



HWYL

WELSH NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



TORONTO'S FAIRMOUNT ROYAL YORK, HOME TO NAFOW 2013

The North American Festival of Wales returns for the fifth time to Toronto, August 29 through September 1, 2013. All events will take place at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, which is exactly the same age as the National Gymanfa Ganu, having opened its doors for the first time in 1929.

RESERVE EARLY!

Call 1-800-441-1414

Group Code: North American Festival of Wales 2013

Room types: 1 King, 1 Queen, 2 Double beds

Festival Rates: Cdn\$111/night singles and doubles,

Cdn\$141/night triples and quads.

Rates available four days before and four days after the Festival, August 26 thru September 5, 2013, depending on availability. For extended stays call 1-800-441-1414

Book on line at www.NAFOW.org.

NAFOW EXPRESS: TAKE THE THE BUS TO TORONTO!

As a result of great interest in a bus from Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Southern Tier of New York to Toronto for NAFOW 2013, arrangements have been made for a bus to pick up Festival attendees in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Binghamton, and Ithaca. It will leave early

morning on Thursday, August 29th and return from Toronto Monday, September 2nd. If you are interested, contact Megan Williams at WNAA International Headquarters, email IHQ@thewnaa.org, or phone 607-279-7402 with your desired pick-up location. Leave your car behind and enjoy the ride! Price: \$125 round trip.

**U S CITIZENS MUST HAVE A VALID
PASSPORT
TO ENTER CANADA AND RETURN!**

THE THREE WELSH TENORS OPEN TORONTO FESTIVAL

On August 29, the Opening Concert of the 2013 North American Festival of Wales will feature "The Three Welsh Tenors." With their energetic, passionate and entertaining program of opera classics, hymns, Welsh songs and medleys, something to appeal to all tastes, their unique personalities shine through. All three are professional tenors, with solo careers in their own rights.

Rhys Meirion has sung most of the leading romantic tenor roles whilst on principal contract at English National Opera and has also appeared with Frankfurt Opera, West Australia Opera, Opera Australia and the Hong Kong Festival. His duet album with Bryn Terfel "Benedictus" was nominated for a Classical Brit Award in 2006.



Aled Hall is a frequent performer for Welsh National Opera and has made over 150 appearances at the Royal Albert Hall, London, in concerts and opera promoted by Raymond Gubbay. Further afield he has sung at the Aix-en-Provence and Wexford Festivals and in Tokyo, Salzburg and Baden-Baden.



Alun Rhys-Jenkins' initial career was teaching but, after winning the Towyn Roberts Scholarship, he turned professional, joining Welsh National Opera in 2005. After singing numerous roles for the company he began a freelance career in 2009 and has since worked for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Scottish Opera and English National Opera. He also made his European concert debut singing Carmina Burana with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carlo Rizzi.



WNAA BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2012-2013

President: Hywel Davies, Maryland
 Vice President: Barbara Leedy, Michigan
 Secretary: Helen Steinle, British Columbia
 Treasurer: David R. Allen, New York
 Past President: AdaMae Lewis, Iowa

US EAST

Kim Corbin, Wisconsin
 Richard Donohoe, South Carolina
 Lincoln Hartford, Wisconsin
 George Horwatt, Pennsylvania
 Gareth Howell, Virginia
 Jeanne Jones Jindra, Ohio
 Pat Kwasigroch, Illinois
 Ian Samways, Pennsylvania
 Nancy E. Wright, New York

Janet Figini, Oregon
 Kay Gavin, Minnesota
 Gerri Baker Parry, Washington
 Ceri Shaw, Oregon

CANADA

Myfanwy Bajaj, Ontario
 Gaabriel Beckett, Oregon
 Beth Phillips Brown, California

David Matthews, Alberta
 Lezlie Wood, Ontario

US WEST

Susanna Adkins, California
 Will Fanning, California

WALES

John Bryan Jones, Conwy

BOARD ASSISTANTS: Mona Everett, Wisconsin; Barbara Jones, Illinois; Beth Landmesser, Pennsylvania; Joan Owen Mandry, Ohio; Mary Mergenthal, Minnesota; Evans Paschal, Washington; Alan Upshall, Washington

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Megan Williams

P O Box 1054, Trumansburg, NY 14886, Phone 607-279-7402
 wnaahq@gmail.com

MISSION

The Welsh North American Association strives to preserve, develop and promote our Welsh cultural heritage and traditions, including the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu, and to do all things necessary and appropriate to accomplish these goals

HWYL is published quarterly by the
 Welsh North American Association.

Editors: Richard Donohoe and David Matthews
 Direct comments or inquiries to editor@theWNAA.org

FYI from IHQ by Megan Williams

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy 2013! I spent Christmas back in Wales and it was very wet but also wonderful. We are now fully focused on this year's festival in Toronto and are all very excited about it. Registrations materials are in the process of being put together and will be mailed out at the end of February. Like last year, the earlier you register, the easier it makes it for us and your help with this is very much appreciated.

This year, because of shipping registration materials and documents to Canada and having them clear customs in time for the start of NAFOW, the cut off for mail-in registrations has to be AUGUST 1. Online registration will remain open up until Friday, August 23rd.

Annual membership renewal notices have been sent out. Just a reminder that memberships are valid for the calendar year, and anyone whose membership has expired needs to renew by March 1 in order to keep the membership active. Those with current annual memberships will be given the opportunity to renew in advance for 2014 with their festival registrations.

Please make sure you let us know if your contact details have changed and we are still encouraging all members to provide us with a valid email address. I hope to see you all in Toronto!

GRAND BANQUET SINGER A WINNER!

Mezzo-soprano Catrin Rowenna Davies will regale the 2013 NAFOW Grand Banquet in Toronto. Ms. Davies specializes in Welsh repertoire and won the mezzo-soprano competition at the National Eisteddfod in Wales in 2012. She was also first-prize winner in the NAFOW Eisteddfod at the North American Festival of Wales in 2002 and 2004 and 2011. In 2005, she was soloist with the North American Welsh Choir in a concert sponsored by the Smithsonian in Washington. In 2007, she was a soloist with the Pontarddulais Male Choir on their North American tour (see article page 3), and in 2008, she was soloist for the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir at the Ontario Welsh Festival in Stratford, Canada. She is a frequent soloist at *cymanfaoedd ganu* and regularly performs Welsh recitals, most recently for the Welsh Society of Philadelphia. Her last recital in honor of St. David's Day was at the Cosmos Club in Washington, a reprise of her recital the previous year at the Garrett Jacobs Mansion in Baltimore.



Catrin made her singing debut at Washington National Cathedral when she was a student at National Cathedral School for Girls. She is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory. Previously, she studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, Wales, where she received an Advanced Diploma in Voice with honors. Additionally, Ms. Davies holds an honors degree in History from McGill University, Montreal, and a Master's degree in Women's Studies from Oxford University.

In addition to her Welsh performances, Catrin has sung with many east coast orchestras and opera companies. As a gifted actress, Ms. Davies is also in demand for straight theater, musical theater, and cabarets.

The Grand Banquet is co-sponsored by the Welsh North American Association (WNAA) and the National Welsh American Foundation (NAAF).



THE GRAND CONCERT: CÔR MEIBION PONTARDDULAIS

The Choir was formed in 1960 under the late Noel Davies, MBE, the choir's conductor until 2002. During this time the choir asserted itself as a most credited ambassador of Welsh male voice singing, having achieved prominence through a record fourteen first places at the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales and two first places at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. In 2004 the choir achieved the "double" by winning the male choir competition at both Llangollen and the Newport National Eisteddfod. At Newport the choir was awarded the prestigious title "Choir of the Festival" and adjudicator Brian Hughes said, "Their mastery of choral technique is sure and their imagination at all times on fire. This is the best singing of male choirs I have heard for many years." At Cardiff National Eisteddfod 2008 they achieved their fifteenth win, the fourteenth successive win for the choir. Twelve overseas tours have been undertaken including Canada, the United States of America and several European countries. In October 2007, the choir visited Pennsylvania where in addition to their concerts at Scranton, Washington, Bethlehem and New York, they performed at a *cymynfa ganu* at Wilkes-Barre conducted by Alun Guy.

CLIVE PHILLIPS, CONDUCTOR

A native of Murton on the Gower Peninsula, Clive John Phillips was first appointed accompanist to a local choir at the age of twelve and, in 1977, became the accompanist and deputy conductor of the Llanelli Male Choir, a position he held until he became Musical Director of Aberavon Male Choir in February 1983.

Following a short period as Associate Musical Director of the Dunvant choir, Clive was appointed the Musical Director of Burry Port Male Voice Choir where he remained until he was invited to become the accompanist of the Pontarddulais Male Choir, a position he held from 1991 to 2002, when he was appointed Musical Director.

He was, for a number of years the Musical Director of the Black Mountain Chorus of Wales and founder and Musical Director of Llanelli Musical Players.



Clive has conducted concerts at many venues throughout the United Kingdom, and he has also conducted massed male choirs at the Richard Burton Memorial Concert, and the opening concert at the 2006 Swansea National Eisteddfod. In addition, he has conducted a number of famous military bands including The Royal Marines, The Scots Guards, The Coldstream Guards and The Welsh Guards.

As an organist he has made over 30 recordings with various choirs and has played at many venues, and he has given organ recitals at several churches in the Swansea and Llanelli areas. Clive was organist at the 1980 National Gymanfa Ganu of North America when it was held in Vancouver, and he will be Conductor of the 2013 NAFOW Gymanfa Ganu in Toronto

His pursuits as a solo accompanist have seen him accompanying many world famous singers, including Delme Bryn Jones, Bryn Terfel, Rebecca Evans and more recently Sir Willard White, Jason Howard, Alfie Boe and Elin Manahan Thomas. He also accompanied the astrologer Patrick Moore who was performing his own xylophone music at a concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

THE NOBLE SOCIETY OF CELTS

WNAA is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant from the Noble Society of Celts to sponsor Clive Phillips' appearance as Conductor of the NAFOW Gymanfa Ganu at the Toronto Festival.



BECOME A SPONSOR!

The success of NAFOW 2012 was due in large part to the number of organizations and individuals that sponsored events at the festival. Sponsor an event at NAFOW 2013! Sponsorship opportunities are available for Seminars, Concerts, Cinema Wales, the Opening Ceremony, the Gymanfa Ganu, the Sunday Service, Meals, the Tearoom, etc. You can be an individual sponsor, or make your business a sponsor. You can be a partial sponsor, or sponsor an entire event. If there is a particular part of the festival you enjoy most or feel you would like to support, please contact us and let us know. For further information on NAFOW sponsorship and how you can become involved, contact Megan Williams at IHQ@thewnaa.org or call her at 607-279-7402.

ALAN THOMAS BACK FOR 2013

Our long-time friend, Alan Thomas, will appear in Toronto as **NAFOW Accompanist**. Alan was born in Neath, South Wales, and studied at Manchester University where he received a Bachelor of Music degree. He went to Reading University for a degree in Education. As well as being Director of Music in two large boarding schools in England, Alan was very active in the National Youth Orchestra of Wales,



Granada Television and many community choral societies. Alan also served as Director of Music at Ashbury College in Ottawa, a post he held for ten years before becoming a free-lance musician and teacher, but he remained at the College as Chapel Organist until 1996. In 1977, he was appointed Organist and Choir Director of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Alan has been involved in many musical activities in Ottawa including conducting the Parkdale Symphony Orchestra. He has maintained a strong connection with the Ottawa Welsh Society and has played for numerous *cymanfaoedd* in recent years, including the National Gymanfa Ganu in Ottawa in 2000, Buffalo 2004, Orlando 2005, Cincinnati 2006, Alexandria 2007, Chicago 2008, Pittsburgh 2009, Portland 2010 and Cleveland 2011.

TORONTO:

A WORLD-CLASS VENUE

Each year, the North American Festival of Wales is a celebration of Welsh culture in North America at its finest. Although the program is fairly similar year after year, the event has a completely different feel because we get to enjoy a new venue. The past two festivals have been very well attended and have been in areas with large Welsh-American populations.

As we return to Canada for the first time in ten years, we are looking for a completely different feel to the festival because of its cosmopolitan location. The friendly faces will remain the same along with the program structure, so what makes it different? We have the privilege of being in one of the largest cities in North America at a world-class hotel, something our group is not usually able to do! As you have seen, we have a fantastic group rate for the hotel in Toronto. What we want to bring to your attention is how truly fabulous a venue Toronto and the Fairmont Royal York are. In addition to the venue, as you can see from reading through this edition of *HWYL*, the program we have put together for 2013 is also world-class.

Fairmont Royal York was constructed on the site of former hotels and was opened in June of 1929. It was the tallest building in the British Commonwealth and quickly set the hospitality standard of the day. The magnificent hotel became known as a city within a city, rising to 28 floors of architectural splendor, replete with mechanical genius and opulence never before seen in Toronto. Today, it remains a landmark in Toronto and still oozes the grandeur for which it was originally known.

Along with this grandeur comes exceptional quality in accommodation, food and service. The Fairmont is one of the finest places to dine in Toronto and the quality of its food speaks for itself. All meal prices on the Registration packet are inclusive of Canadian tax (13%) and gratuity (18%). We hope you will join us in Toronto for what promises to be an unforgettable experience.

TORONTO SEMINARS

PULPIT AND PARLIAMENT

Lord Roger Roberts

There has been, in Wales, a close link between Church, Chapel and Politics. The great issues included Disestablishment, the Tithe Wars and Church Schools. These, more often than not, became either Tory or Liberal matters. The Nonconformist pulpit and the Liberal election platform promoted many of the same issues. David Lloyd George, for instance was influenced a great deal by his Uncle Lloyd, a shoemaker and Baptist preacher. Henry Richard, the leading "apostle of peace" was an M.P. and Minister. Their pulpit oratory resounded also from the radical platforms of the day. Lord Roberts tells the story of the host of Wales' political leaders whose origin was in their local church or chapel.

Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno treasures the months he spent as interim minister of Dewi Sant Chapel, Toronto. For forty years he was – and is! – a Methodist minister, originally from the Conwy Valley in North Wales. He also took a wide interest in political issues, serving first on his district Council and, for the last eight years, as a member of the House of Lords. He has written, broadcast and lectured extensively. From "Pulpit to Parliament" also records some of his own personal experiences.



WE'LL GATHER LILACS: THE LIFE OF IVOR NOVELLO IN SONG

Sheryl Clay-Newell, Alan Thomas & Edward Newell

David Ivor Davies, better known as Ivor Novello, was a



Sheryl Clay-Newell

Welsh composer, singer and actor who became one of the most popular British entertainers of the first half of the 20th Century. In a remarkable career spanning some forty years from his acclamation as "the Welsh prodigy" when a school boy, to his untimely death in 1951, he covered virtually every aspect of the entertainment business. He distinguished himself as an actor-manager and as the composer of some of the most

memorable musicals ever to grace the British stage. Sing

along with some of his favorites, *We'll Gather Lilacs, Keep The Homefires Burning*, learn of his fame as a silent movie star, discover how he ended up in prison during WWII and learn of his legacy: "The Ivors," awarded for excellence in music writing to such prestigious figures as Paul McCartney, Elton John and Madonna, among others.

Join Toronto soprano Sheryl Clay-Newell (Gilfach Goch), Ottawa musical virtuoso Alan Thomas (Neath), and narrator Edward Newell (honorary Welsh by marriage) for a light and entertaining musical journey through the life and times of this historical figure.



Edward Newell

(See Alan Thomas's photo and profile on Page 4.)

WELSH TRADITIONAL MUSIC TODAY

Siân Thomas

In April, 2012, BBC Radio Cymru dedicated a full Friday to showcasing Welsh traditional "folk" music. This music, once considered "old fashioned", is now claiming its place as one of the most exciting and contemporary music genres music in the Land of Song. Learn about its history, including links with North America, but most importantly, learn about its future: how it is playing a role in community development, Welsh language initiatives, cultural tourism and economic development. We might even do a bit of singing!

MARI LWYD

Siân Thomas

Forty years ago, the Mari Lwyd, Wales' own mid-winter horse's head custom, was surviving in only a few

places. But in the last ten to fifteen years, communities have seen how the Mari can be used to get people, Welsh speakers as well as non-Welsh speakers, more involved in local life. One barrier has been the difficulty in getting hold of



horse skulls, so **trac, Wales' traditional music agency**, has come up with the answer: a Flat Pack Mari Lwyd, complete with "how-to" and booklet. Come to this hands-on workshop and learn about the custom and its music while building NAFOW its own Mari Lwyd! **Great fun for young and old alike!**

Siân Thomas grew up in the North American Welsh community. She served on the Ontario Gymanfa Ganu Association board, was first VP of Way, was a founding member of Cymdeithas Madog and wrote for *Ninnau*. She moved to Wales in 1980 to serve as Marketing Officer at Cardiff's Sherman Theatre, followed by serving as Arts Touring Officer at West Wales Arts, company manager of Pendefig Films and, then, as a freelance consultant on telematics in rural development. During a period as Program Manager of Wales Rural Forum, she served on national-level economic development committees, specializing in Cultural Tourism. In 2004, she was appointed Director of Wales' national strategic development agency for traditional music and established a number of groundbreaking projects. Siân is a fluent Welsh speaker – *thank you Cymdeithas Madog!*



She has recently returned to Canada for family reasons and is looking forward to reconnecting with Welsh activities here.

SECRETS OF THE WELSH PIONEERS

Martha Davies

Much of the story of Welsh-America is hidden away in Welsh language sources published in America. In the 19th and early 20th Centuries, all over America - from Maine to California, Manitoba to Florida - correspondents wrote news stories in Welsh, their mother tongue. These accounts appeared for over 100 years in *Y Drych*, an 8-page weekly newspaper published in Utica, New York. Today, English translations are bringing those stories into the light again. In this power point presentation, you'll see advertisements for land, accounts of St. David's Day celebrations, *eisteddfodau* and more. You'll hear first-hand accounts of Welsh settlers and their families, stories that are secret no longer.

Martha Davies' maternal ancestors, the Williams family, came to America prior to 1775 though she, herself, has more recent Welsh roots, having lived in Aberystwyth for four years. While there, she learned the Welsh language and earned the Certificate in Welsh as a Second Language for Adults from the University of Wales. Martha and her husband, Berwyn Jones, are volunteers at the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project in



Wymore, Nebraska, a museum with extensive library and archives including over 100 years of *Y Drych* on microfilm. Martha fervently researches Welsh-American history in Welsh language sources and shares those stories in her columns in *Ninnau* & *Y Drych* and in the Welsh American Genealogical Society Newsletter.

WELSH WRITING DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Dr. Jerry Hunter

A great amount of writing was produced by Welsh-speaking Americans during the Civil War of 1861-65. Selections will be presented in English translation, providing an opportunity to consider the ways in which Welsh-American soldiers described life in camp and the experience of battle in their diaries and letters. Dr. Hunter will also illustrate how the Welsh-language periodical press of the United States interpreted current events with political essays and anti-slavery treatises by civilians along with the vast body of Welsh war-time poetry, ranging from patriotic recruiting songs to verse concentrating on the tragedy of war.

WELSH-AMERICAN LITERATURE: THE START OF A NEW LITERARY TRADITION?

Dr. Jerry Hunter

This seminar will provide an introduction to the history of Welsh-language publishing in America from the beginning to the middle of the 19th century. (English translations of the material being discussed will be made available.) We will focus on the start of the Welsh-American periodical press and what might be called the 'golden age of Welsh-American literature.' A central topic will be the ways in which writers adapted the linguistic and literary resources of 'the Old Country' and applied them to the challenges presented by life in North America. Another central topic will be ways in which writers expressed their Welsh-American identity.

Professor Jerry Hunter is a Celtic scholar who possesses an international perspective. He is also an enthusiastic advocate for the Welsh language and literature. Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, he joined the academic staff of the School of Welsh at Bangor University in 2003. He has also taught at Harvard University and Cardiff University. His research interests are rich and varied, rang-



-ing from Welsh medieval prose to Welsh literature in America during the nineteenth century. The television documentary series *Y Cymry a Rhyfel Cartref America*, "The Welsh and the American Civil War," gained a BAFTA Cymru award and the research for the series led to *Llwyd Cenhedloedd: Y Cymry a Rhyfel Cartref America*, which was named Book of the Year in 2004. Dr. Hunter collaborated again with Cwmni Da, the Caernarfon-based media company, and the documentary series on Wales and slavery, *America Gaeth: Y Cymry a Chaethwasanaeth yn America*, was aired in 2006. His study, *Sons of Arthur, Children of Lincoln: Welsh Writing from the American Civil War*, was published in 2007. His first novel, *Gwenddydd*, won the Prose Medal at the National Eisteddfod in 2010.

WELSH FOLK DANCING (TWMPATH DAWNS)

Siân Frick

Back again this year is the popular Welsh Folk Dance seminar. Siân Frick, a certified and celebrated Welsh Folk Dance teacher, will lead the dances for those of all ages to take part in a real Welsh twmpath, or barn dance. So come and have a good time!

Siân Frick is a British national of mainly Welsh parentage. From 1984-1991 she attended *Cymdeithas Ddawns Werin Cymru* (Welsh Folk Dance Society) workshops in Wales to learn the spirited but light-footed Welsh dances, earning her *Cymdeithas* Instructor's Certificate in 1986. She organized *Dawnsywyr y Tract Cymreig*, The Welsh Tract dancers, and led them from 1986 to 1992. Siân was a member of the *Dawnsywyr Môn*



display team in Anglesey that performed for six months in 1991. She frequently gives demonstrations at many of the Celtic Festivals in the mid-Atlantic region and on her visits to Wales she has joined Welsh teams performing dances at various events. In 2009 she was a member of the U.S. team from Welsh Heritage Week that competed at the National Eisteddfod in Wales and was judged worthy of performing on the main stage.

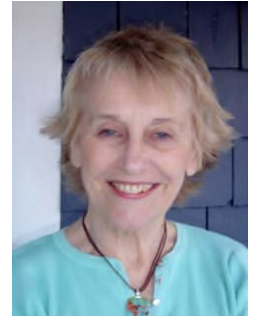
WELSH LANGUAGE CLASSES

Hefina Phillips

Hefina Phillips is back to bring her passion and spirit to teaching you the "language of Heaven". She will teach two levels of the Welsh language—"Absolute Beginners" with an emphasis on *speaking* on Friday. "After an hour and a half you'll be surprised at how much you can say..." insists Hefina. "Next Steps in Welsh", which is suitable for

those with some knowledge of the language and want to practice and improve, is on Saturday. This class will follow on from "Beginners" and you are encouraged to attend both.

Hefina Phillips was born in the Swansea Valley and Welsh was the only language spoken in her home in Cwmgiedd. She was educated at Cardiff University's Welsh Department and says she was fortunate to have studied under Saunders Lewis. She has taught at the annual *Cymdeithas Madog* Course since moving to North America as well as being responsible for starting Welsh language classes in the Toronto area. Hefina feels that to have been born Welsh is the utmost privilege and she does all she can to share her love of Wales and its beautiful language. She admits that her other passion is for her grandchildren. *Hefina's seminars are sponsored by Cymdeithas Madog. Since 1977 Cymdeithas Madog has held a week-long intensive language course in July. Elmhurst, Illinois, is the site for the 2013 course.*



LOOPHOLES FOR U.S. INVESTORS

David Allen

In this seminar, David Allen will talk about ways investors can improve their portfolios, get tax breaks, support their favorite charities. If you own stocks, bonds or mutual funds you will find this seminar useful.



David Allen, Treasurer of WNAA, lives in Owego, New York. He received his PhD from Columbia University and was a Fulbright Scholar to Belgium and a Danforth Graduate Fellow. David is a Professor Emeritus at City University of New York, where he taught a variety of courses in economics and American government.

IMPORTANT TAX CHANGE FOR 2013

FOR PEOPLE OVER AGE 70½ WITH IRA MONEY

Buried in the tax law changes passed by Congress is the reinstatement, for 2013 only, of a provision that benefits taxpayers age 70½ and older who have IRA money.

Normally, all withdrawals from an IRA are taxed as ordinary income. This not only increases your tax bill but also increases your AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) which sometimes causes other tax increases. Charitable contributions can be deducted on Schedule A if the total of itemized deductions exceeds the standard deduction. Many older persons find they save money with the stand-

ard deduction as they don't have state income taxes, mortgage interest, etc. This means charitable contributions don't reduce tax bills.

Everyone's individual situation is different. This article is *not* intended to provide tax advice, which you should obtain from your tax advisor. It is intended to get you to focus on this special break for 2013 and discuss it with your tax advisor. To take advantage of this, you must notify your IRA custodian that you want to make a withdrawal and have it payable to a charity, such as the WNAA. That withdrawal does count toward your RMD (Required minimum distribution) but will *not* be included in your AGI. Thus, you get the benefit of a tax deduction without having to itemize. Your AGI is also lower than it would otherwise be, which may benefit you.

Contributions to WNAA should be made payable to WNAA, PO Box 1054 Trumansburg, NY 14886. Please send a separate letter to WNAA telling us what you are doing. Indicate whether you want your contribution used for expenses related to this year's Festival to be held in Toronto or as an addition to our Endowment Fund. If you would like your contribution to be used for a specific sponsorship – Eisteddfod prize, seminar, etc. – please call our Executive Secretary, Dr. Megan Williams, at 607-279-7402 to discuss sponsorship opportunities.

WILD APRICOT

In a continuing effort to bring WNAA into the 21st century, we have begun to use a new membership database called Wild Apricot. This will allow us to keep all information in one place, which will improve record keeping, link memberships with festival registrations and make WNAA run more efficiently.

Beginning next year, members will be able to access their WNAA account through our website, allowing them to update their personal information, change their preferred email address and log-in to begin festival registration. In 2014, we will need to make sure we have your current email address if you wish to register online and receive the discounted member rates. It will also be possible for non-members to register online and pay the standard admission price. If you do not use email, we will still have postal registration available and we will input your registration information into the computer.

As this is in its early stages, we thought we would bring it to your attention as you will continue to hear more about Wild Apricot over the coming year. We are very excited about this new venture and look forward to offering our members additional services available from our websitestay tuned!