

The Grapevine

It Really Grows on You!

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Ask Doc

Life Lessons from Our Conductor, Paul Wiens

From growing up on a small family farm in Kansas, I learned valuable lessons that have served me well.

Work hard for the family

While I grumbled about farm chores from time to time, the understanding was that everyone in my family had to do their part, that doing so was not an option because our survival depended upon it. So if the cows needed to be milked, the sheep fed, supper cooked or the fields plowed, it just had to be done and that was that. Independent actions or personal choices could not be allowed to threaten the inexorable progress of farm life . . . of our life together.

Some work is really unpleasant

My least favorite work was cleaning up after the animals: shoveling the gutter in the milking area, shoveling out the hog barn while standing knee deep in the stinking soup, digging out the chicken barn where the rats laced the beds of chicken dung, hauling carcasses of dead animals to the old cistern out in the south pasture.

Much work is repetitious and tedious

Working the fields meant gassing up the old tractor, hitching to a plow and greasing it, getting the canvas-covered water jug filled with cool cistern water, and heading out to the field. Plowing



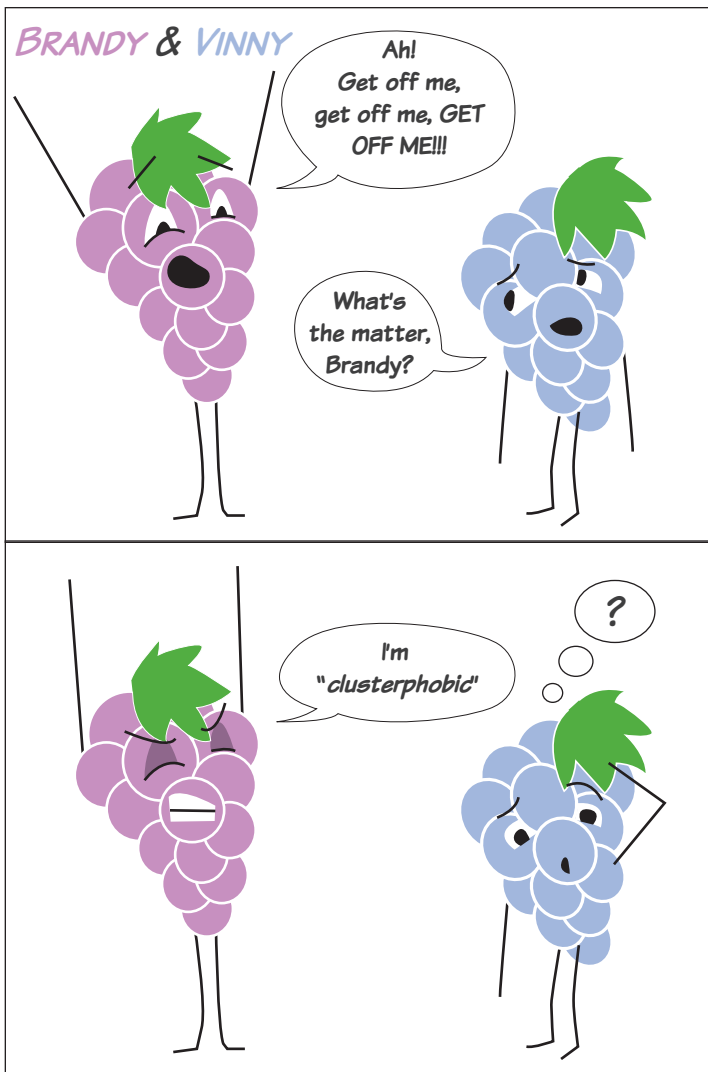
Dr. Wiens and his wife, Mother Dolores.

was the most tedious field work because the small plow of my day had only two shares and cut about 28 inches of ground on each pass. So imagine an 40-acre field of wheat stubble, one-half mile long, in mid July, riding round and round and round for two or three 12-hour days to finish that one field. Plowing was a bumpy struggle between an old hot tractor and the dry stubborn ground but when the field was plowed, it looked clean and dark and I always had a great feeling of accomplishment.

Your word is your bond

While my father signed notes with the bank in town, I never saw a contract between neighbors. We simply worked together and for each other and at the end of the day or week we sat down with

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a pencil and figured out what was due. Having just completed graduate school in 1978, I borrowed 10G from Mennonite neighbors *WITHOUT A SIGNATURE* to make a down payment on a small house. I made sure it was the first obligation to be repaid.

Harvest is exhilarating when the crop is good

I remember harvesting poor crops and being really depressed by the poor yield; the futility and the helplessness was all too apparent and there was no joy in the work. But most of the time the crops were good and we worked with anticipation and excitement as we combined grain or baled alfalfa. Harvest meant cash in the bank, feed for the livestock and food on the table. Piles of golden grain are beautiful and a barn full of sweet-smelling alfalfa is wonderful.

Timing is critical

Would my father be able to plant the grain at just the right time so that the crop would mature before the frost? Could we get the grain harvested before the thunderstorm swept over our land? Could we back the heavy trailers laden with alfalfa bales into the shed before the rain hit? Would we be successful in manipulating the breeding cycle of the ewes so that the crop of lambs would be born in a two-week period during the spring?

How would we survive the next disaster?

Not . . . would there be another disaster! Hail destroyed the corn overnight. Half of the new lambs died of pneumonia and some were run down by coyotes in the pasture. All the hogs got cholera and had to be destroyed. The best milk cow died giving birth. Rain did not fall and the crops withered. Machines broke down. Pray, then borrow money from the bank and replant, repair and start over.

Without community you don't survive

Farmer neighbors came over to help with haying, butchering of animals and cutting of wood for winter heating. When our neighbor had a heart attack, we all hitched up our plows and made short work of plowing all his fields—nothing felt so good as seeing six tractors make short work of an otherwise overwhelming job. On Sunday mornings we were ALL in church . . . no questions, no excuses; we wanted to be in church to see our friends and neighbors. We were all cleaned up and we always ate well at church. We sang together and worshiped with an intensity that may be difficult to duplicate in a society that is over-confident and over-rich.

Giving is a terrible and fearsome thing

My parents tithed all the time . . . through droughts, crop failures, hard times . . . and I could not hardly stand it. Even now, with my relative wealth and security, I struggle with the temptation to store up in bigger barns. Shouldn't I be prepared for the next disaster? How about a little nicer house in retirement?

Dependence upon God seems nearly impossible if you are healthy, wealthy, smart and secure

My guess is that when we believe we are in control we tend (subconsciously at least) to forget or disavow dependence upon God. It's not complicated, really. ❖

MARK YOUR CALENDAR ✓

Date	Time	Place	Event
Nov. 13	3:30-5:30p	Edman Stage	Tutti Brahms rehearsal
Nov. 19 Friday	7:00-10:00p	Edman Stage	Kellogg & Brahms dress rehearsal
Nov. 20	7p call 8p concert	Edman Stage	Brahms Performance
Dec. 3 & 4	6:30p call 7:30p concert	Edman Stage	Christmas Festival

Editor's Note

In Doc's honor, it's time for a metaphor.

Think of your life as a song and our Father in heaven as the master composer. Ask Him to write love, truth, beauty, patience, hope, and all His good promises into your song. Then, remember that He is the composer of our salvation, the most beautiful song in all of history that we get to sing everyday.

Have a great week,
Julia



SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH SUZANNA MATHEWS

Note: this is fictional.

Hello, Suzanna. It's a pleasure to have you here with us this year. I understand that you are a freshman and a soprano 1. Is there anything else we should know about you?

Not really.

Excellent. Actually, can you tell me about yourself anyway? This is an interview after all.

Sure. I am the second oldest in a family of 3 kids, and we are all really smart, but we're still holding out on the youngest because he likes to dive off brick piles. Um, I like to swim anywhere from 2 to 4 miles a day, especially in swollen rivers. I talk with my older brother a lot, and we make up stories about our lives where our parents endow us with absolute authority over our younger brother, but really our family is very close. I think the desire to enslave him is a sign of deep affection. Most of all, I love singing, especially during my daily frolick along the Prairie Path.

Wow. Has singing shaped you into the person you are today?

I agree.

Oh—uh, me too. I understand you are new to Wheaton?

Yes, I'm a freshman.

Perfect. And how do you like it so far?

Well, the campus is alright, and I love all the people here, but I can't stand the pressure to get married. I've already dated four guys with no luck. I feel like a failure at life.

That's deep, Suzan. May I call you Suzan? My advice to you is to shrink your pond so that you become immediately irresistible. Have you considered the tenor section? Or the basses—they are the biggest fish you can catch, hahaha.

I'll have to get back to you on that. I've already been planning, and I think the Honeyrock retreat will be very lucrative. I'll probably find him there. At the moment, I'm feeling tenor, with a slight chance of baritone.

That's nice. In closing, would you mind describing your experience in choir so far, and how that has awakened your inner singer to new heights of rapture and incredulosity?

I like Dr. Wiens because he really cares for us, very much like a grandfather would.

Outstanding. Thank you so much for joining me today and sharing your heart. Do you have any future plans right now?

I have to fly to Sweden next week for a national wooden shoe jogging contest. I operate sanding equipment for splintered shoes. It isn't glamorous, but it pays.

Aren't you remarkable. Suzanna, we are so glad to be in your presence this year, and we hope to get to know you better. May your dreams be merry and bright, and may all your attempts at success take flight. ❖

New Cabinet Member!



Asst. Business Manager: Jacob Weinzettel

Since the age of 10, Jacob has shown remarkable talent for Lively and Intense Speech Therapy (LISPT), which involves a rigorous display of exuberant activity for a long time. He began with his 3-week-old sister, who could recite *Macbeth* after Jacob played explosive peek-a-boo with her for 9 hours. Inspired by Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, he hopes that by singing nonsense syllables while stamping and clapping, he can get

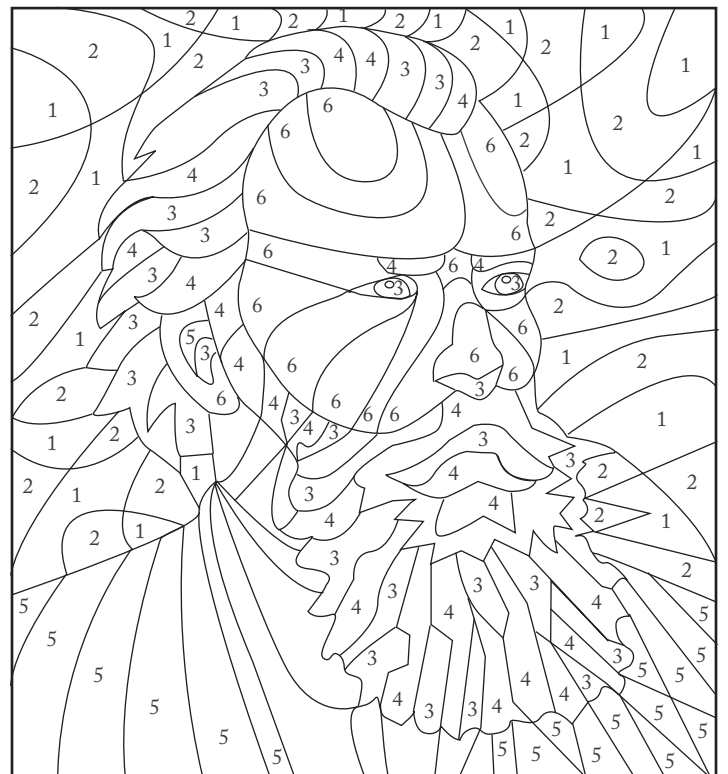
his pet parrot, Confucius, to memorize the Bible in a fortnight. ❖

The Itsy Bitsy Folder

The itsy bitsy folder was stuck inside her slot.
Her brother—the performer—was sitting in her spot!
In went the folder, but not without a groan—
The itsy bitsy folder felt fatter than a tome!

BRAHMS COLOR-BY-NUMBER

1= blue 2= red 3= black 4= gray 5= brown 6= tan blank = white





**DR. WIENS
SHARES HIS
INSIGHTS ON
EVERYTHING
FROM MUSIC
TO MARRIAGE**

Doc on reading music:

“Like climbing a rock face without ropes.”

Doc on Solfege:

“When you miss a syllable, write it in... yeah right.”

“You’re making up syllables like they’re going out of style.”

Doc on breathing:

“The old pirate trick: keep an eye.”

“Nobody because of good breeding or rich parents gets to take a breath.”

Doc on page 4 of the Britten:

“Illinois has a lot of casinos, but we don’t gamble on a note like that.”

Doc on pronunciation in the Britten:

“Spit, spit, spit, spit.”

Doc on the tenors’ breathing in the Britten:

“Don’t breathe and pass go and collect \$200.”

Doc on pronouncing a passage in the Britten:

“Like a chocolate lab [followed by petting motion].”

Doc on page 47 of the Britten:

“The intonation hue should be excruciatingly beautiful.”

Doc on *Mary Hynes*:

“Now I’m in my bubble bath.”

Doc on the alto’s high note in *Mary Hynes*:

“It sounds like someone goosed you.”

Doc on the staccato in *Mary Hynes*:

“The worst part of your life—give me your grief!”

Doc on a looming problem:

“We’ve been nibbling at that cookie.”

Doc on the soprano entrance in *Anthony O’Daly*:

“You sing like you have Cheerios in your mouth.”

Doc on *The Coolin*:

“It’s a love song—you don’t marry an axe murderer.”

Doc on the tone of *Pilgrim’s Hymn*:

“The effervescence of the spirit, instead of death personified.”

Doc on the octet in the Mäntyjärvi:

“That’s a permanent keeper.”

Doc on not performing the Mäntyjärvi fast for the high school students:

“We won’t dazzle them falsely.”

Doc on being Darth Vader at his costume party:

“How would I eat dinner?”

Doc on non-conservies in CC:

“There is neither music major nor non-music major.”

Doc on dismissing members:

“I hate it. I’m too nice, believe it or not.”

Doc on Brahms:

“He’s crazy.”

Doc on movement two of the Brahms:

“If you want to be absolutely frightening, you have to play it straight.”

“The audience will grab their armchairs: maybe it’s true—I’m mortal!”

Doc on movement three of the Brahms:

“And from then on you’re Fugue-ing like the Dickens.”

Doc on movement six of the Brahms:

“The Killer.”

Doc on his racial background:

“I’m not white, I’m Mennonite.”

Doc on the strange solfege syllables in movement six of the Brahms:

“Who would have thought it? Whitacre of course, but not Brahms.”

Doc on the Basses singing flat:

“Pretend that you’re singing without that heavy burden on your life.”

Doc on singing the word ‘Herr’:

“You have to pour on the perfume.”

Doc on the Basses’ tone on ‘Herr’:

“Belly up to the bar—pour me a beer.”

Doc on movement seven of the Brahms:

“You can’t remember what key you’re in because Brahms is twisting your socks.”

“Flatter than the dickens.”

Doc on the tenors in movement seven:

“My Siamese cat used to make those sounds four feet off the ground, hanging on the screen door.”

Doc on the articulation quality of all the choirs singing the Brahms:

“Like a big mass of oatmeal oozing over the bleachers.”

Doc on the Basses slouching:

“I’m coming over there with my BA-ton.”

Doc on maturity:

“A sign of maturity... is... you party hard.”

Doc on a high soprano note:

“Sopranos, don’t pop that note like a zit.”

Doc on certain sopranos looking down at their music:

“People in blue and purple . . . Mallory.”

Doc on a tenor borrowing a pencil from a soprano:

“That means tenors are entirely dependent on sopranos.”

Doc on Luke’s shoe size:

“Size 12—I can feel it from here.”

Doc on singing together:

“We are united. There should be signs on campus—‘sing in unison’—with an American flag.”

Doc on engagement rings:

“Does the diamond have a black spot in it?”

Doc on Mallory D’s engagement:

“Watch out—it could happen to you.” ❖

Over Christmas break, send in your poems, artwork, jokes, quotes, funny stories, choir memories, and announcements—and you can be in the New Year issue!