

Sounds of Christmas in Wentworth



The Cumberland Singers gather on stage at the Wentworth Recreation Centre performing at the Songs of Christmas Concert in a spirited and compassionate style. (Rick Clarke Photo)

By Hope Bridgewater

Once again the Cumberland Singers, located at the Wentworth Recreation Centre under the direction of Jocelyn Morris, performed a spirited, compassionate, and splendid concert of traditional and contemporary Christmas music with proceeds in 2016 going to Hurricane Matthew Relief in Haiti by way of Chalice, a charity aid group for Canada and where needed internationally.

Father Patrick Cosgrove, founder and president of Chalice, attended and spoke with Jocelyn Morris on stage to the audience. Father Cosgrove started Chalice when he was parish priest at St. John the Baptist Church in Springhill. Chalice has been given high rating among Canadian international aid organizations. Chalice affirms the sacredness and dignity of all people, including all those in need regardless of colour, nationality or creed. The funds raised at this concert will be presented to Father Cosgrove for use by Chalice to help Haiti.

I call the Cumberland Singers the Patriquin Clan as out of the 28 performers 23 are descended from the late

Ellsworth and Edith Patriquin who lived in Greenville Station, were parents of 12 children, and trained them in music by having "kitchen parties" in their home. The Patriquin clan of extended families did not keep their musical talent just in their home, because in 1982 Pearl Crowley and the late Jean Mooring-Baker, the daughters of Ellsworth and Edith Patriquin, decided to perform a concert to raise funds to buy a piano for the former community centre and continued to perform the concerts for charity until 1991. Then after a lapse of eight years, Jocelyn Morris, the daughter of Pearl Crowley, asked family members to call themselves the Cumberland Singers and raise funds for Chalice, an organization for charity for Canada and international needs.

Twenty-three of the descendants of Ellsworth and Edith Patriquin by blood or marriage at this 2016 concert for charity are listed here in their memory: Jocelyn Morris (singer, coordinator, director), Ashley Baker (singer, guitarist), Amy Morris (singer, sound technician), Nick Morris (singer, drummer, sound technician), Steve Simpson (back-up drummer),

Sharon Miller (singer, comedian), Larry Patriquin (singer), Carmen Baker (singer), Pearl Crowley (singer), Laurine DeCoste (choir), Erica DeCoste (choir), Roger Patriquin (choir), Ron Rushton (choir), Sarah Morris (choir), Sherri Rushton (choir), Colton Rushton (choir), Bill Baker (choir), Luke Morris (child singer), Ben Morris (child singer), Damien Miller (child singer), Avery Miller (child singer), Seamus McKim (child singer), and Whitney McKim (child singer).

Jocelyn Morris is very emphatic that the five musician friends (not descended from Ellsworth and Edith Patriquin) performing at the concert are very talented, important, and needed. They are Wayne Reid (singer and leading guitarist), Shane Lyons (bass guitarist), Angela Trenholm (piano), Andrew Keilty (Patriquin cousin), Rachael Trenholm (child singer).

The concert was organized in two sets with a recess in between. The first set had nine presentations consisting of group singing, solos, and duets. The second set had children singing followed by 20 presentations consisting of

group singing, solos, trios, duets and quartets.

At the recess, several door prize and the raffle tickets were announced. Two of the winners were Muriel Gaillard for the Turkey Dinner Plus basket and Kenny Coulter for the Large Grocery basket, worth about \$275.

Jocelyn Morris commented: "The biggest disappointment at this 18th version of the "Songs of Christmas" was the absence of Charles Patriquin due to his unexpected heart surgery. He is an excellent MC and a lovely singer. He was missed dearly and the Men's Quartet turned into a Trio and his bass vocals was certainly missed in their two songs. Instead of a MC, a performer at the end of her or his song or a group song announced the next musical presentation.

Volunteer musicians and off-stage workers who gave free their time, talent, and expenses for "Songs of Christmas" was important in order to give all of the money raised (\$3,356) to Chalice in order to help Haiti. In addition to the musicians (already listed) volunteering their music free of charge, other volunteers off stage were: Ethel Gilroy and Jeanette Murray (admission fee); Sharon Miller, Beryl Keilty, Al Keilty (raffle tickets); Shirley Patriquin, Judy Clarke, Amy Morris (bake sale); Amy, Jocelyn and Sarah Morris, Pearl Crowley, Sharon Miller, Sherry Rushton, Shirley Patriquin, Jeanette Murray, Joan Wark (provided food for bake sale); Larry Patriquin, Carson Patriquin, Creighton Patriquin, Andrew Keilty (setting up/taking down chairs and tables); Bob MacLean,

president of the Wentworth Recreation Centre (gift of cancelling rent for concert). Jocelyn Morris as volunteer worker off stage accomplished much work: looked after all the publicity, organized and scheduled practices, decorated the stage back wall, placed stockings with musician's names all along the front of the stage, and put up two Christmas trees on each side of the stage.

Sharon Miller and Jocelyn Morris had four clothes changes to highlight their songs and the other women changed their red blouses for personal outfits for the same reason. For a touch of humour, both Jocelyn Morris and Sharon Miller each told a joke, and Sharon Miller dressed as Sadie the Old Lady recited a witty poem.

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