

Newburyport Choral Society

Member Handbook



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Welcome to the Newburyport Choral Society

We are pleased that you have chosen to join our organization, and we look forward to sharing the joy of creating great music together. When you join the Newburyport Choral Society, a promise is made to you: You will have the opportunity to sing some of the world's most beloved music under the direction of an exceptional leader, and you will have the chance to perform with some of the finest soloists and musicians in the area. In exchange, you make a promise to the Choral Society: To fully participate in all rehearsals and performances, to help promote our concerts, and to contribute your time and talent through volunteer opportunities. By keeping these promises to each other, our chorus will continue to grow and succeed in countless and diverse ways. If we remain dedicated to learning, dedicated to the music, and dedicated to each other, the possibilities are endless!



*Of all the arts music is the most linked with community of expression.
This meaning of music is somehow most open to the amateur musician, and nowhere does it find its
expression so fully among people who sing together. It rests upon a common devotion to the composer's
utterance and a mutual respect for the personal dignity of fellow workers.*

-Robert Shaw

*The soul rises to the music's invitation.
Sweet sounds and mellow harmonies
lift the spirit out of itself,
and once again the heart warms
to the new --- yet old - call
to come to a place
of refreshment and wonder.*

*Exhilaration --- joy at the task ---
the effort and concentration,
all combine
in the joining of singer and composer.*

*---Lorraine Cullen
NCS Member*

About the Newburyport Choral Society

The purpose of the Society is to offer sacred and secular musical performances for the cultural enrichment of Newburyport and surrounding communities. *–NCS Constitution*

The Newburyport Choral Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1934, though its ancestry can be traced back to other local choral groups which were active in the 1800s.

We typically present two concerts per season; the first is in December and offers music of the season in addition to one or more choral masterpieces. The second is performed in the spring and frequently features one of the great choral masterpieces. Concerts are often accompanied by a professional orchestra and feature professional soloists. We also hold an annual Summer Sing which is open to the public.

The Choral Society is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership and who serve on a voluntary basis. The Board generally meets monthly. These meetings are open to any active member of the Society; however anyone wishing to attend should make arrangements with the president at least one week prior to the meeting. The basic operating procedures of the society are specified in the Constitution.

NCS Contact Information

Newburyport Choral Society
P.O. Box 92, Newburyport, MA 01950
Phone us at: (978) 462--0650

E-mail: info@newburyportchoralsociety.org

NCS Website – Members Only Section

Visit the NCS Website: www.newburyportchoralsociety.org

To access the Members-only section of the website, you will need to check with your Section Leader or the IT Director for the Username and the Password. This information will be updated and announced each semester.

Membership Policies

Members Are Important

NCS is a volunteer, non-profit organization and requires a great deal of time, dedication, and cooperation to function and succeed. Every member is expected to participate in volunteer opportunities within NCS, whenever possible. We are always seeking new funds and opportunities to ensure NCS' continued growth and as volunteers your help is critical. There are volunteer opportunities to sell tickets and ads, solicit donations and sponsorships, or become an individual sponsor yourself. You can join in fund raising efforts, help with physical set up for concerts, distribute posters, serve at receptions, donate refreshments for our patrons, act as a Section Leader, or serve on the Board of Directors. The opportunities are varied and the work never-ending. For those who are interested in becoming a Board member, please contact any current Board member and express your interest. A nominating committee is formed each spring to gather the names of members interested in working on the Board and elections are held at the annual meeting in the spring.

Registration

- Registration takes place online prior to the first rehearsal of each semester and on the nights of "open rehearsal" where new members can "check us out."
- The first two weeks of each semester are registration and "open rehearsal" weeks.
- Registration closes after the second rehearsal of each semester. Attendance is counted from the first rehearsal.

Membership Fees

- Dues are payable at/or before registration.
- The cost of dues, music, and tickets can be found on the registration form on the NCS website.
- Dues may be refunded if termination of membership occurs on or before rehearsal week three.
- Dues are waived for full-time students.
- Music purchased from NCS may not be returned for a refund.
- Each singer is responsible for purchasing **two concert tickets each season**, which are paid for in advance by rehearsal week four. This amount is non-refundable after rehearsal week three. In addition, members are expected to assist with the sale of concert tickets.
- Under circumstances of financial need, any of the membership fees mentioned above may be waived at the discretion of the NCS Executive Board. Requests should be made to the Treasurer. This information is kept strictly confidential.

Staying Current

- A chorus-wide announcement, News of Note, is e-mailed each week to everyone who has provided a valid e-mail address. Printed copies of the announcements are provided at weekly rehearsals for those members who do not have access to e-mail.
- Current and past weeks' announcements may also be accessed directly from the NCS website in the Members section.
- A binder containing past weeks' announcements is available at rehearsals.
- It is the responsibility of each member to keep informed of NCS news through weekly announcements, emails, printed copy, verbal announcements, phone, NCS website, and the Membership Handbook.
- All dates, times and locations of rehearsal and performance venues are listed on the calendar, which is distributed each semester.

Publicity Releases

- From time to time NCS updates advertising materials with photographs of the chorus and its members. If anyone does not wish their picture to appear in media photographs or videos, please communicate your wishes in writing to the President.
- All contact with the news media, including letters to editorial staff, must be cleared through the NCS President.

Musical Proficiency

- NCS is a non-auditioned chorus; however, all members are expected to be able to match pitches.
- A vocal check for voice range placement is required for new members.
- If a singer is found to have difficulty matching pitch, or a drastic change in his or her musicianship is noticed by either the music director or section leader that affects the quality of the musical product of NCS, then the following steps may be taken at the discretion of the music director:
 - A mentor may be assigned to provide additional guidance;
 - The singer may be asked to vocalize and/or sing music from the upcoming concert program for the music director and/or section leader prior to concert participation;
 - The singer may be asked to take voice lessons, attend music classes, and/or other educational alternatives in order to continue to participate
- As a last resort, the music director, in consultation with the section leader and executive committee, may recommend that the singer be asked not to return as a singing member of NCS.

Rehearsal Information

Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays from 7:15 pm to 9:45 pm at the Belleville Congregational Church Parish Hall, 300 High Street in Newburyport. Rehearsals begin with a vocal warm-up and there is a short break for refreshments and announcements approximately half way through.

Members are expected to remain for the entire rehearsal unless unusual circumstances prevent it, in which case you should notify your Section Leader prior to the start of rehearsal. During concert week there are additional rehearsals on the Saturday before the concert, and on the Thursday dress rehearsal (concert dress is not required), with the orchestra and soloists. Attendance is required at these rehearsals and any absence must have prior approval from the President or Music Director.

Rehearsal Protocol

- Members are expected to sit with their appropriate voice sections.
- All cell-phones and audible pagers must be silenced during rehearsal.
- It is important that we refrain from talking while the rehearsal is in progress.
- Each week at rehearsal volunteers are needed to bring one gallon of juice/water for the break. A weekly sign-up sheet can be found at the juice table. You do NOT need to bring cups; these will be supplied. At the rehearsal break, volunteers set up and serve the drinks, then clean up afterward, taking home any containers of remaining juice. This is a great way to help out and to meet fellow singers.
- Sensitivity to Scents: Some members of the chorus have acute sensitivities to various scents. We ask that you make every effort to avoid the use of any fragrances when you attend rehearsals and particularly at concerts. This includes the use of scented dryer sheets, hairspray, all perfumes, after shave, hand and body lotions, and even some deodorants. Be a caring, responsible singing neighbor; use "fragrance free" products.

- Visitors are welcome at rehearsals, but must be introduced to the NCS President or Music Director prior to the start of rehearsal. Visitors may not participate in the rehearsal and are asked to sit in a designated area apart from the chorus.

Rehearsal Attendance

- A total of three unapproved absences are allowed each semester including registration weeks.
- If there are more than three absences during a semester, a member may be asked to sing selected concert material before the Music Committee to determine eligibility for performances.
- Attendance is tracked by signup sheets; please remember to sign in each week, starting on week one of the term. Check your name for accuracy on the attendance sheet to ensure it will appear correctly in the concert program. Note any changes on the sign in sheet.

Rehearsal Cancellation Policy

In case of inclement weather or any other unforeseen circumstances requiring us to cancel a rehearsal or other event, members will be informed by 5:00 P.M. of that day through the following channels:

- E-Mail:** A chorus-wide notice will be sent via e-mail to all those who have given us a valid e-mail address.
- Buddy---Up:** If you do not have access to e-mail, make arrangements to be in touch with someone who does.
- Phone:** Call the Newburyport Choral Society at (978) 462-0650 for a recorded message.
- NCS Website:** Go to www.newburyportchoralsociety.org where a notice will be posted on the Members section.

We all know how unpredictable our weather can be, and we know our own limitations. Any time the weather makes safe driving or walking questionable, whether we cancel or not, please follow your own good judgment about whether to come out or not.

Rehearsal Guidelines

Choral singing is a communal art. Through rehearsal, performance, and joint artistic experience we achieve what cannot be achieved alone. The commitment of each member vocally, personally, and academically in each rehearsal and performance determines the success of the ensemble and the benefit to the individual. Therefore, each member is encouraged and expected to contribute that which makes him or her an individual with valuable musical experience and knowledge. We are enriched as an ensemble because of our diversity.

George Case, Music Director

Here are some necessary practices:

- ❖ Listen
- ❖ Watch!
- ❖ Sing Well!
- ❖ Know the music!
- ❖ Work on your own!
- ❖ Mark your music!

We believe:

- ❖ ... in making music from the first rehearsal. Life is too short to be anything less than musical at all times.
- ❖ ... in incremental growth. Little by little we will grow and attain and accomplish – throughout a concert, throughout a season, and throughout many years together.
- ❖ ... in working together. The Music Director will give you the tools and will help you. In return you must work hard. The music requires this of us all.
- ❖ ... that music is more than the right notes and the right rhythms at the right time – that it is the soul and the heart of each individual.

NCS Ticket Sale Policy

Ticket availability will be determined for each performance based on the venue and seating capacity to ensure that all patrons are accommodated.

- NCS tickets will be available for purchase at rehearsals approximately 6 weeks before the concert.
- The Monday of concert week is the last day tickets will be sold internally prior to the concert. Tickets may be sold at the Thursday dress rehearsal at the discretion of the Concert Manager.
- **Note:** *Correct payment amount is requested as change is not available.*

Additional Ticket Transactions

- In addition to direct internal sales to members at rehearsals, tickets may be purchased by members and other patrons at the following outlets:
- NCS Website: www.newburyportchoralsociety.org
- Local Ticket Outlets: NBPT Chamber of Commerce, Jabberwocky, The Book Rack (NBPT), The Natural Grocer, Conley's Drug Store (Ipswich) and Starbird Jewelers (Amesbury). In the event outlets have run out of tickets, they are instructed to contact NCS and refer patrons to other sales options. Tickets may be purchased online via the NCS website or at the door on the day of each performance, if available.

Prepaid Tickets (Will-Call)

- NCS members may place prepaid tickets on the "Will-Call List" for pick up at the door on the day of a performance.
- Requests for inclusion on the "Will-Call List" must be made by the Thursday rehearsal the week of the performance.
- To place tickets on the "Will-Call List" place the pre-paid tickets in an envelope with the name of the individual picking up the tickets at the door, the total number of tickets to be held, the concert day and the NCS member's name. (*Example: Will Call List: Jen Jones/4 Saturday tickets; NCS: Paul Smith*) This should be completed by Thursday before the concert.
- Late requests for inclusion on the "Will-Call" list should be directed to the Concert Manager and will be accepted at the Concert Manager's discretion.
- Outlets are instructed to refer patrons to NCS and are not encouraged to place tickets on the "Will-Call List".

Questions About Tickets or Special Ticket Transactions

- Questions about ticket availability, special ticket transactions, or “Will-Call” arrangements should be directed to the Concert Manager. The Concert Manager can be contacted by either of the following methods:
- NCS e-mail: concert@newburyportchoralsociety.org
- NCS Telephone Line at 978-462-0650

Complimentary and Discounted Tickets

- All complimentary and discounted tickets require NCS Board approval prior to the release of the tickets.
- If you have any questions about the ticket selling policy, please see the Concert Manager.

Concerts

Dress Rehearsal

- Though called "Dress Rehearsal" this simply refers to the rehearsal that is with orchestra in the week before the concert and does not require concert dress. You should in fact dress as comfortably and casually as possible and wear comfortable shoes. Be prepared to be patient, for at this rehearsal the Director's attention is primarily on the orchestra. Since we must make the most efficient use of their time, any problems or questions that directly affect the chorus will be addressed, but only after the orchestra rehearsal is done.

Concert Dress

All performances are in full concert dress unless otherwise noted.

Women's' concert dress:

- plain black ankle-length skirt and plain black long-sleeve top,
- or one-piece dress meeting the same requirements;
- black stockings; black shoes (sneakers are ok as long as they are totally black with black lacings.)
- Neither sandals nor fitted trousers are allowed.

Note: Only small stud earrings and wedding rings are permitted.

Men's concert dress:

- black tuxedo,
- white shirt,
- black bow---tie,
- black shoes, and black socks.

Concert Etiquette

Our chorus prides itself on its singing, but concert deportment and appearance are equally as important. In order to ensure that we give our audience (and our fellow singers) the best possible concert experience, please follow these guidelines:

- ❖ While entering and exiting the concert hall, and while in position on the risers, there is absolutely no talking, waving or otherwise signaling to anyone in the audience (even if they do the same to you.)
- ❖ Music is to be carried in a plain black folder or black 3-ring binder.
- ❖ Water bottles or other containers are not allowed in the performance hall.
- ❖ While filing in and out of the concert hall, music is carried in one hand down by the side of your body nearest the wall.
- ❖ Hold your music up and as flat as possible to allow you to see the conductor, the audience, your music and to project your voice outward to the audience.
- ❖ When standing on the risers, move forward as far as possible with your toes touching the front edge. This gives the person behind you enough room to hold his/her music in the correct position.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of the ushers to handle any issues with the audience. While filing in or out, please do not interact with the audience in any way (except a smile) even if an audience member is crowding the aisle or cutting through the line.
- ❖ Clip score pages together wherever solos occur. Do not follow along with the soloist.
- ❖ Turn pages quietly.
- ❖ Keep your eyes on the conductor.
- ❖ Smile!

Something you may think is unnoticeable is usually obvious to the audience, so please stay focused and don't let your fellow singers down.

Nurses' Advisory

Sometimes a chorus member will feel faint during a concert, particularly because we are standing for a long period of time. There may be a sensation of warmth, nausea, or feeling of lightheadedness accompanied by a visual gray-out. If this happens to you, sit down immediately. Try to let the person next to you know that you are feeling poorly. There will be a point person in your section who will know what to do to help.

Concert Parking

Parking at our concert venues is usually limited, so carpool or have someone drop you off whenever possible. Park as far away as you can to allow ample convenient parking for our audience.

Since we are never certain of a secure place to leave purses and other valuables, bring only what you absolutely need.

Post-Concert Receptions

NCS traditionally hosts a reception following each of our performances. This reception gives us time to visit with the audience, orchestra members, soloists, and our fellow singers.

Beginning several weeks before the performance, you will find signup sheets at rehearsal asking for volunteers for reception duties to help with:

- Set up and clean up the reception hall
- Providing NCS Punch and making ice-rings for the punch-bowls
- Providing finger foods

A reception Hall Monitor is obtained for each reception. These are non-singers who watch over food and any personal items we leave in the hall. Monitors receive a complimentary concert ticket for an alternate NCS concert performance.

Newburyport Choral Society Punch (Secret recipe!)

A tradition at our post-performance receptions, you will need this recipe when you sign up to bring the punch:

23 oz. pineapple juice (1/2 of a 46 oz. can or 4 - 6-oz. cans)

1 - 12-oz. can frozen orange juice

1 -12-oz can frozen lemonade

2 cups **strong** tea

2 liters soda (ginger ale, 7-UP, Lemon Dry, etc.)

Mix all ingredients except soda and add enough water to make a gallon. When ready to serve, add soda.

NCS Sponsorship Programs

The importance of funding for NCS through individual and corporate sponsorship cannot be stressed enough. This vital source represents a substantial percentage of our annual income. Sponsors receive formal recognition in our Concert Programs in addition to these other benefits:

Guest Conductor	\$1000	Program Mention & 4 Holiday Concert Tickets
Director's Circle	\$1000 & up	Program Mention & 8 Concert Tickets per Year
Benefactor	\$500--\$999	Program Mention & 6 Concert Tickets per Year
Patron	\$250--\$499	Program Mention & 4 Concert Tickets per Year
Associate	\$100--\$249	Program Mention & 2 Concert Tickets per Year
Friend	Up to \$99	Program mention
Sustaining Member	Monthly Donations at newburyportchoralsociety.org	Program mention

If you are interested in becoming an NCS sponsor, please contact the Sponsorship Director at sponsors@newburyportchoralsociety.org (for Individual Sponsorship) or the Development Director (for Corporate Sponsorship) at dev@newburyportchoralsociety.org.

Sponsorship Ticket Allocation

Sponsors may be eligible to receive concert tickets; the Sponsorship Director will contact you for your choice of performance date.

If you need to exchange your tickets for another date, return them to the Sponsorship Director directly, along with information about which date you would prefer and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

In the event you do not plan to use your sponsorship tickets, please return them to the Sponsorship Director. Doing so will greatly help the Society with future sponsorship planning.

NCS Endowment Fund

The Newburyport Choral Society Endowment Fund was created to provide an opportunity to give in memoriam or in celebration of an individual or event. Families may request a gift to the NCS Endowment Fund in lieu of flowers for a deceased loved one.

Contributions to the Endowment Fund can be made at any time during the year, and are recognized in the next concert series Program.

To make a contribution to the Endowment Fund, simply send a check payable to The Newburyport Choral Society, along with pertinent information to the Newburyport Choral Society, P.O. Box 92, Newburyport, MA 01950, Attn: Treasurer.

Advertising in the Concert Program

Advertising is available in all of our Concert Programs. When an ad is purchased, it will appear for two Concert seasons, or a total of four performances.

Deadlines for submitting ads are generally six weeks before the performance, but exact deadline dates will be announced each season.

Rates for Concert Program ads are as follows:

Business Card Image	\$60.00
Half-page	\$250.00
Full-Page	\$450.00
Back Cover	\$500.00

Please send ads along with a check payable to The Newburyport Choral Society, P.O. Box 92, Newburyport, MA 01950 Attn: Printing Director.

Please help us to spread the word about advertising in the Concert Program. This will benefit NCS by helping to defray the cost of creating the program.

Educator PDP

The Newburyport Choral Society is registered with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Professional Development Point provider. Keep a log of your rehearsal hours, performance and workshop attendance, and NCS will provide the necessary certificate.

