

BARRIE BRANCH

Even though it is bitterly cold outside this week, inside our homes are filled with music. What wonderful opportunities we have as teachers to impart knowledge and instill a love for music with each student. I have been reminded this week of how blessed we are as teachers; with children's excited phone calls over their exam results, and kind words of encouragement and thanks from parents.

In September, our first meeting was held at the Barrie Public Library, with twelve members present. Our branch has many plans underway for the year. We are developing business cards that will lead potential clients to our website, where they can get more info than just what can be listed on a brochure. This reduces our advertising cost greatly.

Our branch celebrated Canada Music Week with an Awards Recital. Piano and vocal students gave great performances. Several students received scholarships for excellent exam results in 2009. Awards are given in practical subjects to the student with the highest mark over 85%, rudiments over 90%, and senior theory over 80%. A used music sale was held at this event also. Thanks to Mary Jane VanPypen for organizing this!

Plans are underway for the Student Evaluation Day in February. Brett Kingsbury will be our piano adjudicator, and Elizabeth Martel our vocal adjudicator. Last year, we had an overwhelming response with entries and well prepared performances. Our branch awarded \$ 2400 to students! It was a fantastic two day event. March recitals follow this event for the award winners, giving another opportunity for performance! This year we have decided to award gift certificates to our local music store for those students who receive A+ or A. This is great preparation for upcoming music festivals and spring exams.

The winter session of RCM exams just finished in Barrie, and we are thankful for the ORMTA teachers who volunteer their time to sit at the desk. We have had this arrangement for many years, and it is our biggest source of income.

April's event is our ORMTA Branch Competition. We are pleased to have Sarah Kyle as our vocal adjudicator and Nancy Telfer to adjudicate the pianists.

We are "making time" for a pedagogy discussion at each meeting. The morning can get filled easily with business, as we only hold five meetings per year. In November we discussed scale teaching techniques. February's discussion is on scalic passages in Sonatinas.

We look forward to accomplishing much with our students in the coming months!

Cheryl Graham

