



**Folsom Concert
Association**

NEWSLETTER

July 2020

Hello everyone!

It's been a while since we've had a newsletter for you, and since so many of us are still pretty isolated, we thought it was time to start up again - to keep you informed, entertained, and involved.

Some of you have already been contacted by phone. We want to make sure that during this difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, you are safe and staying healthy. Your well-being is very important to us. We enjoy getting your feedback about past events, and what you would like to see in the future. So, if you haven't talked to someone directly, you will soon! In the meantime, you can contact us via email or phone at any time.

We, at the Folsom Concert Association (FCA) are still unsure as to when we will be able to start providing concerts again. The Harris Center recently announced they are closing their doors until July 1, 2021. We have been using that wonderful venue since they opened ten years ago, and plan on continuing there once they reopen. Again, YOUR health is very important to us, so we will wait until it is safe to start up again. In the meantime, please know we will stay in touch, and we will keep you all informed of the other things FCA is doing while unable to provide concerts for you. We will let you know as soon as we have a startup date again. And rest assured...you will not have to give up your seats.

For now, we will be posting updates, videos, and interviews online from time to time. And we will be sending out periodic newsletters, as well. If you have items to submit, suggestions, or any questions you would like to see addressed in the newsletter, feel free to contact us!

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or

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Please check our recently redesigned, easy to navigate, **WEBSITE**.

<http://www.folsomconcertassociation.org>

If you are on **FACEBOOK**, please look at our page there, too!

<https://www.facebook.com/FolsomConcerts/>

And **INSTAGRAM**

<https://www.instagram.com/folsomconcertassociation/>

And **YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCngapSnET1PcuZiwWqHuoUA>

SCHOLARSHIPS!

We are so proud to announce the recipients of the 2020 Dick Merz Scholarship awards!



SARAH ALLEN

Scholarship Award: **\$5,000**
El Dorado High School
Carnegie Mellon University
Musical Theatre (MFA)



AURORA GIACOBBE

Scholarship Award: **\$1,000**
St. Francis High School
Emerson Pacific University
Film/Media Arts Production



SOPHIA AUGUSTINE

Scholarship Award: **\$3,500**
Folsom High School
Berklee School of Music
Music



NAOMI SMITH

Scholarship Award: **\$1,000**
Ponderosa High School
Brigham Young University
Music Performance



BRANDON BARTOSH

Scholarship Award: **\$1,000**
Ponderosa High School
UCLA
Communications



LEAH WOODS

Scholarship Award: **\$2000**
Vista Del Lago
CSU Sacramento
Music (emphasis on voice)



Honoring Dick Merz

You may or may not be aware that when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we were about to embark on our 25th anniversary season (1995-2020). We had special events planned, and fabulous artists booked and ready to perform. Now, all of that is on hold. In the meantime, we want to share a story of how we came to be. We'll start by honoring our founding father, **Dick "Buzz" Merz**. Dick passed away on December 19, 2019.

Born on the Fourth of July (in 1930), he was destined for greatness, and indeed, his was not a life wasted. To get a sense of who he was, let's start with some background information and some of his many accomplishments.

Growing up in Auburn, he spent a lot of time on his family's gold mine and had wonderful childhood stories about running in the woods and fishing in the creek on the property. When he was in third grade, Dick met a cute little girl named Shirl. She'd moved to Auburn with her family and they lived only a few blocks away from each other. They were part of a large group of neighborhood kids that played together almost every evening. They went through grade school, high school, and junior college together, and although they never formally "dated", Dick and Shirl remained close friends. She moved to San Francisco to pursue her art education, and eventually settled in the Bay Area with her husband and children. Dick, in the meantime, joined the Air Force during the Korean War, was married, and had two children.

When it was time to work on their 50th high school reunion, both Dick and Shirl were single again. Realizing how well they worked together on the planning committee, Dick suggested they make "working together" a permanent arrangement. They announced their engagement at the reunion!

Together, they were active in Folsom's Trinity Episcopal church. They traveled, mostly in the United States, and partook in all kinds of outdoor activities. It took years for Shirl to realize Dick really didn't enjoy the outdoors anymore at all. She had no idea that he went hiking, sailing, took cruises, and so on, simply to please her. She said, "He really was an indoor kind of guy!"

Dick worked for Folsom Prison for almost 30 years, and he was instrumental in starting the prison's Project for the Visually Impaired. It teaches prisoners to read and write in Braille, then to use those skills to translate texts and books to Braille. This program has been a fabulous service to visually impaired prisoners and to people across our nation. In fact, those in the program now may soon be translating for the Library of Congress. The program has provided true rehabilitation for the prisoners involved. Most have been able to find employment upon release, and their recidivism has been dramatically reduced.

After retirement, at the age of 54, Dick began to follow his true passion; working to promote the arts in the community. In, his own words, he said,

"The community concert concept had been of interest to me ever since I was a subscriber of the Auburn Community Concert Association. In 1992, the City of Folsom built a new Community Center and I realized that Folsom now had a facility suitable for concerts.

“I had several friends; Ed Pegram, Nick Econome and Charles Schlenker, meet with me about the feasibility of having a community concert association in Folsom. We met with a representative of the New York office for Community Concerts of America and we were assured that Folsom could support such an activity.

“Many civic and music lover people were invited to be a part of forming an association. We were officially formed in January 1995 and had our first concert in April. The featured artist was pianist John Bayless and he was an outstanding success with six hundred persons attending the concert. Over five hundred persons became paying subscribers for the first full concert season of 1995-1996. I was president for four years and then as a Director.

“The Folsom Lake Community Concert Association (Now named Folsom Concert Association) has become a success story in Folsom’s entertainment world. It inspired and encouraged other performing art organizations to become a part of Folsom’s entertainment. In 2010, it began performing at the new Three Stages Theater at Folsom Lake College. It soon sold out each season and additional second performances were added to accommodate those who were unable to get season tickets.”

Dick remained an active member of the Board until 2019, just months before his passing.

But his work didn’t stop with the Folsom Concert Association. He was one of three founders of the Folsom Lake Symphony in 2004. He also founded the group, Friends of Folsom Parkways, in order to preserve Folsom’s historic lands, and to develop and preserve the parkways in the city. He was a former chairman of the Folsom LIONS club. He served on the redevelopment agency, Citizens Advisory Committee, and was an active member of SIRS (Sons in Retirement) Branch 49, a California men’s social group.

In 2009 he received the “Star Achievement” from FLCCA (FCA) for his work. In October 2013, FLCCA (FCA) was awarded the Folsom Arts Achievement Award from the Folsom Arts Commission and a Resolution of Commendation from the Folsom City Council. He accepted both awards in behalf of FLCCA (FCA). Because he started several organizations and was on a number of committees in the community, Dick received the Golden Arch Award as Senior Citizen of the year in 1997.

This amazing man was such an asset to the community. The Folsom Concert Association celebrates his life by naming our scholarship program after him and deeming him an Emeritus Board Member.

Meet our Board Members

Many of you know, or at least recognize, some of our board members. We would like to take this time to help you become more familiar with them. They are not only lovers of the arts, but they are volunteers, committed to this program and the amazing things it does for Folsom and the surrounding communities. We will highlight a few of them in each newsletter, so you can a better sense of who they are as people, how they joined the Board, and what they have contributed to the success of the Folsom Concert Association.



CRAIG BURNETT
President

DIANNE BURNETT
Chair of Artist Selection
Committee

In 2009, lifetime residents, Craig and Dianne Burnett, were members of the River City Corvette Club. Through a “friend of a friend”, they heard that the Folsom Lake Community Concert Association was having a California Beach Boys concert. FLCCA hoped the Corvette club could send a group of people with their red Corvettes to the concert in honor of the Beach Boys song, “Little Red Corvette”. Craig and Dianne, and a group of their friends, showed up to have their car show before the performance. On the spur of the moment, they decided to buy tickets to see the show. While they were buying them, Doreen Mykytyn, who was the membership coordinator at the time, told them they could buy season tickets and save money. So, they and their friends became subscribers. After a few months, Doreen approached them again, and invited them to attend a board meeting to learn more about the association.

Craig and Dianne didn’t think they were really interested, but at the last minute decided, “why not?”, and went. At the meeting, the board members each introduced themselves, and when Dick Merz said his name, Dianne was thrilled to meet this man face to face. She had grown up living on the Folsom Prison grounds, since her father was a long-time employee of the prison. Her father had worked closely with Dick on several inhouse vocational programs. And Dick’s name was very familiar to her. Craig and Dianne attended a second meeting, and after they understood all FLCCA did, they eagerly joined the Board in 2010.

A year later, it was election time, and the Board needed a new president. Craig had served on Community Service Boards for over 30 years and offered to step up and take on the presidency. The board felt it might be premature and elected him as Vice President instead. A few months after the election, the newly elected president had to step down due to health issues. And in 2011, Craig, who had only been on the board for a year, assumed the position after all.

In 2011, the Harris Center had opened and Craig, essentially starting from scratch, had SO much to learn! The Executive Director at the Harris Center, David Pier, took Craig under his wing, trained him to schedule and book the artists, and taught him all the behind the scenes work that goes on in the theater. Craig now has a wealth of knowledge as to the workings of the front of house, the technical, and artistic needs of the performers, and all the tasks necessary to keep the association running smoothly. After nine years, he continues to serve as the President.

Craig’s wife, Dianne, also stepped up as soon as she was on the Board. The outreach program needed help and Dianne was the perfect person to take it over. She’d worked for the Folsom Cordova School District and had contacts at most of the local schools. The program expanded, and in addition to the school concerts, she even helped with the instrument refurbishing program the Board set up. Subscribers and friends donated instruments and the Board had them refurbished and given to Cordova Meadows Elementary and Vista del Lago schools, since their music and arts program funding had been cut back.

Over the years, in addition to the outreach program, Dianne also took care of the performer hospitality, the scholarship program, special dinners and events. She currently chairs the Artist Selection committee, which you will learn about at a later date.

Craig and Dianne together developed an informational training manual for all new board members. Their passion is not only to serve the community, but to also serve the people they work with. Many of you know them personally, and others may simply recognize them as two greeters who give you warm and gracious welcomes before the concerts. Please say hello when you see them again!

Subscribers' Comments

"I can't tell you which concert was my favorite, because I have loved them ALL!"

"You are the gem of the community!"

"I've been a member almost from the beginning, and I cannot imagine not going to your concerts this year! I will miss you terribly"

"What a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon, being greeted by FCA Board members when we arrive, getting a chance to visit with old friends, hearing wonderful musical acts that do not split your ear drums, and all at reasonable prices!"

"We have always been impressed with FCA's extra-curricular activities such as the scholarship program and providing entertainment to Senior Living Facilities. You are a great asset to the community, and we hope you come back to us soon."

"What I enjoy the most about the concerts, is that they are not just performances. The entertainers truly give themselves to us. I've never seen anything like it."

And per David Pier, Executive Director of the Harris Center, when asked why people keep coming back to the Folsom Concert Associations performances, "Because they trust the Folsom Concert Association!"

Next newsletter?

Interview with Daniel and Marla
Spotlight on Board Members
What DOES the FCA President do?