As with everything and everyone else in 2020, Tumbleweed was knocked for a loop by the COVID-19 pandemic. In April, we had begun discussing potential options for this year’s festival; as TMF Coordinator, Dave Carson attended online meetings of the “Large Events Coalition,” which included representatives from the Tri-City Water Follies, the Convention Center, the Washington Festivals and Events Association (WFEA), and more. We began to work together to build centralized guidelines for safety for events in these situations. Shortly after this, the Washington State Department of Health began releasing guidance documents for various types of activities and events. It quickly became clear that there was no way for us to safely hold a traditional, live-in-the-park festival this year.

The Planning Committee, however, voted down straight-out cancellation, and the idea of going virtual with an online form of the festival was quickly raised and adopted. Then, all we had to do was to DO it! Right off the bat, our major goal was to make sure that the virtual festival would have the same feeling of community, of family, that Tumbleweed has always had for both the attenders and performers. That idea gave us the structure we used: a number of “Stages,” named after our traditional stages, scheduled with the same types of performances as the live stages by the inestimable Micki Perry.

Given that structure, we quickly realized that we were going to have to go with pre-recorded performances for all stages, and for the concerts. Our truly live events would be limited to the Workshops, the Sea Shanty Sing-Along, and the Contra Dance. After developing the technical requirements for the recorded performances, we polled as many past and present Tumbleweed performers as we could as to whether they’d be willing to participate in a virtual festival. We received a LOT of very positive reactions, with very few folks backing out.

Tom Reitter, who had begun working on a festival documentary film last year, stepped in and gave us fabulous service as a video editor, making sure each recorded performance was the highest-quality possible we could manage. Tom also made the header section that appears on each performance, leaving room and time for the MIC introductions. We believe that these are about the best we’ve ever seen, so we give continuing Thanks to Tom!

We also had other fortuitous finds, as people with exactly the right knowledge for things we didn’t know we needed popped up at just the right time! Anne Schur, with years of User Experience Design, helped lay out and assure that the festival was as easily usable as possible. Chris Clanister, who normally runs the sound on our Continued on Page 2. See Success!

Are We There Yet? Getting Closer!

Well we are finally out of Phase 1 of the Washington State Corona Virus Reopening Plan! We are now in Phase 2, even though technically we shouldn’t be considering cases are still not down to an acceptable level, and actually cases are on the rise again. The weather is getting colder, and we are coming in to flu season on top of the current pandemic. It is still not safe to meet in large groups, even with social distancing, and folks still need to be wearing masks when out in public. This means that our concerts, coffeehouses and contra dances are still on hold indefinitely until we can meet together safely or come up with creative alternatives. We will be doing our Sea Song Sing-Along on Zoom (see Jim Horneyman’s article about how to get a Zoom invite to these). We had one First Friday Folkie Free for All outdoor before the weather turned, but may have to meet for FFIFA on Zoom as well. Contact Micki Perry at micki_perry@qsl.com or 509-947-6735 if you would be interested in a sing-a-long/song circle that has multi-genre focus on Zoom, especially if you could help by hosting.

There is some good news on the horizon! We hope to try to do a virtual holiday concert on December 5! We are still trying to work out the technical details, but it will be a virtual concert on the internet with pre-recorded video on Vimeo, similar to what we were able to do for Tumbleweed Virtual Music Festival. Wishing we could be together in person, but we are thinking something is better than nothing and we want to do something thing! Mark your calendars for December 5th and stay tuned!
Success! Continued from Page 1

North Stage, turned out to have experience taking live events online, and he made sure that we could do all the various tricks for livestreaming that we needed. Thank you, Chris!

Wes Weddel coordinated almost all matters pertaining to the Jane Titland Memorial Songwriting Contest, including contributing his own MC spots.

Terri Widergren stepped up to help us with our marketing and most things related to the store – so there are quite a few happy, happy people wearing Tumbleweed merch thanks to her energetic action.

We also collected performances for our three concerts of the weekend – the Friday Night “New Horizons” concert for and by younger performers, the Saturday Night “Tumbleweed Benefit Concert” with our three headliners, and the Sunday Night “Theme Concert.”

Jude Noah, himself a member of at least three bands, really stepped up for us by assembling 11 groups of wonderfully diverse and skilled younger performers for the “New Horizons Concert.” He also provided MC duties for this concert, which got great reviews.

The Saturday Night Concert was, MC’d by Dan Maher, and presented longer performances by such luminaries as John David Maloney, and Shanghaied on the Willamette. Micki Perry, MC’d the Sunday Night “Theme Concert,” featuring performances by some of our Tumbleweed performers centered around this year’s theme, “Wind.”

As our scheduled opening date drew closer, we worked with a local computer, StartupWebTech, based in India, to build the actual festival site itself. Coordinating from halfway around the world (they were 12 hours ahead of us) was challenging, but in the end, it was almost exactly as we’d imagined, and beautiful to boot!

Getting the performers that had sent us overnight was always a treat. Even better was that we had more than one “Wild-Caught” band! A performer from Indiana, and two bands from Ireland, heard about our festival and got in touch to ask if they could play! We answered “yes, yes, yes!” So now, we’re literally entitled to call ourselves the Tumbleweed International Music Festival!

One more joyous catch was Tom Lewis sending us a performance as well (also from Ireland.) So now, the Tumbleweed Virtual International Music Festival 2020 remains live for all to see until next August at http://tumbleweedmusicfestival.org. We also have our Shop, where you can pick up your Tumbleweed merchandise.

A great, inclusive, “Thank You All!” to everyone on the planning committee, and those who popped in to help during the long, hard days of July and August, you are certainly valued and not forgotten! “Thank YOU!!!” to our Sponsors and Co-sponsors this year. Sponsored by Three Rivers Folklife Society and City of Richland, co-sponsored by Northwest Public Broadcasting, KBOOK-FM, Print Plus, OneWorld Telecommunications, and Southam Creative.

Covid Can’t Stop SSSSS!

Three Rivers Folklife Society is continuing the long standing Second Saturday Sea Song Singalong (SSSSSS) tradition during the pandemic by going virtual on Zoom. We take turns leading sea songs, folk songs, and fun songs. Members often use the Rise Up Singing books as a resource for finding and learning songs to share. Over the last several sessions we’ve had folks from all over join in (Seattle, Portland, Vancouver BC, Alaska, etc) so we’ve had a great variety of singers and songs we’ve never heard before. If you want to join in on the fun, let Jim Honeyman know at honeyman2@charter.net, and he’ll add you to the mailing list for the Zoom invitations.

Hopefully we’ll soon be back at Roundtable Pizza in Richland, for a live in-person singalong, but for now we’re doing the next best thing. Join in and sing along on Zoom, or if you are shy you can also watch the session livestreamed via the Tumbleweed Music Festival Facebook Page. We start singing at 7:00pm and wrap up around 9:00pm. The next session is Saturday, November 14th (the second Saturday of course!)

2020 Annual Election Results

The annual election of officers was held by mail in ballot for the first time, due to the Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings. In contrast to what some national level political figures have been claiming, there was no evidence of voter fraud, interference, or other issues. In fact, the ballot response was unusually high compared to past elections at in-person annual meetings. Congratulations to the new officers, President Gene Carbaugh, Vice President Nancy Ostergaard, Secretary Frank Cuta, Treasurer Steve Ghan, and Members-at-Large Jim Honeyman, Bob Lewis, Micki Perry, and Terri Widergren.

Special thanks to retiring President Jim Honeyman for an excellent term of service. The new officers’ terms commenced July 1.

Opportunities Never End!

Hear ye, hear ye. 3RFS is an all-volunteer organization, and to sustain its life, new volunteers are needed! We are in particular need of a NEWSLETTER EDITOR to help others to write and then compile or pull together articles on our concerts, coffeehouses, dances, and calendars.

We know that right now public restrictions are limiting our ability to produce these events. So here’s a chance for your creativity to come through with folkly items of interest. Some basic experience with some processing is needed, but you don’t need to be a professional and you don’t have to do it all. We send out about 10 newsletters a year, with most of the effort required in the first half of the month. If you are interested email Gene at carbaugh2880@charter.net

As we start planning the resurrection of concerts, we are seeking PRODUCERS and LIBRARIANS for individual concerts. Each concert requires tickets, performer hospitality, sound and venue coordination, refreshments, ticket-taker, and merchandise seller. We have a cadre of people who are willing to do these things, but we need a Producer for each concert to make sure it all comes together. Contact Micki Perry at 509-947-6735 if you are interested.

Following an above-and-beyond-the-call effort to bring about this year’s Virtual Tumbleweed Music Festival, we need volunteers for some key roles for next year’s 25th Annual Tumbleweed Music Festival. Key positions needing to be filled include festival-coordinator, fundraiser, publicity coordinators, volunteer coordinator, and performer registration coordinator.

Planning meetings for next year’s festival have begun. It’s your chance to influence the decisions on what our 25th Annual Tumbleweed Music Festival will be. In-the-Park? A combination of both? One thing is for sure, without volunteers for key positions, it might not happen. The next virtual TMF planning meeting is Tuesday, November 3 at 6:15pm. For information, contact Dave at davidcmason14@gmail.com