

Fitting the occasion

Out of step. A little overdressed. A lot underdressed. Unprepared. Unsure of what to say, so the wrong thing escapes the lips. Embarrassment leads to regret which leads to uncertainty which leads to avoidance in the future. It happens to most people at one time or another. There is an event that must be attended but there is not enough information. Perhaps the information includes the word “formal,” which has various meanings depending on the source. We all have known the feeling of doing something or saying something that does not fit the occasion. It is guaranteed to happen when we are children. There are a few such incidents that are burned into my brain — I learned from them.

Paying attention when we have good information causes us to reach for different parts of our wardrobe as we get dressed. Paying attention when we enter a room full of people means that we will read the room and react accordingly. Seeing the expressions on people’s faces and hearing the inflection in their voice helps us to interpret what we hear so that we can respond accordingly. We are all familiar with what it means to fit in. Some choose not to. Some do not care. Even that requires an understanding of what is and is not expected.

Dressing, acting, and speaking as the occasion calls for is a form of respect and support.



DR. SEAN NIESTRATH

Fitting the occasion is an encouragement to those who have planned the event or are being honored, celebrated, or remembered. When Paul was writing to the Ephesians, he gave instructions concerning the use of our words. In a list of practical teachings for those who wanted to live life worthy of the calling of a disciple he said, “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29).

There is another side to “fitting an occasion.” It is an extension of what happens when we reach into our closets to choose how we are to dress for the day. For most of us, if we work, we have a fairly set routine, and the choices are easily made. But what if, every day, the whole world was open to us, and we were able to choose our destination.

What would then be our process? We might do a little research to learn what is out there and available. Maybe we reflect on how we feel or what concerns us. We do this when we choose books or articles that we want to read. For those on social media, we do this when we choose with whom we engage. We do this when we choose our hobbies and vacations. What normally happens is that we find out we have favorite genres or destinations, and they eventually become routine as well.

There are times when expectations and reality do not match. There are times when we thought we were prepared and learned that we weren’t. This happens

when we watch a movie and it is not quite what we expected. It happens when we read a review of how difficult a hike might be and learn that we do not all use the same scale. It causes us to not be prepared for what we experienced.

Now think about devotional reading. Perhaps you have had the experience of needing some encouragement and open your Bible to Leviticus and start reading. Or maybe you have experienced a loss and land near the end of the book of Psalms. It is possible to read portions of the Bible that do not fit the occasion. This is why liturgical churches read what they do at various times of the year. While it is always appropriate to read about the birth of Jesus or the resurrection, to read the first around Easter and the second at the end of December just doesn’t quite fit.

The same is true as we experience our lives. All the Bible is good for reading and for instruction, but not all of it fits every occasion. I know people who have various life experiences and without much thought turned to the Bible and started reading only to be disappointed because it did not fit the occasion. The Psalms is a good example. If what you are reading doesn’t fit, move on to another one. Eventually something will hit right where you need it.

Our spiritual lives have ups and downs and various “occasions” as we learn and grow. It is worth taking time to pay attention to how we are doing and which part of the Bible we are about to enter. Be prepared. Don’t ignore any part of it, but it is ok to choose those parts that fit the occasion.

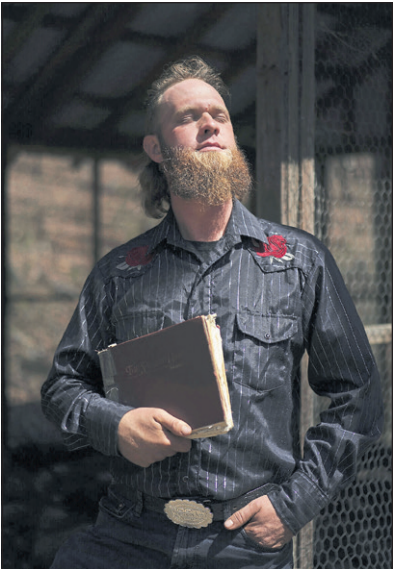
Who are the Sacred Harp singers?

BY HOLLY MEYER AND JESSIE WARDARSKI ASSOCIATED PRESS

BREMEN, Ga. — “The Sacred Harp” hymnal is beloved by those who sing from it, carrying on the Christian songbook’s more than 180-year-old legacy.

They are young and old — and all ages in between. Some have been singing from the hymnal all their lives, just as their parents and grandparents had done before them. Others became immersed in the shape-note singing tradition as adults and found fellowship as well as music.

As the Sacred Harp community awaits the latest edition of their songbook, here’s a look at who these singers are and why this a cappella group practice is important to them.



Jessie Wardarski | Associated Press

Isaac Green, 34, poses for a portrait with his copy of “The Sacred Harp” near a natural spring at Holly Springs Primitive Baptist Church in Bremen, Ga., on March 25.

THE SACREDNESS OF ‘THE SACRED HARP’ FOR MANY SINGERS

For Isaac Green, Sacred Harp singing is not a hobby — it’s spiritual.

“Sacred Harp singing is my church,” said Green. “I get much more out of listening and thinking about the words I’m singing than I do anybody preaching to me.”

Green grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, singing out of a different shape-note hymnal. He discovered “The Sacred Harp” much later, while living in Alpharetta, Georgia.

“There are definitely some people that have very different beliefs than me, have very different upbringings, have very different day-to-day lives, but when we come together and sing ... that can be our one thing that we are in unison over,” he said.

FINDING SINGING IN THE ‘BACKWOODS OF ALABAMA’

More than 20 years ago, Bridge Hill Kennedy was burned out by music ministry when he joined his sister-in-law at a Sacred Harp singing event. Unfamiliar with the tradition, they looked up YouTube videos beforehand.

“We went into the backwoods of Alabama, and there it was, some of the most beautiful music that I’ve ever heard,” he said.

Today, it feeds his soul and boosts his mood.

“This community means the world to me,” Kennedy said. “I’ve met people that I never would have met ... and that has given me a greater opportunity to love, even difficult people — opportunities that I would not have had otherwise and I’m grateful for that.”

AN INHERITED FAMILY TRADITION

Sacred Harp singing is a family tradition for Reba Dell Windom. Growing up, it’s how she spent her weekends.

“I don’t remember learning to sing. I just thought, well, I could always sing,” said Windom, who has stuck with it throughout her lifetime, loving the fellowship and the practice. She views “The Sacred Harp” hymnal as a special book deserving of respect, like the Bible.

Windom has her grandfather’s and her dad’s old songbooks. Singing makes her feel close to them, especially when she leads a group of singers through a hymn they used to lead at singing events.

“I like to lead them, and sometimes it makes me cry, but it’s just memories,” she said. “There’s quite a few that would be considered my favorite.”

A YOUNG GIRL’S SONGBOOK

Eleven-year-old Riley McKibbin received her copy of “The Sacred Harp” from her family with its long line of Sacred Harp singers.

At the front of her songbook, a handwritten note dated Aug. 6, 2017, reminds her of that.

Riley, who likes how “everybody comes together and they can just sing Godly songs for God,” has attended Sacred Harp singing events since she was a baby. For a few years now, she’s served as a song leader, taking her turn guiding the group and keeping time.

Riley’s mother, Lisa Webb, said her daughter has always loved to sing, and it was important to have her share in the family tradition.

CHURCH CALENDAR

SPECIAL SERVICES

Grace Baptist Church Homecoming will be Sunday, June 8, starting at 10:45 a.m. The featured group will be Servants Heart Quartet. Lunch will follow in Fellowship Hall. Everyone invited. For more information, call 270-519-1763. Bro. C.W. Barnhill Pastor.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, 830 Oscar Cross Ave., Paducah, will host its Vacation Bible School from 6-8 p.m., June 2-6. The Theme is “God’s Laboratory: Fusing Elements for Explosive

Joy” for ages 3 to adults. Beatrice Thompson is the superintendent and Rev. Donna G. Newsome, pastor. Information: 270-443-1428.

SUBMIT ITEMS

Items for the Church Calendar must be received by email by noon Tuesday to news@paducahsun.com. No handwritten announcements, please. Put Church Calendar in the subject line. Include the name, location, physical address, date, and time of the event, along with the phone number and name for contact information.

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0100 ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHERIDAN PLAZA VA HOME (A non-Profit organization) is requesting donations to help provide shelter and jobs for homeless veterans, which includes those with disabilities, PTSD, paralysis and other challenges. ALL are welcome. We thank you in advance for your donation, any amount you can give is needed and appreciated. Please send your donations to: Sheridan Plaza Home c/o McKenzie Banking Co. 153 Highland Drive, Mckenzie, Tennessee 38201.

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0150 GARAGE /ESTATE SALES

GARAGE SALE 209 Fairlane Dr, Mayfield, May 31, 8 a.m. - ? Camping supplies, bicycles and much more.

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VFW Indoor Yard sale June 5th, 6th, & 7th. Hours are 7:30am to 5pm 1727 Washington Street. Proceeds to benefit veteran's programs.

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0900 LEGALS

NYMT Loan Trust 2014-RPI: Complaint for Foreclosure has been filed in McCracken Circuit Court, Case# 24-CI-1067, regarding property at 11925 US Hwy 60W, Kevil, KY. You must assert a claim before 07/05/2025 or default judgment will be taken against you. Contact Cathi Harrison, Warning Order Attorney, (270)983-2228 for info.

Commonwealth of Kentucky McCracken County Fiscal Court Ordinance No. 2025-07

An Ordinance amending McCracken County Ordinance No. 2024-02 by making revi-

0900 LEGALS

sions to the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operating Budget by modifications in receipts from Car Rental, County Road Aid, Jail Contract with Counties, Sheriff Excess Fees and E911 Fee in strict compliance with the mandates of Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 68.

Summary: The present Ordinance makes revisions to Ordinance 2024-02, McCracken County Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operating Budget, pertaining to a modification in receipts from Car Rental, County Road Aid, Jail Contract with Counties, Sheriff Excess