachian Carol

collected by John Jacob Niles

This haunting song has its origins in a song fragment collected on July 16, 1933 by folklorist and singer, John Jacob Niles. He first heard the song in the town of Murphy in Appalachian North Carolina, where he was attending a fundraising meeting held by evangelicals who had been ordered out of town by the police. A little girl had stepped to the edge of the little platform hitched to a truck. She began to sing. Her clothes were dirty and ragged, and she, too, was unwashed. Her ash blond hair hung down in long skeins, but best of all, she was beautiful, and, in her untutored way, she could sing.

She smiled sadly, as she sang. It was only a fragment – two or three lines. She repeated the fragment seven times at 25 cents each. Niles left with three lines of verse, a garbled fragment of melodic material and "I Wonder as I Wander" became a part of folk history.

**The Snow Lay On the Ground**

David Conte

This lovely piece for Male Voices, Piano and Harp was composed by the distinguished West Coast composer, David Conte. The anonymous 19th century poem tells the story of the Nativity as written in the Bible. Each verse is followed by a different setting of the Latin words, *Venite adoremus Dominum*. The music is exquisitely crafted by the brilliant Maestro Conte, who was one of the last students of the legendary Nadia Boulanger. Currently, Conte is Professor of Composition and Conductor of the Conservatory Chorus at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In 2005, he collaborated with composer Todd Boekelheide on the film score for the documentary "Ballet Russes," shown at the Sundance and Toronto Film Festivals in 2005. He is having a brilliant career as a composer, conductor and scholar and we are proud to perform one of his fine works.

**Hard Candy Christmas**

Carol Hall

This song was written by composer/lyricist Carol Hall for the musical, 'The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas'. It's sung near the end of the show when the girls of the brothel are preparing to leave. This song is widely attributed to Dolly Parton, who played the role of Miss Mona in the film version of the musical and was the featured soloist for the piece.

**White Christmas**

Irving Berlin

One time Buffalonian Irving Berlin wrote this song in 1940 while sitting poolside at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. It was introduced by Bing Crosby in the 1942 film 'Holiday Inn' where he sang it as a duet with Marjorie Reynolds. The song went on to receive the Academy Award for Best Original Song. In the original script, Reynolds (whose voice was actually dubbed by Martha Mear for the film) actually sang, not Crosby, who was to have sung the song. 'White Christmas' was also the title theme for the 1954 film starring Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen.

**Do You Hear What I Hear?**

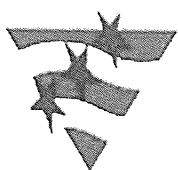
Noel Regney and Gloria Shane

This seasonal standard was written in 1962 by Noel Regney and his then wife Gloria Shayne. More than 120 versions of this song have been recorded, in musical styles ranging from jazz and New Age to funk and

reggae. It was written as a clear and plaintive plea for peace at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, in October 1962. In a 1985 interview with The New York Times, Mr. Regney said "I am amazed that people can think they know the song -- and not know it is a prayer for peace."

### Finally Here

Eric Helmuth is a composer of choral, concert and church music, with over 20 published works. His commissioned works have premiered in such venues as New York's Carnegie Hall and Symphony Hall, Boston. When we did our very first concert way back in 2002, we sang a beautiful love song composed by Eric Helmuth. He heard about it and sent the chorus and me a beautiful note congratulating us and wishing us well as we embarked on our BGMC journey. Eight years later, we're singing another gorgeous love song by Eric, called "Finally Here." This song touches our hearts in many ways and so we want to dedicate this song to our friends and loved ones in the gay community and to our friends and loved ones who are always at our sides.

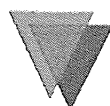


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## About the Artists



Incorporated in 2000, the **Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus** (BGMC) performs a rich catalog of classical, contemporary, Broadway, pop and multi-cultural music. The repertoire is as diverse as the 62 men who are singing with pride as members of the BGMC.

The BGMC has been honored by the Empire State Pride Agenda with a Community Service Award. This award was given in recognition of BGMC's efforts to raise awareness and to enlighten our region through song. To that end, the BGMC has performed in a variety of venues throughout Western New York and in Pennsylvania and Ontario for many community events. Additionally, the BGMC traveled in 2004 to Montreal and again in 2008 to Miami to participate in the seventh and eighth quadrennial GALA Festivals, international gathering of gay and lesbian choruses. BGMC won the *Artvoice* Best of Buffalo 2008 Award for Best Choral Group. Also in 2008, the BGMC was honored by the Arts Council of Buffalo and Western New York, with its prestigious award for Community Service. It was a glorious day.

While maintaining a strong presence within the gay community, the BGMC also has been privileged to perform with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra at Kleinhans Music Hall on two occasions. It has also done benefits for the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Church music program, Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church's restoration, the annual World AIDS Day Memorial Service and the AIDS Community Services fundraiser, *Cause for Celebration*. Additionally, BGMC performed for the arrival of The Amistad, participated in "Gusto at the Gallery" at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, sang at an Ars Nova Musicians "Viva Vivaldi" Concert, sang at Fredonia College for its diversity and multicultural groups and also performed at the Nichols School as part of its Diversity Week activities. Of course, our four major concerts (this year, increased to nine) annually bring our work to thousands of listeners in the Western New York area.

The BGMC is a New York not-for-profit corporation of member singers and supporters, dedicated to producing high quality vocal music in the rich tradition of men's choral singing. Through its music, the Chorus endeavors to entertain and enlighten, create harmony and celebrate personal and community pride.



**Barbara Wagner** (Artistic Director) has served as Minister of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo for 44 years. She was the director of choral activities at the Nichols School for more than 24 years and served the congregation of Temple Beth Am as its Music Director for 12 years. She was in charge of vocal activities at the Buffalo Seminary for several years and conducts the Unitarian Universalist Church Choir as well as the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. In addition to its Sunday morning responsibilities, the UU Church Choir has made two highly acclaimed European tours, the first to Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic and the second to Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland. In the Fall of 2006, the choir did a short concert tour of the Northern Adirondacks. The UU Church Choir, under the direction of Ms. Wagner, has recorded for American Public Radio, and has performed locally with members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, with the Amherst Saxophone Quartet and with the Ars Nova Chamber Orchestra. Ms. Wagner was the conductor for the Peace Odyssey Tour of Hungary and the former Soviet Union. Choral singers from all over the USA participated in this tour. She was a member of the prestigious seven member Hymn book Resources Commission that was responsible for the denominational hymn book, *Singing the Living Tradition*, published in 1993. She was the chair of the New Hymns Task Force, which produced *Singing the Journey*, another denominational song book, published in June, 2005.

She ran a choral program at Nichols High School that involved over 100 young singers, including a concert chorus, women's ensemble, men's ensemble and a mixed chamber group. She was also guest conductor for the City of Good Neighbors Chorale.

Ms. Wagner earned a BFA degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she studied Organ with Squire Haskin. She has done graduate work at Westminster Choir College. She did advanced Organ study with Karl Richter at Munich Conservatory and has done advanced conducting study with Raymond Harvey, the former Assistant Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and presently the Music Director of the Kalamazoo Symphony. Ms. Wagner regularly attends choral workshops led by many of the most prestigious choral conductors in this country. Rodney Eichenberger, the late Robert Shaw, Paul Salomonovich, Robert Page, Vance George and Dale Warland are just a few of the greats with whom she has worked.

She is a member of The American Choral Director's Association, Erie County Music Educators Association, MENC, Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network (founding member, former vice president and board member), NYSSMA, American Guild of Organists (former program chair and sub dean of the Buffalo Chapter) and Chromatic Club. She was presented with the Erie County Music Educator/Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra award for excellence in choral education in May of 2002. Ms. Wagner has been included in editions of both *Who's Who in American Women* and *Who's Who in America*. She is the proud charter Artistic Director of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus.



A native of North Carolina, **Debi Overton** (Accompanist/Conductor), has held positions as coach/accompanist at the University of Texas at Austin and served as Director of the Chamber Music Program at The New School of Music in Philadelphia. For many years, she was active at the Summer Music Festival in Aspen, Colorado. As the coach/accompanist for the choral department in Aspen, she served as assistant to noted conductor Fiora Contino. She has assisted in preparing choruses and soloists for such conductors as Tamara Brooks, John Nelson, Robert Shaw and Sergei Commissiona. Additionally, she has coached with coach/accompanists David Garvey, John Wustman, Brooks Smith and Dalton Baldwin and the local master, Livingston Gearhart.

Ms. Overton has accompanied Master Classes for Luciano Pavarotti, Phyllis Curtin, Jessye Norman, Leontyne Price and Sylvia McNair. She has accompanied the regional Metropolitan Opera auditions in Greensboro, NC, Philadelphia, PA, Atlanta, GA and New York City. Considered by her peers to be "one of the finest sight readers in the country", she offers nuances and subtle interpretations of music that have been enjoyed and applauded by thousands of listeners throughout the United States. Recently reviewed, Ms. Overton was touted as "a musician's musician" in the *Buffalo News*.

In addition to her duties as Organist and Choir Master at Calvary Episcopal church in Williamsville, NY, Ms. Overton is a past chair of the Music Commission of the WNY Episcopal Diocese; currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Guild of Organists and is active in Western New York teaching, guest conducting, accompanying and performing with singers and instrumentalists.

**Barbara Levy**

Barbara began her musical career at the ripe age of 12 in 1958 when she was under contract with A.B.C. Paramount Records. Barbara Lyons (as she was called back then) recorded singles written by Carole King and arranged by Dick Wess ("Mack the Knife") and even cut a children's album with Woody Herman's bass player, Chubby Jackson.

During a 35-year hiatus, she raised a family, owned a lefty bookstore, graduated from business school and went on to earn masters degrees in special education and social work. Next, she launched and maintains today a flourishing practice in marriage and family therapy.

Announcing Barbara's return to performing in 1998 was the release of a CD of jazz and pre-war standards ("They're Writing Songs of Love...") and began gracing the stages locally and in New York City. She also performed in Havana, Cuba until travel restrictions halted such exchanges between musicians. A second CD, "Peel Me a Grape" was released in 2003 and was well received by jazz lovers everywhere.

Barbara's educational experiences included the Eastman School of Music as well as studying at the University of Massachusetts' famed "Jazz in July" program as one of only 14 vocalists selected through audition. There she worked with such greats as Yusef Lateef, Dr. Billy Taylor and Sheila Jordan.

Today, as Barbara enjoys her "golden years, she continues to study, perform and thrill audiences of all ages.



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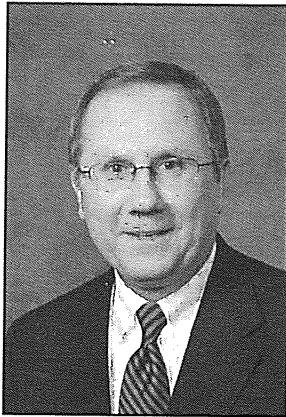
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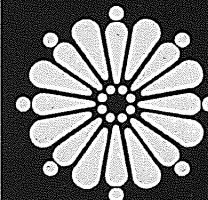


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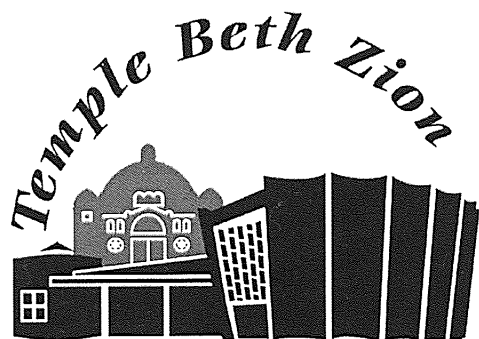


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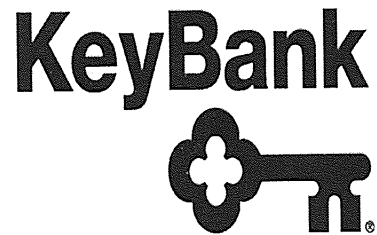
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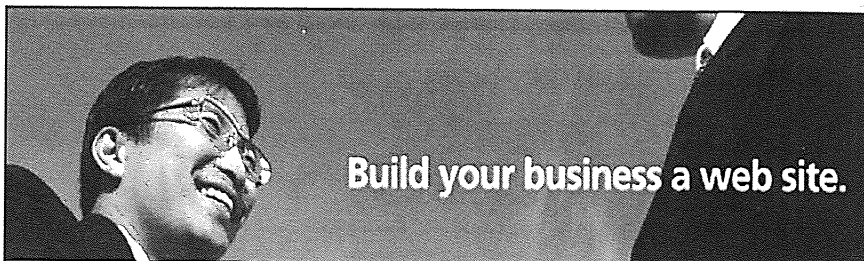
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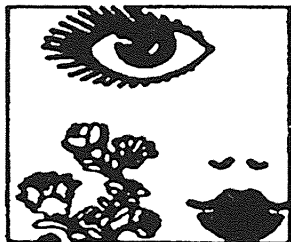
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*Christmas Eve,*

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Choral Prelude, 10:30 pm

Solemn Choral Eucharist &

Candlelighting, 11 pm

*Christmas Day,*

Benjamin Britten's

A Ceremony of Carols, 10 am

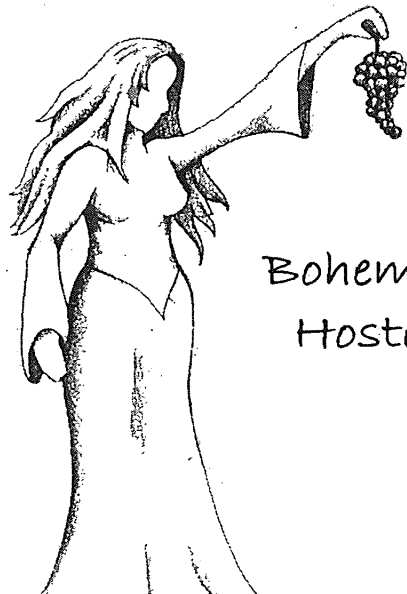
Solemn Choral Eucharist 10:30 am

*Normal Sunday Eucharists; 8 am, 9 am, 11:15 am, and 3 pm Evensong*

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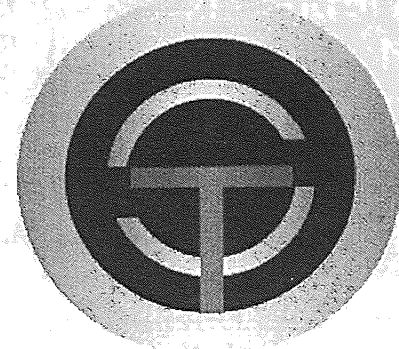
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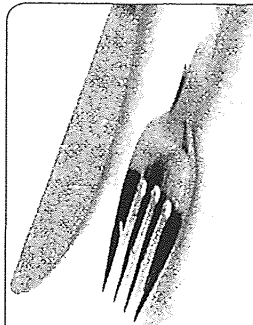
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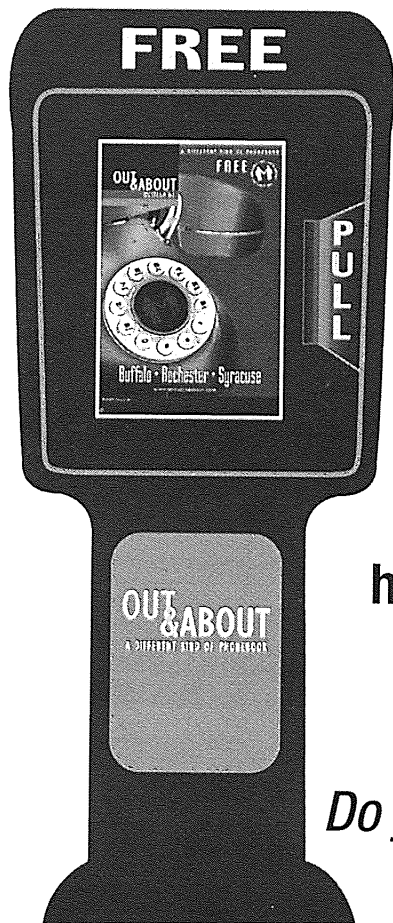
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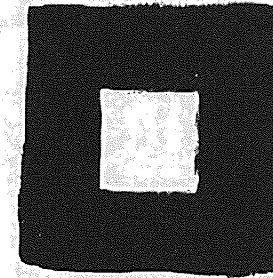
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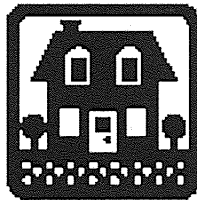
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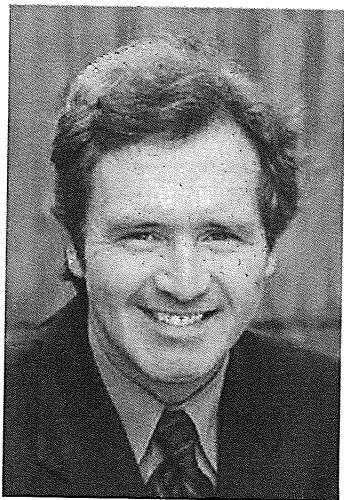
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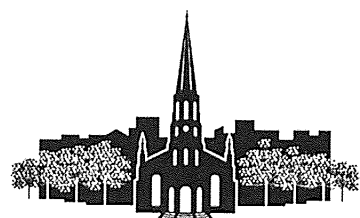
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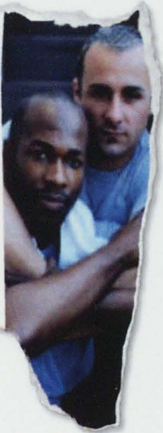


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