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Alhorn Association of North America

<http://www.alhornassociation.org/>

*The Official
Newsletter of the
AANA*

Welcome to our first issue of the 2025 year. In this issue you will see reviews of events from 2024 and early 2025, Bill Hopson's review/endorsement of the new edition (translation and editing) of Gassmann's seminal alhorn book *s'AlhornBüechli*, a link to an article about the application of Alexander Technique to performance on the alhorn, and listing with contact information for upcoming summer 2025 events in North America. Thank you for reading, and if you have any suggestions, short articles for future issues or updated event information, drop me a line at rosebone@icloud.com !



Bill Rose, Editor

Alhorn Institute 2024 Year in Review

2024 was a great year for the Alhorn Institute. We hosted three of our own events and were able to attend four others in our mission to spread the joy of alhorn playing.

The first event of the year was the 3rd annual Windy City Alhorn Workshop (May 15-18). We spent three days rehearsing at Lake Forest College with instructors Dr. Natalie Grana, Brian Priebe, and Laura Nelson. In addition to the rehearsals, there were two performances. The first was on Friday at the Lake Bluff Gazebo where small group pieces were shared for a Maifest celebration. On Saturday, the group performed as part of the 100th anniversary for the American Aid Society of German Descendants.



William Rose, editor
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The second event was the 2nd annual Blue Ridge Alphorn Workshop (June 13 -16). Our home base was the beautiful Penmerryl Farm in Greenville, Virginia where Brian Priebe and Laura Nelson guided the group lessons. On Saturday the afternoon rehearsal was hosted at Barren Ridge Vineyards, and on Sunday final concert took place at Stablecraft Brewing.

The third event was the 17th annual North American Alphorn Retreat (August 7-10). Under the tutelage of Bill Hopson, Brian Priebe, and Jim Hopson (with guest conductors Dr. Peggy DeMers and Bill Rose) there were three great days of rehearsing in the historic Cottonwood High School auditorium. In the evenings, group meals were shared at a few local restaurants in Salt Lake City. For the final Concert, the ensemble performed on the opening day of the 52nd Oktoberfest at the Snowbird Ski Resort.



In addition to the events that hosted by the Alphorn Institute, AI also had the privilege of participating in several events around the country. In May AI attended the Northwest Alphorn Workshop in Leavenworth, WA; in June, the International Trumpet Guild conference in Anaheim, CA; and in July, the first annual Tahoe Alphorn Experience at UNR-Lake Tahoe as well as the International Horn Symposium in Fort Collins Colorado.

Thank you to everyone who participated in these events. It is a true pleasure to see all of the alphorn friends around the country and meet the alphorn players that are catching the bug every year.



The Alphorn Institute looks forward to a similarly busy schedule this summer, and we can't wait to see all of you along the way. The official dates of this year's alphorn institute events will be posted soon. For more information, visit us at www.alphorninstitute.com.

Robert R. Brazelton
Executive Director, Alphorn Institute

The Inaugural Midwinter Alphorn Workshop

The inaugural Midwinter Alphorn Workshop, hosted by Daniel Fuertges and the German American Central Society (GACS) of Peoria, took place Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2025 in Peoria, IL. It brought together Alphorn enthusiasts for a weekend of music, culture, and community. Featuring guest artist Dr. Peggy DeMers, the event was a celebration of both musical artistry and German heritage.



The GACS Culture Committee is dedicated to promoting and maintaining Deutsche Kultur through performing arts and other cultural activities. Their regular programs include the Deutsche Stammtisch, held every second Friday of the month at the Lindenhof Friday dinner, where guests can practice their German language skills in song with their German band. Additionally, the committee screens subtitled German films throughout the year and sponsors the annual Maifest.

The Lindenhof Echoes, a group of dedicated Alphorn players, contribute to preserving and celebrating German culture by performing at festivals and other events throughout the year. Their commitment to this traditional Alpine instrument adds a unique and authentic musical experience to GACS gatherings.

The workshop kicked off on Friday with a memorable flash-mob-style concert at the Illinois All-State Music Educators Association, captivating an audience of 200. Later that evening, participants gathered for an authentic German dinner hosted by GACS at the Lindenhof, where they had the opportunity to showcase their Alphorn skills in small group performances during the German band's intermissions.



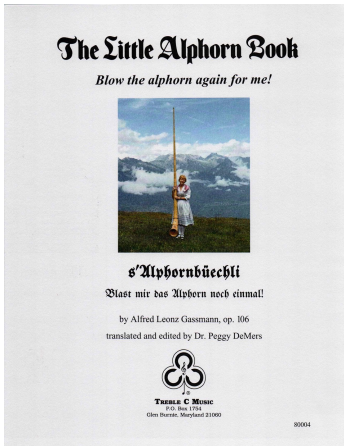
Saturday's full-day workshop, led by Dr. Peggy DeMers, offered a comprehensive exploration of Alphorn technique and repertoire. Participants engaged in intensive studies focused on refining their sound and performance skills. One of the highlights of the day was Dr. DeMers' video lecture, "The Alphorn in the 21st Century – 18th Century." This lecture provided a historical perspective on the instrument's evolution and contemporary significance. The weekend culminated in a Saturday evening concert where attendees demonstrated their newfound skills in a showcase of Alphorn music.

The inaugural Midwinter Alphorn Workshop was a resounding success, bringing together musicians and cultural enthusiasts in a shared celebration of this ancient traditional art form. With strong support from GACS and the Lindenhof Echoes, the event not only strengthened the Alphorn community but also reinforced the vibrant cultural heritage upheld by the society. Plans are already underway for future workshops, ensuring that the Alphorn continues to resonate in Peoria for years to come. Bravo to Daniel Fuertges for all his work in making this first workshop in Peoria a success!

IL Allstate flash mob: <https://www.facebook.com/509190942/videos/pcb.9669880846369389/972090091518255>

Dr. Peggy DeMers

Review/Endorsement of s'AlphornBüechli



Alphorn Friends,

This is my heartfelt endorsement of Peggy DeMers' excellent English translation of "s'AlphornBüechli" (The Little Alphorn Book) by Alfred Lorenz Gassmann.

The Little Alphorn Book is Gassmann's collection of Alphorn music, history and tradition that could have been so easily lost but for his monumental effort. We owe him a great debt, and Dr. DeMers as well for her faithful translation.

The Little Alphorn Book was first published in 1938. A. L. Gassmann was a music teacher and administrator in Berne Switzerland. His passion was Alphorn. He visited every corner of Switzerland collecting Alphorn melodies and folklore. The melodies in this collection include the traditional "all is well" signals played by the shepherds, the daily "milking time" calls to bring in the cows, the "Jutz" expressions of spontaneous joy, and the tragic and

beautiful "Uf em Rossberg" composed by Gassmann himself after a rockslide on that mountain took many lives. The time that you spend with this book is fundamental in understanding where our instrument came from and what it means to the Swiss.

The characterful music is our main interest, but a feature of the Little Alphorn Book is the "Rules of Alphorn Blowing". From the first "Put your Backside to the Mountain" (which is my free translation) it is full of charming and spirited folklore. It is a product of its time and some of the rules may be constraining to the modern player, but Gassmann reminds us that the Alphorn is at its best played outdoors, just after sunset when the air gets still, as the shepherds played it for their sheep. The only real rule of Alphorn blowing is to make the music beautiful, and evocative; to play what is in your heart.

Tchuus!

Bill Hopson

The AlphornBüechli is available at:

TREBLE C MUSIC
P.O. Box 1754, Glen Burnie, MD 21060-1754
(410) 507-1284

<https://www.treblecmusic.com/product-page/the-little-alphorn-book-blow-the-alphorn-again-for-me>

Link to: Alexander Technique and the Alphorn

<https://www.alphornassociation.org/atandthealphorn>

A Hack for Alphorn Mastery by Sean Slatter and Stasia Forsythe Siena, MA, AmSAT

When people ask me how I was able to learn the fundamentals of the alphorn with no prior musical training, my answer is: I hacked it. There are two alphorn hacks that I recommend every individual incorporate into their pursuit of mastering the alphorn: solfège (which will be described in subsequent articles) and the Alexander Technique. If you are serious about mastering the alphorn (or any motor skill) AT is a performance optimization methodology that will be transformative to your work...

Summer 2025 Alphorn Events in North America

(All North American events require the use of an F alphorn. Generally, there is a small number of horns in F available for rent at these events. If there are questions, contact the organizers.)

2025 NORTHWEST ALPHORN WORKSHOP AND FESTIVAL

Memorial Day weekend, May 22-25, 2025. Gathering in the beautiful Bavarian—themed town of Leavenworth, WA. Workshop fees are \$200/individual, or \$300 for self and spouse/partner/family member. Registration fees includes all group instruction, Thursday Meet 'n Greet (snacks/beverages), Friday evening BBQ dinner, Saturday Bratwurst lunch, and Alphorn Workshop T-shirt. Faculty includes Dr. Natalie Grana, Laura Nelson, Dr. Peggy DeMers, Dr. Yannick Wey and Jim Hopson. They will be hosting the first annual gathering of the [Alphorn Association of North America](https://leavenworthalphorns.org/nw-alphorn-workshop) (AANA).
<https://leavenworthalphorns.org/nw-alphorn-workshop>

2025 WINDY CITY ALPHORN WORKSHOP

May 14–17, 2025. Rehearsals and classes will be held at Lake Forest College on Chicago's north shore. Our finale performance will be on May 17th. This year's faculty includes Dr. Natalie Grana, Tony Brazelton, Laura Nelson, Brian Priebe, and Robert Brazelton. Standard registration is \$375 and the cost to rent an alphorn is \$25 for the duration of the workshop. Discounted student registration (elementary – post graduate) is \$275 and includes free alphorn rental.
<https://www.alphorninstitute.com/windy-city-alphorn-workshop>

BLUE RIDGE ALPHORN WORKSHOP

June 12–15, 2025. Home base for the weekend is the beautiful [Penmerryl Farm](https://www.alphorninstitute.com/copy-of-northwest-alphorn-workshop) where there are a multitude of opportunities for enjoying our horns in their natural setting including 5.5 miles of hiking trails and a private lake. The price for the Blue Ridge Alphorn Workshop is \$475. This fee includes all group lessons, as well as 3 dinners during the workshop. There is a discounted rate of \$375 for students enrolled in elementary school- post graduate. The fee for non-playing guests is \$150, this rate includes all of the meals during the retreat. The price to rent a horn for the duration of the retreat is \$25. The Alphorn Institute members leading this year's Blue Ridge Alphorn Workshop are Tony Brazelton, Brian Priebe, Laura Nelson and Robert Brazelton.
<https://www.alphorninstitute.com/copy-of-northwest-alphorn-workshop>

MIDWEST ALPHORN RETREAT

July 23rd–July 27th, 2025 at the Franciscan Life Process Center, Lowell, MI (15 miles east of the Grand Rapids Airport). Dr. Peggy DeMers, Artistic Director and Educator/Instructor, and William Rose, Assistant Educator/Instructor. All on-campus housing has been filled; however there are many excellent hotels in the Grand Rapids area. Fees: \$975 all-inclusive fee for retreat (on-campus housing, meals, private & group lessons, all group activities); \$400 for non-performing family member (on-campus housing with spouse, meals & all group activities); \$675 for retreat commuter (meals, private & group lessons, all group activities); \$200 for non-performing commuter family member (meals & all group activities). Registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_cfu6TcMeLvG9GoJ69SsJpXObA5vySyjaiU2mIzu87p33IQ/viewform?usp=header

NORTH AMERICAN ALPHORN RETREAT

August 6th–August 9th, 2025 in Salt Lake City, UT. The final concert will take place as part of Snowbird's Oktoberfest. The price for the North American Alphorn Retreat is \$375. This fee includes all group lessons. There is a discounted rate of \$275 for students enrolled in elementary school- post graduate. The retreat is taught using alphorns in the key of F. The price to rent a horn for the duration of the retreat is \$25. <https://www.alphorninstitute.com/north-american-alphorn-retreat>

TAHOE ALPHORN EXPERIENCE

Tentative dates for the Tahoe Alphorn Experience are Thurs. Oct. 2– Mon. Oct. 6, 2025. These may be extended to allow for more hiking! For more information, and updates on registration fees, etc. please contact Brandi Jones at sierrahorns@gmail.com . website: <https://sierrahorns.org/tahoe-alphorn-experience.html>

•**For Submissions to the AANA Newsletter:**

please submit your article to Bill Rose rosebone@icloud (submission guidelines – three to four paragraphs, and anywhere from two to four pictures of the event).

•**For submissions to the Google Calendar of events:**

Contact Brandi Jones sierrahorns@gmail.com

•**Google Calendar of events link:**

[Calendar](#)

Cheers, and Happy Blowing!

Bill Rose

