



# Hickory Neck Nuggets

March 2014

## The Lowliest Holy Day

By The Reverend Michael L. Delk

If you can imagine the various sacred dates in the Church's calendar as a group of middle school students, then Ash Wednesday is the kid in the corner who got bullied at recess, lost his lunch money, and generally gets ignored. We like the crisp brightness of Christmas and the joyous euphoria of Easter, but Ash Wednesday? We don't like Ash Wednesday.

It shows us how puny and vulnerable we really are. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." And with that cheerful comment, a smudge of palm ash, roughly in the shape of a cross, goes on your forehead. Who wants to take an hour out of their busy schedule to experience THAT? Anyone interested in the truth.

The truth is that our time here is limited. We have limits, chafe at them as we will. Sometimes, we impose imaginary limitations on ourselves, and our job then is to overcome those illusions and reach for more. However, sometimes there are limits that cannot be breached, and this is one of them. Everybody gets one ride at the carnival, and then it's over.

Hopefully, we move on to something even better, something so wonderful we cannot begin to imagine, much less describe, how marvelous it is. But in the meantime, we've got this life and none other, and every choice matters.

What we believe, what we do, our attitudes shape our lives in ways difficult to anticipate and inescapable in their consequences.

Yet if we're aware of this, and nothing like a solemn statement of mortality and a grainy, greasy smudge of ash gets the point across quite so well, then we receive power and wisdom to make better choices, because we know the score. Only when we accept that someday we will die, only then can we really start living.

So what Ash Wednesday really offers us is not a morose occasion to reflect on the inevitable end, but a chance to alter our perspective on what's happening right now. Ash

Wednesday invites us to turn our lives around, a phrase which translates a Greek word *metanoia* into the much maligned and misunderstood English word, "repent."

That's what Lent is really about. It is about turning our lives around, with the help of God's grace, to a direction that gives life greater meaning and purpose and peace. Give up chocolate or TV or whatever your special treats are as a way of signifying the sacrifices (another unpopular concept) that true turning around takes, if that helps. But whatever you do or don't do this Lent, view the season as an opportunity, not a burden.

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*Ash Wednesday from page 1*

On March 5th, we invite you to allow God to help you make that vital U-turn. God didn't invent Ash Wednesday, but God inspired some very faithful, sensitive people who did invent this day for our benefit. At 7 a.m. and 12 p.m., we'll be in the Historic Chapel. At 7 p.m., you can find us in the New Chapel. Only on this day do we bracket the entire day to make it as convenient as possible to do an uncomfortable thing. It's really that important.

Please be aware that our worship does not end with ashes. That happens up front. No, we finish with Communion, that strengthening sacred meal, the foretaste of the heavenly

banquet. I think the combination of the two is a powerful symbol of redemption, of the love that God has for us. We start out with the clock ticking, and that is a serious matter, but we conclude with the truth that the clock never wins over faithful people, who day by day in countless ways make the turn, if they first know what they're made of: dust – dust and spirit.

So come say hey to the kid in the corner. He's not so bad. Ash Wednesday is for everyone, which includes you. See you here on March 5th. ✨



## Vestry Highlights

The monthly Vestry meeting took place on Tuesday, February 11th, in the Narthex of the New Chapel. A wonderful "old hymn sing" opened and closed the meeting as part of prayer and meditation, led by Fr. Michael.

The Vestry welcomed Don Seeterlin as a special guest to formally receive Hickory Neck's endorsement to become an accredited chaplain. Larry Kelley (Stewardship) reported on a successful Time and Talent Ministry Fair, which yielded 127 newly filled slots across all the ministries, with many folks volunteering for more than one ministry. As of January 31st, 117 stewardship pledges were received. The Second Sunday Mission Ministry has designated recipients for January-May 2014. The recipient for February, Williamsburg Walks the Talk, received from \$186 from February's offering, and the recipient organization for March will be Avalon.

Fr. Henry reported that the Emergency Winter Shelter program in partnership with St. Martin's served 31 individuals who were in need of warm shelter, and he gave special thanks to the 34 parishioners who participated in this ministry. The Buildings & Grounds ministry

recently purchased two audio neck lanyards which will work with our existing audio system to aid worshippers with hearing difficulties.

The first set of new albs for acolytes and Eucharistic Ministers have been blessed and placed into service. The second set will be delivered in early March. A complete set of new altar paraments and vestments for the Historic and New Chapels have been ordered, thanks to recent specified contributions and memorial donations. We expect to be able to bless and put these into use by June 22nd.

Fr. Michael presented his 2013 annual report, detailing statistical information on attendance, baptisms, transfers in/out, marriages and burials. The Vestry officers certified the official parochial report, which will now be sent to the diocese for recording purposes. Our music ministry continues to grow, thanks to Sarah Bland, who has brought in a sequence of instrumentalists, vocalists, and ensembles to provide special worship offerings. Another classical music concert will be presented on March 2nd, featuring a choir of students from The University of Virginia. Preparations for Lent, Holy Week and Easter are well underway.

For more details, full sets of all previous months' Vestry minutes are posted on Hickory Neck's website. The next meeting of the Vestry will be held March 11th, at 7 p.m. in the Wilkinson Center.

Jill Ramsaur, Register

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Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. Items received after this date will be considered for publication in a future issue.

Please send submissions to [nuggets@hickoryneck.org](mailto:nuggets@hickoryneck.org)

# Sarabande

By Sarah Ford Bland

Just as March is the month for music in our schools, so also will Hickory Neck delight in many musical offerings, all to the glory of God, in worship and in concert. The Parish Choir and Praise Band will lead worship following their usual schedule as we leave this long Epiphany season and move into Lent. Our women's ensemble will provide special music at the end of the month for the 9 a.m. service. Along with a trio of Hickory Neck singers and a guest soloist, they will also lead worship at the 11:15 service during the Choral Scholars' 3 week absence for spring break and choir tour. We will welcome them back for the last 2 Sundays of the month.

Mark **Sunday March 2 at 5 p.m.** on your calendar! "Jubilate", an auditioned student choir from The University of Virginia in partnership with University Baptist Church, will present their spring tour concert at Hickory Neck. Directed by minister of music Alba Beasley, Jubilate is a unique music ministry that has served UVA students and the entire University community since 1973. It is grounded in commitment to high standards, musical excellence, joyful praise, and openness to diversity and inquiry. It has over 700 alumni and is the oldest choral group of its kind on the University Grounds. Their pre-tour program for us will include both secular and sacred works, accompanied and a cappella. The concert will be followed by a reception.

*"Music is an agreeable harmony for the honor of God and the permissible delights of the soul."*



*Johann Sebastian Bach*

## Mardi Gras and Shrove Tuesday

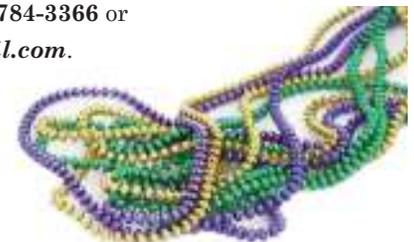
**March 4, 2014, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**

Come join us on **Tuesday, March 4**, for an evening of good food, laughter and fun. We will begin with delicious pancakes, sausage, conversation and Mardi Gras music at **6 p.m.** Get your outrageous on and plan your hats or masks and bring a joke or funny story to share with your friends. We will be entertained by:

- Parade of Mardi Gras decorated hats and masks
- Hats and Masks Contest
- Music
- Comedy Routines
- Recognizing the King and Prince
- Passing the crowns to the new King and Queen.

Put it on your calendar today!

We have seen over the years that Hickory Neck has lots of talented parishioners who perform on this special night. We are looking for others who might have hidden talents that they have not shared. Please consider sharing your musical, acting, or other entertaining gifts on Shrove Tuesday. You will perform before a warm and welcoming audience. Contact **Linda Becker @ 757-784-3366** or [lindabecker53@gmail.com](mailto:lindabecker53@gmail.com).



MARCH



CELEBRATIONS

## Birthdays

1 Carolyn Gaylord	17 Ashley Roberson
2 Jessica Hughes	18 Cleve Corlett
3 Nancy Byrd	20 Betty Harrison
3 Shannon Hunter	20 Ken Parsons
4 Esther Gay	21 Rin Fraize
5 George Margroum	21 Phyllis Faas
5 Gary Harvey	22 Donald McConaughy
6 Eleanor Hunter	24 Bill Teale
6 Margaret Schober	24 Jim Day
10 Pam Maddox-Jefferson	27 Jennie Seiler
13 Nancy Aschiero	27 Terry Day
16 Ollie Kendrick	

## Anniversaries

2 Gay & Bill Forloine
9 Kathryn & George Bridewell
14 Joy & Randy Tanner
17 Ann & Bill Burnett
24 Ann & Coleman Ragsdale

*Did we miss your big day? If your birthday or anniversary is this month and you are not listed above, please send the information to [Nuggets@hickoryneck.org](mailto:Nuggets@hickoryneck.org)*



(01/31/14)

Budget Income	\$36,615.74
YTD Actual Income	\$37,376.00
Budget Expense	\$38,046.18
YTD Actual Expense	\$34,859.90

We are off to a good start in 2014! The first month ended in the black by \$2,516. Income was over budget by \$760 and expenses were under budget by \$3,186. Looking back a year proves a point. At the end of January 2013, income was under budget by \$757, expenses were over budget, and we ended the month in the red by \$2,483. This is an enviable financial position for a winter month.

Another testament to the health of the parish is the fact that we have received 117 pledges totaling \$402,158 for 2014. In 2013, we received 117 pledges totaling \$379,616. And the non-pledge income grows each year. Increased Treasure, coupled with increased Time and Talent, speak volumes about the commitment and spiritual growth of our parishioners.

As you read this, a jovial Shrove Tuesday celebration is looming; a sure cure for the winter doldrums. This is followed by a solemn Lent, a time of reflection and personal spiritual development. But during Lent, we have the Vernal Equinox to look forward to, bringing the annual greening of our Holy Hill. May the anticipation of new life and new energy be an inspiration to keep the momentum of our growth ever increasing!

Fred Boelt



Transfer In: L. McCarthy "Mack" Downs III

Transfer Out: Valerie Vee Elkinskirt (to St. Michael's, Bon Air)



# Our Prologue

by Martha W. McCartney

## Insights into Colonial Life

During the colonial period, Virginians loyal to the Church of England typically celebrated Holy Communion three or four times a year: at Christmas, at Easter, on Whitsunday (Pentecost) and sometimes, on Michaelmas, which fell on September 29th. Some eighteenth century clergymen claimed that only about ten percent of their congregation took communion, while the rest hastily exited from the church. Of course, by the time the communion service began, worshipers had sat in their rigid wooden pews for 90 minutes or more. When parishioners were invited to gather around the Holy Table, they knelt at the chancel rail, received the Host, and then were dismissed with a blessing.

In 1724, the Rev. Hugh Jones, an English clergyman who became a mathematics professor at the College of William and Mary, said that

contrary to Anglican tradition, a significant number of people insisted upon receiving communion while seated in their pews, instead of kneeling before the altar. He added that, "It is not an easy matter to bring them to the Lord's Table decently upon their knees." Besides providing a critique of parishioners' behavior, Mr. Jones went on to share his views about the type of clergymen that should be sent to Virginia. He recommended that they be, "Persons that have read and seen something more of the World than what is requisite for an English Parish." He said that, "They must be such as can converse and know more than bare Philosophy and speculative Ethics, and have studied Men and Business in some measure as well as Books." He added that they should, "act like Gentlemen, and be facetious and good-humour'd," but "without too much Freedom and Licentiousness." He also said that they should be "good Scholars without becoming Cynics" just as they should "be good Christians without appearing

Stoics." From the tone of Mr. Jones' narrative, it is impossible to determine whether he was describing himself or simply enumerating the ideal colonial clergyman's attributes.




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## God is Love

By Chaplain Don Seeterlin

We worship a wonderful and amazing God. One who is ever with us and with-in us. Our God is LOVE as John tells us in his first letter. 1 John 4:16; He states: "So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."

As my Old Testament instructor was fond of saying, "the whole of the Old Testament is a love story". It is a recounting of God's love for us despite and in the face of man's inhumanity to man, and man's struggle to understand the world around him. In the end, God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to teach us how to live, and to open for us the gates to eternal joy and peace in His presence.

## Chaplain's Corner

God has already proved His love for us, and in so doing, He has judged us, and found us worthy of His love. We have nothing to earn. We are the recipients of a love greater and deeper than we could possibly imagine or even begin to understand. We do have a chance to respond to this love. Every time we are kind to someone in His name, we acknowledge the God with-in us, who is also the God with-in them.

*Don Seeterlin serves as a chaplain at Sentara Regional Medical Center and Riverside West Point Convalescent Center.*

# Lent Provides Opportunities for Growth

By the Reverend Henry P. McQueen

With Lent approaching, it is time to plan for this special season. Originally considered the fast of the 40 days before Easter, the actual practice of fasting has varied, and even for those who fasted 40 days, each day included a simple vegetarian meal and plenty of liquids.

In our own chapels, flowers will be absent and vestments will change to purple as a reminder of the penitential nature of Lent. “Alleluias” will be gone, as will the Gloria in Excelsis during the Mass. Lent was also traditionally a time of preparation for the catechumens, who would be baptized at the Easter Vigil.

It is within this framework that we begin our own Lenten preparations. Walking the journey of Lent and the Triduum of Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Great Easter Vigil) prepare us to more fully appreciate the joy of the Easter resurrection.

The spiritual practices of fasting, almsgiving, acts of penance, and disciplined devotion all provide possibilities and a framework for our own journey. Fasting is an option; you might consider one day or perhaps one morning a week. Let the discomfort associated with fasting be an inward reminder and not an external sign. Also please consider the medical advisability of this practice before beginning it.

Almsgiving is another traditional practice. Giving of time and talent can be as valuable as giving of treasure. Consider offering your services to one of the many valuable charities in the area. You might also consider helping one of Hickory Neck’s own ministries: those

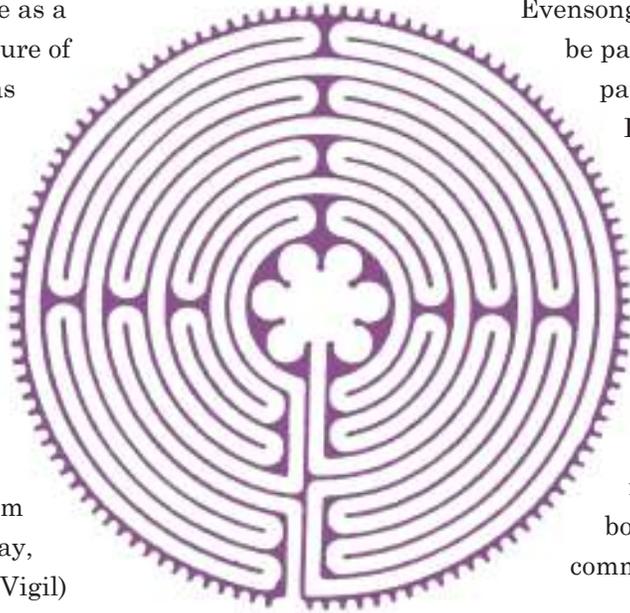
who launder and iron the altar linens each week or rearrange chairs for meetings and functions might appreciate the helping hand during Lent; being a lector for the weekly Evensong services might also be a suitable service to the church.

Disciplined devotion can take many forms. If time permits, daily Morning Prayer, weekly Evensong, and Sunday Eucharist could be part of an intentional devotion pattern. Other options include a Bible study or book reading that will bring with it a greater theological understanding of the mysteries of our faith. All of these things can be done in solitude or with a group. Reading the entire Bible is possible during Lent, though you may wish to delve deeper into the Gospels or a specific book, perhaps using a reputable commentary as a companion.

Suggestions for reading might include C.S.

Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*, almost anything by Henri Nouwen, Walter Bruggeman, Marcus Borg, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, especially *The Cost of Discipleship*. An Amazon search of ‘Lenten devotional’ will bring a long list of possibilities.

Online options might include subscribing to the daily meditations from The Society of Saint John the Evangelist ([ssje.org](http://ssje.org)). These insightful reflections, which come from the brothers of an Episcopal monastery in Boston, are very powerful. As other online options become known, we will try to highlight them in the ePistle. If you have questions about books or prayer practices, contact Father Michael or Father Henry for ideas.



*Continued on page 7*

# A Bump on Hump Day

By The Reverend Michael L. Delk

My whole life, and probably for a long time prior to my birth, Wednesday has been known as “hump day,” because once it arrives, you feel like you’ve climbed a mountain, and though it’s downhill from there, most people know that getting down can be harder than going up. The middle day of a Monday-Friday workweek, Wednesday is a long way from the weekend just past and the weekend yet to come. People are tired and ready for a rest. Wednesday also falls almost equidistant between Sundays. The spiritual charge that we receive during Sabbath worship starts to fade a little as the week wears on. This can be especially true in a challenging season like Lent, when we try to exercise new disciplines as a sign of devotion and sacrifice.

So for the past decade, we have offered Evensong, a relatively short yet immensely deep and beautiful liturgy of prayer and song, on Wednesday nights at 6 p.m. in our candle-lit Historic Chapel. People who have attended this worship event consistently over the years talk about how inspiring and calming it is. We bask in each other’s company, in the hymns and ancient plainchant of our faith, in the scriptures, and in the silence. Evensong only lasts about 25 minutes, but the positive impact it can have on you can last a lot longer.

This year, we will celebrate saints who have shown us various paths we can take on our journey of faith. At

our first Evensong, on March 12th, we will honor Gregory the Great, one of the greatest popes in history, who brought much needed reform to the medieval Church. On subsequent Wednesday nights, we will give God thanks for St. Joseph, the Annunciation of Our Lord (when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary about bearing Jesus), James Lloyd Breck, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who bravely resisted Nazi tyranny and paid for it with his life.

Afterwards, we’ll gather for a potluck dinner. Bring a dish to share: salad, entrée, side dish, or dessert. Somehow it always seems to work out just right. Feel free to hit KFC or Subway or a pizza place, because I know that many will be going straight from work to worship. Once our fellowship concludes, a small group open to everyone will discuss shame and how we can overcome that poisonous condition. (Please see the article on that course in this edition of the Nuggets.)

Everyone can use a bump on hump day, especially during Lent, and starting March 12th, it will be waiting for you in the Historic Chapel at 6 p.m. for five consecutive Wednesdays. I look forward to singing and praying with you then and there. ❁



*Lent, from page 6*

One of the keys to Lenten devotions is to be intentional and perhaps focus on an area that is a challenge or curiosity to you. Also, be gentle with yourself if keeping the practice becomes a burden. This should be a time of growth and renewal. An exercise that can help renewal is to go beyond the corporate confession that is a part of Eucharist and seek time to share the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent with a priest. If you feel

burdened by past sins, large or small, being relieved of the burden can bring renewal; a call to one of our priests, or any Episcopal priest, is all that is needed to begin this process.

Lent is a special season for growth. Living in the darkness permits the Easter light to shine even brighter. ❁

# Shards of Shame and the Hurting Heart

By The Reverend Michael L. Delk

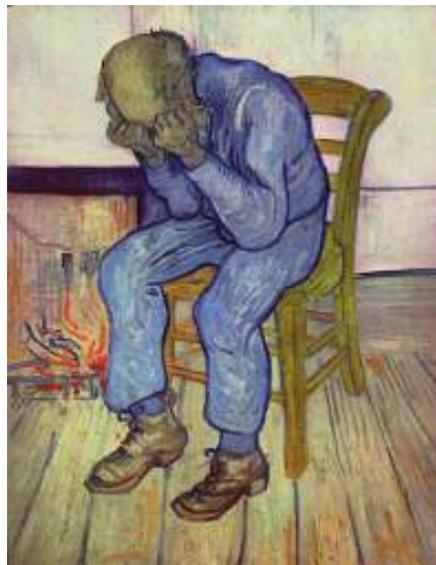
We tend to think of Lent as a forty-day season of feeling bad about who we are. We focus on our sins and strive to repent of them with the help of God's grace, hoping that forgiveness will come and that we will summon the courage to receive it, humbly and gratefully. Yet in doing so, we often fall into the pit of sharp glass shards that we call shame, which hurts us much more than it helps us.

Lent involves recognizing the wrong we have done and the right we have not done, which provokes a sensation we call guilt, a natural response of conscience offended. However, it is easy, living in a culture of judgment, to transition quickly and quietly from the guilt of "I did something bad" to the idea "I am a bad person," the epitome of shame. Shame is sinful, because it destroys rather than repairs our relationship with God and others.

As Brene Brown wrote in her book *Daring Greatly*, "Shame is the fear of disconnection – it's the fear that something we've done or failed to do, an ideal that we've not lived up to, or a goal that we've not accomplished makes us unworthy of connection. *I'm not worthy or good enough for love, belonging, or connection. I'm unlovable. Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are*

*flawed and therefore unworthy of loving and belonging."* [p. 68-69; author's italics]

What makes shame so dangerous is that it can be alive and well in our hearts and minds without our even being aware of it. We may harbor



At Eternity's Gate by Vincent van Gogh

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***Shame destroys people  
by causing  
disconnection from  
others, from God, and  
from self.***

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regrets about unreconciled relationships, major mistakes that caused irreparable harm, or the failure to embrace opportunities that escaped us forever. Shame destroys people by causing

disconnection from others, from God, and from self. Lent can be misunderstood and misused as a way of intensifying an already present cycle of shame, when Lent is actually designed to reconnect us in loving relationship with God, other people, and ourselves.

Starting on Sunday, March 16th, and running through, Sunday, April 6th, I will offer a four-week series on how we can recognize the presence of shame in our lives and shuck off its shackles to enjoy freedom and peace. We will gather in the Historic Chapel from 10:30-11:10 a.m. for a presentation. Questions and sharing, of course, are always welcome. However, sharing our experiences of shame in the midst of a large group can be intimidating.

Thus, on Wednesday nights after Evensong at 6 p.m. and the pot-luck dinner that will follow, those who are interested can gather with me to exchange stories of shame, or simply listen and learn from those who are willing and able to share.

Participation in the Sunday class is not necessary to be a part of those Wednesday night sessions, though being there on Sunday will offer helpful preparation. If you'd rather skip the Evensong and dinner, I anticipate that our small group discussion will begin about 7:15 p.m.

*Continued on page 9*

*Shame, from page 8*

What we're seeking, as we attempt to recognize and then rid ourselves of shame, is what Brown describes as "wholehearted living." To quote again from *Daring Greatly*, "Wholehearted living is about engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness. It means cultivating the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, *No matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough.* It's going to bed at night thinking, *Yes, I am imperfect and vulnerable and sometimes afraid, but that doesn't change the truth that I am also brave and worthy of love and belonging.*" [p. 10; author's italics]

At its heart, shame is about fear, and scripture tells us "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because Jesus first loved us." [I John 4:18-19] I hope that God's perfect love can banish the fear that underlies shame and its sense of unworthiness and not belonging. I look forward to an inspiring and healing path of discovery together. ❁



## *Lent*

*It is good to be last not first,  
Pending the present distress;  
It is good to hunger and thirst,  
So it be for righteousness.  
It is good to spend and be spent,  
It is good to watch and to pray:  
Life and Death make a goodly Lent  
So it leads us to Easter Day.*

*Christina Rossetti*



**HNC**

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In Concert

March 2, 2014 at 5 p.m.

Hickory Neck Church

# *Jubilate*



Background from [hmomoy](#) at flickr.com

Join us in welcoming ***Jubilate*** to Hickory Neck Church for their pre-tour concert on March 2 at 5 p.m. in the New Chapel. These talented University of Virginia students are preparing for a spring break tour to Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and other stops in Virginia. Read more about them on page 3. This is a musical opportunity you won't want to miss!