

Music lover started in Mania choir

By KATE GILDERDALE
 For the second year in a row, Linda Hollin has taken on the challenging task of music director for Music Mania, the show which has entertained and delighted legions of fans for the past 29 years.

Her involvement goes back to September, 1979, when she asked Lorne Boadway, then principal of Summitview Public School, whether there was a choir she could join.

He passed on all the information about Music Mania and that was the beginning of a happy association that started with the 1980 show.

"It was a wonderful chance to sing," enthuses Linda. "It was also a great way for new people in town to get to meet other people." She's only missed one show, in 1983, and she found it strange and somewhat unsettling to be a member of the audience instead of the cast.

"I very much missed being in it. As I sat there on the Saturday night, it was hard not to sing." It

was also a learning experience. "I saw the show from another perspective. It makes you appreciate your audience when you have to spend two and a half hours sitting on those chairs," she laughs.

An accomplished piano player, she has both played and sung in the show over the years. The job of music director, however, is a big commitment, with preliminary work starting in the fall.

She's chairman of the music committee and a member of the format committee, and has the task of ensuring that the music needed for the selected theme is available.

"The situation could happen where the format committee would pick the idea and there was no suitable music for it. As I hear ideas I'm thinking about the songs we could use for them.

Once we have the format, the music committee starts brainstorming." That, says Linda, is the most frustrating part of the process.

"You can come up with 20 fabulous songs, but only 10 are available in print." She recalls that one year the chorus had to sing 17 songs. "That was too much."

Now the show features more solos, duets, trios and quartets, as well as chorus selections, to take some of the pressure off the choir.

Decisions on what music the group wants to use are drawn up by Dec. 1, and copies of the music are made available to chorus members at the first meeting in January.

Linda remembers one of last year's enthusiastic new chorus members suggesting they should produce two shows a year. Like many others, he simply didn't realize the amount of planning involved.

"Nobody sees that unless they are part of the committees," she says. "Most of the people involved in the format and music committees also show up in January as members of the chorus, or in February or March as skit

members."

Linda credits director Ed Warlow with bringing a fresh perspective to a show which had shown signs of losing its direction after the 26th year.

"As someone who has a history with Music Mania, I think an enormous amount of credit should be given to him," she says. "After one year in the show, he agreed to direct. He said he would do it as long as there were some simple, but very vital, changes made." It was Ed's contention that Music Mania should become everybody's show.

He wanted committee heads to be responsible for taking the decisions for their own groups, giving him only when there was a problem.

This would give each group more freedom and responsibility, allowing them to develop their ideas without interference.

"It made the position of director much less awesome and meant that talented people could do what they do best and what they liked doing," she adds.

As a result, says Linda, "the show has more life and more sparkle to it because everybody has made a contribution to the final product. I feel it's a better show."

Although she says she won't think beyond the current show, "I have a rule that I don't think about next year's show until this one is over."

It's hard to imagine Linda not being an integral part of Music Mania. "It's not something I'm ready to walk away from forever," she concedes.

At the end of the day, it's an immensely rewarding and emotional experience. On the last night of the show, she says, "you realize that this is the last time this same group of people will share this experience. You'll

never get them all back together again."

The important thing for would-be Music Maniacs to remember is that they don't need qualifications or outstanding voices to be part of the show, stresses Linda.

"The only requirement I have for chorus members is that they're willing to work hard, be available and co-operative, and that they enjoy music," she says.

With new people and new ideas constantly revitalizing the show, and the determination of the participants to make each one a winner, she's convinced "there will be a Music Mania for at least 25 more years."

This year's show runs from Thursday, April 27 to Saturday, April 29, at Stouffville District High School.

Top speakers competing

By KATE GILDERDALE
 Students from across Area F competed in the public speaking competition at Ballantrae Public School recently.

Eleven students in the junior category vied for the opportunity to represent their schools at the regional contest.

Plenty of creative thought went into all entries, which included a speech on how it feels to be a pet budgerigar, the delights and disadvantages of life in Australia and the trials and tribulations of a hand-stitched, major league baseball.

Junior division winner Kris Wilde of Ramer Wood Public School gave a graphic and humorous account of visiting the orthodontist to be fitted with braces, which, according to him, sentenced the victim to a diet of "no toffee, no ice cream, no popcorn and no gum. Nothing but Uncle Ben's Converted Rice and baby food."

Amy Sled, of Orchard Park Public School, captured second place honors with a spirited account of the day she and her family accompanied sister Mary to Kingston to start her first year at Queen's University.

Amy related some of the pitfalls awaiting a freshman, and ended with a tuneful rendition of

the University's song in Gaelic and an athletic jump from the stage.

Third place went to Mark Johnson at Reesor Park Public School, who pointed out the human body has many weaknesses, "and mine is my mouth." His problem, he said, is that his mouth couldn't accommodate his teeth and he has to wear a retainer.

Although he can't eat all the things he loves, he claims there are advantages.

"This appliance always keeps girls away. When I get this off I will be a better looking guy with straight teeth and a beautiful smile," he concluded.

The judges had a difficult time selecting three winners from the 10 intermediate students who took part, whose topics ranged from the misleading portrayal of life on television commercials.

First place Sarfraz Visram from Ramer Wood Public School was clearly a crowd favorite, with a witty and well presented speech on speeches.

He gave a hilarious run-down of various speech presentations from the dramatic and technical to the obscure, not forgetting to add a few jokes along the way.

For those wondering what jokes had to do with his speech, he said, "wasting time is the essence of speeches."

Second was Jennifer Miyauchi from E.T. Crowle, who spoke on behalf of those much-maligned left handers. In defense of fellow 'lefties' Jennifer pointed out since left-handed people use the right side of the brain for thinking and right-handed people use the left side, "only the left hand-

ed are in their right minds."

Andrea Wilson of Ballantrae Public School came third for her lively account of life at the family cottage with no water, no electricity, an outhouse and "no dear old television."

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