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# Tactus

American Choral Directors Association  
Western Division Newsletter  
Fall 2016



## *From the President* **Overdot or Not?**

*Anna Hamre* 2



## *From the President-Elect* **Finding Men**

*Travis Rogers* 4



## *R&S Becomes R&R* **Repertoire & Resources**

*Cari Earnhart* 6



## *State Report* **Nevada**

*Kim Ritzer* 9



## *State Report* **Utah**

*Reed Criddle* 9

### **ADVERTISERS**

3 Music Mart

7 PALI Retreat

8 UNLV

11 Voice Care Network

12 Redlands

13 Steinway

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3 State Presidents

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Western Division  
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**President**

**Anna Hamre**

Professor Emerita,  
Cal State Fresno  
Artistic Director,  
Fresno Master Chorale  
[ahamre@csufresno.edu](mailto:ahamre@csufresno.edu)

**Vice President**

**Steve Hodson**

Professor of Music,  
Westmont College  
[hodson@westmont.edu](mailto:hodson@westmont.edu)

**President-Elect**

**Travis Rogers**

Choir Director,  
Napa High School  
[trogers777@comcast.net](mailto:trogers777@comcast.net)

**Treasurer**

**Barbara Hobbs**

[bkhobbs@baymoon.com](mailto:bkhobbs@baymoon.com)

**Webmaster,  
Communications Chair**

**Scot Hanna-Weir**

Director of Choral Activities,  
Santa Clara University  
Artistic Director,  
Santa Clara Chorale  
[scothw@gmail.com](mailto:scothw@gmail.com)

**TACTUS Newsletter Editor**

**Nina Gilbert**

[ninagilbert@yahoo.com](mailto:ninagilbert@yahoo.com)

**State Presidents  
and R&R Chairs: p. 3**

## What would Mozart do? To Overdot or Not?

**Anna Hamre**  
*President*



I remember the lesson clearly: **the answer "It feels right" to justify a conductor's musical choice is never enough.** I recall my mentors Lynn Whitten and Joan Catoni Conlon requiring that decisions be made taking into account the composer's circumstances, intentions, resources, inherited traditions and background, and theoretical visions.

But things are never simple, as I continually discover. I have spent a great deal of time in recent months trying to wrap my head around Mozart's reworking of Handel's *Messiah*. This challenge came about because we are complying with the union requirement for the number of players receiving services with the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra. The solution was to use Mozart's version, and I was anxious to accept this challenge partly because I suspect the Handel-Mozart *Messiah* may actually have had a longer tenure than the original Handel conception.

Less than 50 years separated the original composition (1741) and Mozart's reworking of it (1789), but that half-century yielded significant developments. In examining those, I initially had a negative visceral reaction to several things: changes in ornamentation, reassigned vocal lines, and introduced timbres such as the clarinet.

Yet, in going back to the guidance of my mentors, I had to delve into the same questions I was schooled to ask regarding circumstances, intentions, etc. So, in thinking through the Mozart adaptations, I looked at all the differences and possible reasons. Some may have been very practical. For example, likely there was limited room at the Mozart presentation, explaining the lack of a keyboard part. Very possibly, there was not an available trumpeter who could soar in the stratosphere in the old Baroque style, explaining the reassignment of lines in "The trumpet shall sound." It is well documented how fascinated Mozart was with the beautiful new available sounds in the developing clarinet.

Times had also changed. Perhaps overriding everything was the atmosphere found in this new era of Enlightenment, which had as its premise that rational thought, not emotion, should be the major guiding principle. So how does one reconcile that with Handel's creation?

And how do we address such things as the changes in ornamentation? Do we require the trombones to play the alto/tenor/bass parts colla parte, as would have been the norm?

**Consider the composer's  
circumstances, intentions,  
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**This challenge came about  
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Fresno Philharmonic  
Orchestra.**

There are a few definitive answers. First of all, Handel himself left multiple versions of his masterwork, suggesting that he may have wished it to be pliable enough to be adapted by future composers. We must, then, review what Mozart actually wrote down. He used a German translation. He changed a few notes. His manuscript demonstrates that he obviously had a new vision for such established practices as overdotting.

**Truth be told, I made decisions because "they feel right."**

them because "they feel right." However, if the great (much-mourned) Dr. Whitten asks for an accounting of my choices (in the hopefully distant future), I believe I will have the rationale to support my decisions.

After many months of study—I am about seven weeks before performance—I have made virtually all of the decisions that can be made at this point. And, truth be told, I made

## **ACDA Western Division Leadership State Presidents**

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**Elizabeth Schauer**

Associate Director of Choral Activities,  
University of Arizona School of Music  
[erschaue@email.arizona.edu](mailto:erschaue@email.arizona.edu)

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**Lou De La Rosa**

Director of Choral and Vocal Activities,  
West Valley College  
[l.delarosa.wvc@gmail.com](mailto:l.delarosa.wvc@gmail.com)

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Director of Choral Activities,  
The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
[mfelipe@hawaii.edu](mailto:mfelipe@hawaii.edu)

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**Kimberly Barclay Ritzer**

Choir Director, Green Valley High School  
[kritzer@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:kritzer@interact.ccsd.net)

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# Where Did You Get All Those Men?

**Travis Rogers**  
*President-Elect*



I've been asked this question many times through the years after performances when people have seen and heard the Napa High School choir sing on a formal concert for the first time. Each year we have 150-200 young men in our choir program.

I've had the good fortune, through no effort of my own, of being born and raised in the Napa Valley. Except for four and a half years of college in southern California (Biola University) and one school year of graduate study at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, the city of Napa has been my home.

**I teach at the high school I attended in 10th grade (Napa High) and direct the choir program I sang in as a student.**

When I attended high school, being a boy in choir was being brave as one could easily take the brunt of ridicule for being in a "girls" class. And, I really didn't sing in the choir, I played piano for it. The two high schools I attended (Napa and Vintage) at least had the reputation that enough boys were involved that we had a reasonably balanced Concert Choir. The rest of the girls were enrolled in various women's choirs based on their skill level and experience.

My senior year at Vintage High School began in the fall of 1973 and brought to our campus a brand-new first-year teacher who was on a one-year contract to cover the choir program while our regular permanent teacher took a leave to complete a doctoral degree.

You might know the name Jo-Michael Scheibe—yep, I was in his choir the very first year he taught! Mike is the person responsible for so turning me on to choral music that, upon graduation, I knew exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up, a high school choir director!

In addition to the music I learned and the passion Mike created in me for choral singing and directing that senior year of high school, I learned some very practical things from him that have influenced what I do—continuously now for thirty-seven years as a high school choir director.

## Today's topic: Recruiting Men!

By my second semester, senior year at Vintage High School, Mike had recruited enough boys into the choir

program that we had as many boys as girls in both the Concert and Chamber Choirs and had enough boys left over to begin an all-men's choir of about thirty students.

Mike didn't sit around and wait for students to come to him. He actively used the telephone, enrollment records, the mail, call slips out of class, etc. to personally initiate and sell choir, one-on-one, with as many students that he could find. Mike set goals, both in the number of students he wanted to have and in the quality people he went after to fill his choir classes. I saw firsthand the results of his work where it came to the point that it was cool to be in choir, whether you were a girl or a guy.

**There was no men's choir and I wanted to have a 100% contract the next school year, so I got permission to start a men's choir class...with five young men enrolled.**

**Why the emphasis on getting boys?** In those days, in the Napa community, there was no problem getting girls to sign up for choir. Teachers had to actively recruit boys

to get at least one choir on campus balanced to do quality SATB literature for study and performance.

When I returned to the Napa community and was hired at Napa High in the fall of 1980, I was fortunate enough to inherit a quality program where the previous director had made it a point to have as many boys as girls in the Concert Choir and the show choir. 80 kids were signed up to sing in three different choir classes. The only issue? One choir class, the Treble (Girls) Choir, had only two signed up. I actually had to recruit eight more women to keep the class!

There was no men's choir and I wanted to have a 100% contract the next school year, so I got permission to start a men's choir class and was allowed to start it with five young men enrolled. I would recruit and be able to give academic credit to the Concert Choir boys who would be willing to give up a couple of lunchtimes a week to assist the five in the first Men's Choir class. All together, 20 boys sang in that first Men's Choir at Napa High School.

Over the years, those 30 boys in the Men's Choir (30 boys in the entire program at the start) turned into as



many as 200 boys in three separate periods of choir. In fact, many times in recent years there have been up to 40 more boys than girls in the overall program. We actually had to drop an intermediate women's choir class to add another men's choir section.

How did the program get to this point? How can you get more boys into your high school choir program?

**Here are some answers** that you may be able to use in your own situation that could increase boys' enrollment in choir at your school.

**1** Take your top, most socially credible and socially comfortable 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys with you to your feeder middle schools. Ask the vice principals in charge of 8<sup>th</sup> graders at each middle school to give you a list of their top kids, *whether or not they have sung before*. Call in the 8<sup>th</sup> graders in groups of 4-5 kids at a time, but talk to them in a separate room one by one while your 9<sup>th</sup> grade sales team talks to the rest as they are waiting to let the 8<sup>th</sup> graders know how cool choir is. Close the deal and get those recommended 8<sup>th</sup> graders into choir.

**2** Make friends with the counselors at your school. Some classes fill quickly and, many times, counselors are looking for a place to put kids. But don't allow your men's class to be a dumping ground. One or two bad attitudes or behavioral issues can spoil a class quickly. **Also don't be concerned about whether the student has sung before. You are looking for kids that you can turn on to choral music.** Our advantage as choral musicians? It's much easier to teach a beginning singer than a beginning instrumentalist! A new singer can sound quite good quite quickly with the appropriate teaching technique.

**3** Have your current choir students be recruiters as well. I've known directors that have paid (out of their pocket) up to \$50 a person to each current student that has brought in another student.

**4** Teach at least two to three fun, easy-to-learn, sounds-good-right-away songs at the very outset and get your kids performing for your parents and audience as soon as you can! Remember the last scene of *The Music Man*, where Harold Hill's instruments finally come in and kids start to play the instruments? The kids sound awful, but the parents are so excited about seeing their children play an instrument that everyone feels great about music.

**Don't misread this: I'm not advocating putting the kids out for public performance and having them sound awful to their and your embarrassment.** I am advocating not wasting any time from the first day of school before instilling proper singing technique and stage presentation, and holding a well publicized concert five or six weeks into the school year. Don't worry about the performance being an artistic success, just get the kids singing and enjoying it! When the kids sing, the parents are thrilled! The audience applause for the kids works as a magic potion that immediately increases the enthusiasm the kids have to want to sing again. Then, like any subject matter, move into more complex, rewarding literature that they will be open to considering after finding quick immediate success through your teaching and directing skills!

**5** Make choir the **cool** thing to do! For the guys, that includes things like getting a National Anthem appearance for a ballgame, performing a novelty song on each concert that allows them to be goofballs and get attention for it, going on a performance tour that includes a day at an amusement park, etc.

**6** Build relationships! Many of the young men live in a home with no father, thus missing having a male role model. Some are not athletes or top scholars. You as the teacher can become that adult role model and provide that place in their school day where that young man can flourish individually and be part of something successful and fun.

**7** I've found over these many years that **establishing a successful program and reputation for excellence is a draw in itself.** Where in the early years, 10-15 kids would sign up for the Men's Choir class and I would recruit 20-30 more to fill the class, now, typically, anywhere from 70-100 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys have already signed up, so I only recruit a few more using the lists of recommended students that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade vice principals have provided. Most of those new boys have not sung in a choir before—they didn't participate in elementary school or middle school—but they've heard that Men's Choir is the thing to be in at Napa High: no homework, easy A, a chance to go to Disneyland, but, ultimately, respect on campus for being in a group that everybody in the community (school and town) knows does good stuff.

## Final Thoughts

From the start of my teaching career, I set goals for the number of men I wanted in my program. To be honest, some of this goal setting early on for male enrollment was motivated by the fear of running out of boys

to fill the choirs to do the music I wanted to teach and conduct. The first goal was starting a men's choir with twenty kids. The next year, I set a goal of 30 kids in Men's Choir and 50 boys in the entire program. The year after, 45 kids in Men's Choir and 70 in the entire program. After many years, the final goal was 200 men in the program. I've found that working hard towards those goals was worth it as it motivated me to do whatever I needed to do to reach those numbers and continuously expand the program.

I also made sure to bring in great male role models who were great choral musicians and who I knew related well as musicians and interacted well personally with high school kids. I found out later that I needed to bring in great female directors as well, because many of the guys needed to learn manners, graciousness, and show respect when learning from and interacting with women. Many come from homes where respect and interaction with other adults is a missing element in their upbringing. Bringing in guest directors is a huge plus in introducing the kids to wonderful people and musicians, and in instilling how one treats guests in our space.

**I made sure to bring in great male role models. I brought in great female directors as well, because many of the guys needed to learn manners, graciousness, and respect when interacting with women.**

Finally, be aware that all young people need to find their passion, something that they are good at and love. So many of our kids have not found that passion yet—for many it is singing, it's just that they (and you) don't know it yet. Be proactive in going out to meet kids and parents at school and community events. Be visible and make your kids visible as a class act representing your school and community. It's hard work, but the rewards are great—making wonderful choral music with kids that you have introduced to the magic we know and love and having the satisfaction of having made a positive difference in a young person's life that can last a lifetime. Mike Scheibe (now the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Southern California) did that for me. Now you go and do it for those boys (and girls too) whose lives you can change through choral singing!

## Introducing... Repertoire & Resources

**Cari Earnhart**  
*R&R Chair*



Greetings from California's Central Valley! I would like to begin with a sincere "Thank you" to many of you who have given this native Texan such a warm welcome to California and the Western Division. In just a couple of months, I have already seen the strength and collegiality of this division's choral community. I am hopeful that the diversity of my musical experiences will help me to better serve you. I look forward to the opportunity to meet you all and am honored to serve as the Western Division's Chair of Repertoire and Resources (Repertoire Specific).

### What does R & R chair mean?

Our organization has given a new name to one of our longstanding working areas. The former **Repertoire and Standards** is now **Repertoire and Resources**. It is the hope of ACDA that this new title will better reflect the intentions of the organization.

**The Choral Repertoire and Resources Committee shall seek to improve the quality of choral performance and literature in the United States.**  
*Article XIII, Section 4, ACDA Bylaws (source: acda.org)*

The Repertoire and Resources (R&R) areas provide support, vision, and resources for every major area of choral work. The committees will play an important role in serving their perspective choral areas. R & R will provide:

- Repertoire and literature recommendations
- Documents and resources
- Leadership and information
- Networking among colleagues
- Maintenance of excellent standards among colleagues
- Professional development opportunities
- Promotion of choral music performance and participation

My area of **Repertoire Specific** will focus on overseeing our representatives for: Contemporary Commercial, Multicultural/Ethnic Music, Men's Choirs, Women's Choirs and Vocal Jazz. As we move forward, I welcome the challenge of working together with you to promote the three Cs of ACDA's primary efforts: Collaboration, Community and Commitment.

**Dr. Cari Earnhart** serves as the Director of Choral Activities at California State University, Fresno. A native Texan, she comes to California from the United Arab Emirates where she was Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Voice at the American University of Sharjah. She combines careers as a conductor, teacher, and singer and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator. Earnhart has conducted choirs in the US and while living and working in Europe and the Middle East. A mezzo-soprano, she began her professional singing career in New York City and has performed professionally in the US and abroad. Her passions of research include Arabic choral music, choral music of Latin America and vocal epidemiology.



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## CONCERT SEASON 2016-2017

### "NEW BEGINNINGS" – FALL CONCERT

Thursday, October 27, 7:30 pm (UNLV)

### 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MADRIGAL-CHAMBER CHOIR FESTIVAL

Friday, November 4, 4:00 & 7:00 pm (UNLV)

### "REAL MEN SING" – MEN'S CHORUS FESTIVAL

Saturday, November 5, 4:00 pm (Desert Oasis H.S.)

### "DUSK UNTIL DAWN" – WINTER CONCERT

Thursday, December 1, 7:30 pm (UNLV)

### "HOLIDAYS WITH THE MASTER SINGERS"

Friday, December 9, evening (location TBA)

Saturday, December 10, evening (location TBA)

### "CABRERA CONDUCTS

#### THE MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS"

with the LAS VEGAS PHILHARMONIC

Saturday, March 4, 7:30 pm

Sunday, March 5, 2:00 pm

(The Smith Center for the Performing Arts)

### "CABRERA CONDUCTS BRAHMS"

with the LAS VEGAS PHILHARMONIC

"Ein Deutsches Requiem"

Saturday, April 1, 7:30 pm

(The Smith Center for the Performing Arts)

### CHAMBER CHORALE SPRING TOUR

April 6-11 (Itinerary TBA)

### BAROQUE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Thursday, April 20, 7:30 pm (UNLV)

### CHAMBER CHORALE HOME CONCERT

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- **EXCEL**, appearing by invitation at divisional conferences of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and at regional and state conferences of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).
- **GROW** together, maintaining an active, collaborative, and dedicated student chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.
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## State Reports

### Nevada

**Kim Ritzer**  
*President, Nevada ACDA*



The Nevada Chapter of ACDA has been continuously growing and trying to reach out to all choral directors in our wonderful state. We have joined the Sing Up Initiative and have opted in the ACDA Conference Scholarships for Students.

We have quite a busy year planned trying to help teachers earn contact units for their time spent in workshops and rehearsals for special events. We are a co-sponsor of the **Clark County School District's High School Honor Choir** and the sole sponsor for the **Clark County Middle School Honor Choir**. Auditions for both of those events were completed at the end of September with the selected Honor Choirs rehearsing during October. Our **Honor Choir Concert** will be on October 25, 2016, on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The guest conductors will be Victor C. Johnson (Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts) for the middle school and Dr. Steve Zielke (Oregon State University). Our Clark County teachers can earn contact units toward salary advancement by helping with the rehearsals leading up to the arrival of the conductors. We are looking forward to a wonderful experience for the students and teachers involved.

**Our NV ACDA annual mini-conference** will be held on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, in Las Vegas. We feel very fortunate to have Dr. Joseph Modica (University of Redlands) as our headliner. He will be presenting a keynote address, reading session, conducting workshop and clinics for three choirs (children's, middle school and high school). Contact units are being offered for this event, as well.

**Our End of the School Year ACDA event** will be a reading session/appetizer night in June. All of our state R & S chairs will select 3 pieces to share that evening. This is the second time we will be holding this event, due to the attendance and enthusiasm of the members who attended.

**Timberline Middle School Troubadors**  
Cathy Jolley, *conductor*

### Utah

**Reed Criddle**  
*President, ACDA Utah*



I am constantly reminded what charmed lives we lead as we introduce musical art to those around us. What an intense opportunity and responsibility this is to be arbiters of culture in our spheres of influence as we select the music we teach. Equally influential is the way we present that literature: the methods, the reverence, and the collaborative spirit with which we interact with our fellow musicians. As one History major said to me yesterday, "Often when I return home from a choir rehearsal, my wife says to me: 'You had UVU Chamber Choir rehearsal today, didn't you? You just seem lighter and have a bright countenance. What were you singing today?'"

That spirit of renewal and joyful creativity is what we are sure to encounter at the upcoming **ACDA-Utah state conference, Utah Sings!** Hosted by the University of Utah on October 21 & 22, 2016, the conference will feature many outstanding guest conductors and presenters, including Sharon Paul (University of Oregon), Henry Leck (Indianapolis Children's Choir; Butler University), Craig Jessop (Utah State University), Michael Huff (Snow College), Cory Evans (Utah State University), and Mack Wilberg (Mormon Tabernacle Choir).

**Utah Sings!** will also feature the following performing ensembles, selected by blind, peer-review audition:

**Treble Honor Choir**

Sharon Paul, *conductor*

**Interfaith Choir**

Michael Huff, *conductor*

**Millennial Choir and Orchestra**

Cory Mendenhall, Brett Stewart, Brandon Stewart, Joni Jensen, Brent Wells, *conductors*

**Corner Canyon High School Cadence**

Melissa Thorne, *conductor*

**Atlanta's Chorale - New Creation**

Tony Thompson, *conductor*

**Alpine Boys Honor Choir**

Henry Leck, *conductor*

### **Timpanogos Chamber Singers**

Steve Durtschi, *conductor*

### **Consortium**

Rex Kocherhans, *artistic director*

### **Lux Singers**

Leland Spindler, *conductor*

### **Brigham Young University Women's Choir**

Jean Applonie, *conductor*

### **Duly Noted**

Robert Seely, *artistic director*

### **Utah Baroque Ensemble**

Martha Sargent, *conductor*

### **Provo High School Chamber Singers**

Kenny Wisner, *conductor*

### **Brevitas**

Matthew Nielsen, *conductor*

### **Utah Valley University Chamber Choir**

Reed Criddle, *conductor*

The ACDA-Utah board is also delighted to announce that **all nine institutions of higher education in Utah will be performing Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* as a combined Intercollegiate Choir**, guest conducted by Craig Jessop. They will be accompanied by Clay Christensen (staff organist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir).

The participating collegiate choirs include:

### **Brigham Young University Singers**

Andrew Crane, *conductor*

### **Dixie State University Chamber Singers**

Roger Hale, *conductor*

### **Salt Lake Community College Chamber Singers**

Lyle Archibald, *conductor*

### **Snow College Cadence Chamber Choir**

Michael Huff, *conductor*

### **Southern Utah University Opus Chamber Choir**

Steven Meredith, *conductor*

### **University of Utah Chamber Choir**

Barlow Bradford, *conductor*

### **Utah State University Chamber Singers**

Cory Evans, *conductor*

### **Utah Valley University Chamber Choir**

Reed Criddle, *conductor*

### **Westminster Chamber Singers**

Christopher Quinn, *conductor*

There is no doubt that Utah SINGS! What a tremendous celebration of song this will be. We welcome ACDA members near and far to join in the fun. Pre-register at [acdaautah.org](http://acdaautah.org).

**I am also thrilled to introduce to you our ACDA-Utah president-elect, Camille Kingman.** Camille is one of Utah's star music educators, and I count it a blessing to have her teaching at Orem Junior High School, only five minutes from my institution. She is adored by her school community ([http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/schools/ot-camille-kingman/article\\_386ed15e-71f2-5596-be26-25c2e4232f9a.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/schools/ot-camille-kingman/article_386ed15e-71f2-5596-be26-25c2e4232f9a.html)) and by her state choral community. We look forward to a bright future under her leadership!

# 36th Annual International Course



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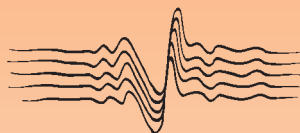
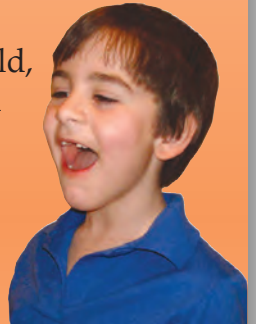
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