

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

For more information contact: Steve Meyer at 510-887-4311

www.ggbc.org

Media contact: Nancy Vicknair 510-390-7044

JPEGS available contact: nancyvicknair@comcast.net

Golden Gate Boys Choir & Bellringers

480 Larchmont Street o Hayward o CA o 94544-1153 o USA

Tel: (510) 887-4311 or (415) 431-1137 o Fax: (510) 786-2458.

Antique Bell Donated to Golden Gate Boys Choir & Bellringers for Lafayette Campsite

Hayward, CA, August 18, 2006: The Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers, founded in 1989 and known throughout the greater Bay Area for its excellent musical program and performances, just completed two weeks at their annual summer camp in Lafayette. This year, however, the boys showing up for camp had a surprise waiting for them. Steve Meyer, the artistic director, had purchased a beautiful bell which would be used during camp for daily events.

Meyer said recently that at their previous campsite there was a bell that was used throughout the day to mark prayer times (the "Angelus") and also for meals, rehearsals and classes. "We grew used to the bell ringing and to depend on it for keeping time," said Meyer. "Most appropriately, the Golden Gate Boys Choir had three groups of bellringers at camp, two sets of bells and a set of chimes. The chapel bell was really an extension of our bell ringing family. When we changed campsites to Lafayette, the bell was immediately missed, and it was harder to keep on schedule without the aural reminder of when it was time to rehearse, change classes, report to the dining hall and gather for events. I resolved to find a bell to install at the camp to restore that camp mystique from our past, and to help keep things on schedule!"

Meyer had searched for a suitable bell by going online and googling the word "bell." Among the sites provided was Brosamer's Bells and their web page listed various bells for sale, including church bells, cupola bells, ships bells, locomotive bells, fire bells, post bells and hand bells. Listening to the sound clips provided on the Brosamer web pages, Meyer determined that, for sound purposes, a 15" to 17" bell would be a perfect choice for his camp, especially since the cost of the larger church bells was prohibitive. As it was, the brass locomotive bell that Meyer purchased cost between three and four thousand dollars and he decided to donate to the Golden Gate Boys Choir.

The bell chosen by Meyer is a 16" bell, with a rich, full sound, and was assured that it could be heard through the breadth of the campsite, without disturbing or distressing the local residents whose homes lie on the perimeter of the camp property. Mr. Brosamer packed the bell, mounting it on a wooden pallet, and the

bell began its journey from his storage building on the farm in Brooklyn, Michigan, to Diocesan Youth Retreat Center in Lafayette. A week later, the bell arrived via truck, and a small tractor with fork lift attachment was needed to unload the sturdy, but very heavy, bell.

Mr. Herb Shepherd, site manager of the Diocesan Youth Retreat Center, unpacked and examined the bell first. Herb built a frame for the bell on top of the wooden pallet, and when the paint had dried on the wood, moved the bell from the work area at camp to a prominent location in front of the main house.

Meyer brought an issue of the Smithsonian Magazine (February 2006) to camp because it has a large photo of an old locomotive (pages 58-59) with a bell that looks exactly like the one donated by Meyer. He enlarged the photo from the magazine and posted it on the bulletin board at camp so that the staff and boys could see from whence their new bell had come.

Several persons could not resist playing the bell even before it was settled into its prominent new position in front of the main house at the retreat center, so Meyer cannot say that he was the first to ring it for the camp. But, on the final day of camp, August 12, Steve motioned to the parents and friends close by to cover their ears, and "announced" the beginning of rest hour with a fairly continuous ringing of the bell. . Of course there were always at least 2-3 campers volunteering to ring it each time!

Future plans include mounting the bell on a small tower, the foundation of which can be found already as a part of the main house architecture, pending approval of the retreat center Advisory Board. Bells are typically given a name when they are mounted or moved into a tower or belfry, usually the name of a saint or other patron, and their new bell will also be named. Steve Meyer and the campers at Golden Gate Boys Choir & Bellringers are very proud of their new bell. Now as soon as anyone drives, or walks, through the Diocesan Youth Retreat Center's entrance, they can view the shiny brass bell thanks to Steven Meyer's generosity.

Steven Meyer
Artistic Director, GGBC
Bell Donor

About Golden Gate Boys Choir & Bellringers

The Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers is an independent, non-profit organization committed to the tradition of boy choir training. They offer extensive instruction in musical skills and choral performance for boys and young men in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. The choir develops repertoire, vocal skills, and knowledge of music theory. These skills are proudly showcased in performances at local, national and international levels. For more information, call (510) 887-4311 or (415) 431-1137 or email ggbcbcr@aol.com.