

Varsity Singers light up PA Capitol



By Gary Weckselblatt

The energy in the Pennsylvania Capitol wasn't radiating from the 18-foot Douglas Fir that Gov. Tom Wolf and First Lady Frances Wolf lit during Thursday's annual tree lighting ceremony.

No, the energy flowing in the rotunda came from the melodious tones on the marble steps. The marvelous voices belong to the students who make up the Quakertown Community High School Varsity Singers.

"This was a blast," said choral director Jonathan Lechner. "It was an honor to be invited. It's a great opportunity for the kids. I'm awfully proud of them. This is one of the

strongest groups we've had."

The governor's office invited the Quakertown choir to be the only entertainment for the traditional event. Songs included:

- It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas
- Oh Christmas Tree
- Oh Come, All Ye Faithful
- We Wish You A Merry Christmas
- Jingle Bells
- Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Wolf's staff became familiar with the Varsity Singers a year ago when

Sen. Bob Mensch, whose district includes Quakertown, invited them to go caroling through the hallways during the holiday season. The talented voices were well received, and the governor's staff remembered.

Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner was contacted last month by the governor's office, and the performance was arranged.

State Sen. John DiSanto, whose district includes most of Dauphin County and all of Perry County described the students' show as "wonderful. It was such a strong performance. It brought a lot to the

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community and everybody was singing along." The senator was kind enough to provide the students with bags of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups.

It was a long day for the young people, who took a school bus from the high school at 8:30 a.m. for their noon performance. They practiced after their 10 a.m. arrival, and after lunch in the Capitol building, at the urging of Dr. Harner, sang in the cafeteria area for the appreciative public.

Later Thursday evening, the Varsity Singers entertained the School Board in the District Services Center, and even had Dr. Harner dress up as the Grinch for one of their numbers.

School Board member Rob Diliberto, who traveled to Harrisburg to see the students, said of the performances: "I got goosebumps. It was great."

Dr. Harner commended the singers and Mr. Lechner for their excellent work. He said the district's music program, including band director Frank Parker, is "second to none."

Governor and Mrs. Wolf certainly agree!

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