

NVMTA News

October 22, 2013

Meeting and Program 10/30/13

9:30 Coffee and networking

10:00 Business Meeting

Discussion of Standing Rules Amendments regarding fines for teachers not fulfilling assigned duties at events

Vote on policy to allow audio and video recording at events, subject to discretion of chairman

Vote on policies for website and social media

Discussion and vote on raising fees for Theory Mastery Day because of the increase in VMTA fees for this event

10:45 Program: College Auditions

How do college and conservatory faculty assess applicants for places in their music programs? What skills or qualities ensure admission for young pianists?

Panelists Marian Hahn, Peabody Conservatory, Mayron Tsong, University of Maryland, and Ivo Kaltchev, Catholic University.



Ivo Kaltchev



Mayron Tsong

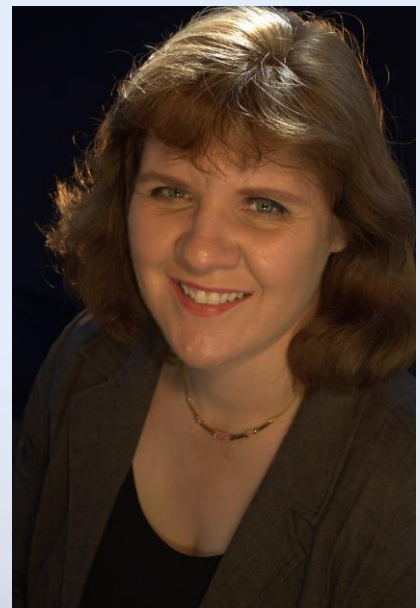


Marian Hahn

Highlights from the September 26 General Membership Meeting

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- 2013-2014 Budget approved
- Local Dues increase of \$10 (to \$50) approved for 2014
- René Johnson named NVMTA Most Valuable Member September 2013



René Johnson

Changes in nvmta.org

If you have not visited nvmta.org recently, you should!

Website liaison Laura Bogart has been working hard to make the website more user-friendly. We now have buttons on the home page to Join NVMTA, Find-A-Teacher, and our new Facebook page. On the right column you will find a scrolling list of upcoming events.

Website and Social Media volunteers:

Website Liaison: [Laura Bogart](#)

Calendar: [Shauna Leavitt](#)

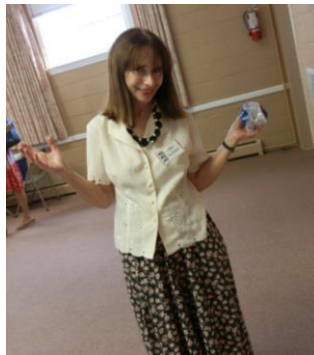
Member Directory: [Natalie Grimes](#)

Facebook: [Sarah Strom](#)

LinkedIn: [Aphrodite Mitsopoulou](#)

The Luncheon Honoring New Members with Activity Fair on October 6 was a great success with about 50 members in attendance.

Congratulations to Amy Rothstein for organizing the event!



Upcoming Registration Deadlines

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Saturday, November 2
Registration Deadline for Judged Recital November 17
<http://nvmta.org/files/2011/06/Judged-Recital-Application-Form-2013-14.pdf>

Saturday, November 16
Registration Deadline for Keyboard Skills Day, January 5
mtfest.com

Saturday, November 23
10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Spring Festival New Teachers Registration Deadline and Computer Day at the Oakton Library

Neighborhood groups forming for informal get-togethers! Please contact Diane Perett at perettduet@aol.com for information.

Volunteer Opportunities in NVMTA

NVMTA is always seeking more volunteers. Here are some of our current needs—Please donate your time and expertise!

1. Bring refreshments for General meetings. Contact [Nancy Plourde](#)
2. Provide items for Bake Sale at Fall Festival on November 2nd. Contact [Diane Kimble](#)
3. Photographers needed for all events! Contact [Elizabeth Blakeslee](#)
4. Write future editions of this newsletter. Contact [Elizabeth Blakeslee](#)

René Johnson, NVMTA Most Valuable Member September, 2013, agreed to answer a few questions about her life, career, and volunteer work for NVMTA.

Can you tell us a little about your background, and how you came to be a piano teacher?

I grew up in a musical family. My mom was a fine pianist; my dad was a fine organist. We had an organ and a piano in our living room. I'm the oldest of five children. The four girls all studied piano for at least 10 years; our brother made it to about middle school. I started teaching piano when I was in high school. I bought my first piano when I was in 8th or 9th grade. My dad paid 1/4, my grandma paid 1/4 and I paid 1/2. I still have the piano and it is very special to me. A blind friend recently gave me her piano so I have two now. They were coincidentally the same brand and model (and color).

I majored in Medical Technology in college with a Chemistry minor. I worked as a Toxicologist for a couple of years and then decided that I wanted to be home with my children and being a piano teacher worked out better. When I moved to Arlington in 1991, I joined NVMTA and began teaching again. I have been so grateful for the things I have learned through my participation in NVMTA. I have gained many musical skills and learned so much from the dedicated and talented teachers in this area. In 2003, I bought the recommended books, read, studied, took some private lessons, took the tests at the National Convention and earned the privilege of adding NCTM after my name. Just this year, I received my Permanent Professional NCTM Certificate.

You serve NVMTA as Chairman of Theory Mastery Day, and as liaison with Charms, who is developing our mtfest.com site for the registration and automated scheduling of our events. Can you describe these roles?

In 2001, I became involved with Theory testing. Eventually, I co-chaired the event with Virginia Moore. She and I worked extensively on the theory tests. It has been interesting to watch the progression of the ear training from cassette tapes to CDs to online files you can download. In 2010, I took the position of Chairman for Theory Mastery Day and have appreciated the help of co-chairs David Kosutic, Maiko Chiba, and Ashlee Burt (now in Utah).

In addition to TMD Chairman, I am now the IT Liaison (2013) for NVMTA. This is a new position which evolved from our Immediate Past-President Ken Lee's foresight for the need to automate the registration and scheduling of our festival and competition events to take some of the burden off the shoulders of the chairmen. Ken Lee and Sarah Strom made good headway on this project which paved the way for the current project. About a year ago, we gathered the requirements for each of the events sponsored by our organization, sought bids, reviewed the 13 bids, and then the Executive Board chose the best candidate, Dorian Systems (Charms).

I have been working with them since July 1, 2013 with help from Jeri Bennett. The first year we will focus on the largest events for registration and scheduling services and hope to have registration completed for the smaller events. In the second year, we plan to have registration and scheduling for the remaining events.

You donate so much of your time and energy to NVMTA. Why?

At times, my work with Charms on the registration and scheduling program has seemed like a full-time job. I wake up in the morning thinking about it; sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night with

ideas. I guess what motivates me includes the following: I know it will be a huge value to our organization. It will save SO much time for chairmen. I want to be part of something valuable and successful. My husband has experience in this field, and it has actually been a good thing for our marriage because I go to him with questions and I'm very interested in his answers (I've learned a lot from him), I love spreadsheets and I love making lists and checking off progress and these passions have lent themselves perfectly well to this project.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like to do hard things: I just climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa (you can read about it in my blog: renejohnson-medley.blogspot.com). I made it to the highest point in Africa at 19,300 feet (far above the clouds), I have walked 50 miles in less than 20 hours (twice) with boy scouts, I have run two half-marathons, and biked the entire C&O Canal trail (180 miles) and the entire W&OD trail (Mt. Vernon to Purcellville). I have backpacked and hiked in Oregon, Colorado, Idaho/Wyoming, Virginia, West Virginia, and Minnesota.

I love people watching in a new city. I love to travel. I've been to Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Peru, England, France, New Zealand, Tanzania, Jordan, Israel, and Egypt. I speak Spanish (conversationally) and loved learning some Swahili words when I was in Tanzania (my favorite is good night "lala salama").

I have four sons ages 12-22. They are all musical (piano, band percussion, oboe, and violin). I love a good book. My two most recent books are *Cutting with Stone* by Abraham Verghese and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury. I am an active member of my church. I've played for the choir for about 15 years now and serve as one of the organists. Another happy accomplishment this year is losing 25 pounds (so far).

Every couple of years, I like to take piano lessons from Nancy Breth. I love the challenge to get prepared for her and the feeling of accomplishment when I have music prepared to share with others. I love teaching piano. One of my favorite things is when I'm upstairs at my house and a student arrives via the downstairs backdoor and begins to play the piano. To me it says, "I'm ready for my lesson, come teach me." It makes me feel very happy.



René's Philosophies of teaching and life:

- *Work hard, it pays off.*
- *Do your Best.*
- *When making choices, consider Good. Better. Best.*
- *When deciding what to say: Is it nice? Is it necessary? Is it true? (If it's all three, it's probably worth saying.)*
- *Set high goals.*