

# The Quechee Times

Good People Good Places — Good Things Happening

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## Dartmouth Gospel Choir Director Prepares to Launch the Quechee Music Festival

Justine Earnest

**E**cclectic. That's one word Walter "Walt" Cunningham Jr.—choir director of the Dartmouth College Gospel Choir and a fairly new resident of Quechee—uses to describe himself; and he does so several times throughout our interview.



Photo Courtesy of Dartmouth College

Founder and overseer of Dartmouth Idol, Walt Cunningham. The sixth annual Dartmouth Idol competition was held March 8th, 2013. Vocalists sang one solo with a 10-piece band and duets with their competitors. Read more at Dartmouth Now. (Photo by Eli Burakian '00)

While listening to Cunningham—who now splits his time between Quechee and Chicago—talk about his background and life, I couldn't help but agree with him.

A 1987 West Point graduate from Waterloo, Iowa, who chose the military academy over Julliard despite his long-time passion for music, Cunningham spent 16–17 years in the corporate sector working for Pfizer, Inc., Wilson Learning, and even as a top regional salesman for Viagra, before accepting a job at Dartmouth College.

Growing up, he developed an interest in music early on. His parents first recognized his music ability when he was four years old after he taught himself to play an old organ in their basement.

*Continued on page 8*

## The Quechee Club Welcomes New General Manager Tim Lewis

**T**he Quechee Club is pleased to welcome a new general manager to oversee the management and finances of the club.

Tim Lewis, formerly of the Alto Lakes Golf and Country Club in Alto, New Mexico, was recently selected from a pool of more than 20 applicants. Lewis has a long history in the private club industry, getting his first job at a club at the age of 16. He has been a general manager since he was 27 and has extensive experience enhancing family-oriented amenities, fostering a welcoming environment for both staff and members, and keeping down expenses.

"We are extremely excited that Tim is joining Quechee as General Manager and COO [Chief Operating Office]. His extensive background in golf communities and marketing will be a real asset," said Quechee Club President John Ferney. "We owe our thanks to the Search Committee who did a terrific job in matching our requirements against the various candidates."

*Continued on page 10*



## From Quechee to Zermatt

David Barrell

**J**ustin Barrell was born February 26, 1982. I, his dad David, would tuck him in a backpack and ski down the trails and slopes of the Quechee Ski Hill. At 22 months his mother and I took him to Pico Mountain for his first true day on skis – many days that winter he enjoyed sliding down the Quechee beginner trails, and within a couple of years, he was in the starting gate at Quechee races.

He lettered for four straight years on the Lebanon High School Ski Team and following his graduation from St. Michael's College, Justin

went to live in Snowbird, Utah. His passion for skiing has never ebbed.

Last year I asked Justin to join me and a small group



Justin Barrell at age 5 or 6 in the starting gate on the Quechee Ski Hill.

of fellow ski journalists on a weeklong trip to Zermatt, Switzerland. He immediately jumped at the opportunity and it was then that I learned that Snowbird and Zermatt are sister ski resorts, owing to Snowbird's founder Dick Bass' fondness for mountain climbing and his earlier climbs up the Matterhorn.

Zermatt is a wonderful all-inclusive alpine resort with 55 lifts and hundreds of miles of skiterrain. Other resorts have great lift systems and immense terrain; only Zermatt has the omni-present Matterhorn.

*Continued on page 23*

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**From Quechee to Zermatt**—continued from page 1

Joining us on the trip was Eric Janson of Lebanon, NH who has been a regular ski patroller at Quechee and who had skied with me and Justin at Snowbird.

Neither Justin nor Eric had skied in Europe, although both had skied extensively throughout the U.S. and Canada, so it was extra special for me to show Switzerland to them both. If you have never skied in Europe, the first change you'll notice is that most skiing is done above tree line, because the Alps are actually lower in altitude than most mountains in the Rockies. Also, the trails are marked descents down the mountain as opposed to trails cut into the trees. Because of the absence of trees, there is less definition and on cloudy or snowy days, visibility can be a problem. Fortunately for our group we had great amounts of sunshine with the Matterhorn always visible. Some skiers never saw the Matterhorn in an entire ski week.

Zermatt is next door to Cervinia, Italy and one day our group was scheduled to ski into Italy and have lunch with the head of the Cervinia Tourist Bureau. Mid-way during our tram ride we were informed that high winds prevented the normal ascent to the summit and that only a very long t-bar could access the route down into Italy. The group decided to forego the Italian connection; except for Eric, Justin and me. About half way up the very long T-bar, I was seriously questioning the wisdom of our decision. Bitter cold and 30 mph winds will make cowards of us all. No way to bail, so we hung on and then began the long descent down into Italy, with the wind blowing up the mountain. At one point we unfolded the trail map in the wind and realized we didn't know where we were or where to go. A small mountain hut, at about 9000 feet, was a few hundred meters away so we hiked to it for warmth. What a lucky find. The hot tea was a godsend, but the proprietress of the Baita Grand Sometta also knew who we were supposed to meet and called him on her cell phone and worked out a plan for us to meet at a restaurant high on the mountain. Before



we left she said to make sure to get a copy of the February Bon Appetite as they were being featured for mountain cuisine- sure enough ten pages were devoted to mountain dining in Cervinia and this tiny hut in the middle of nowhere that three cold skiers just stumbled upon.

Because we had skied down the wrong trail, we had to descend all the way to the valley and then ride a lift up to the alpine restaurant. Upon arrival, our very grateful host, Enrico, made sure that the maitre'd kept our wine glasses full as waiters served a typical six course lunch. Somehow, we skied back to Zermatt and down into the village just as the lifts stopped running. Cold, tired and superbly satiated, we retired to our hotel, The Perren, for another Swiss dinner. With all of the meats and cheeses consumed one would expect obesity to be rampant. Nope, the Swiss and Italians we encountered were all fit. There are no motorized vehicles allowed in Zermatt except public transportation. They walk everywhere, no matter the season.

One day, the three of us opted for some off piste skiing (off the trails in untouched powder). You don't dare do it on your own lest you end up at the bottom of an avalanche, so Justin and Eric scouted up a guide. Rudi is from Austria and is a true mountaineer, teaching and guiding in the summer, skiing in the winter. We were pleased to have his 25 years of experience to show us parts of Zermatt that most skiers do not see or ski. Following our day with Rudi, Justin, who skis with many high-end skiers in Utah, remarked, "Dad, he can really ski."

horn, the highest cable car in the world, range from five to eight miles. Because of Zermatt's high altitude, it boasts the longest ski season of all resorts in Europe.

Following our magical stay in Zermatt, we took the train back to Zurich and stayed an extra day before our Air Swiss flight home. I had been to Zurich previously, but to have a leisurely day to explore was an eye-opener. Zurich is known for being a commerce and financial center, but being situated on a river and lake, the city is stunningly beautiful and boasts more than 50 museums, 100 art galleries, 1200 fountains, plus the haute couture shops and myriad of great restaurants. This is a cosmopolitan city that competes with the great cities of the world.

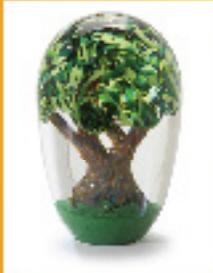
Sharing Zermatt and Switzerland with my son, whom I introduced to skiing 30 years ago at Quechee, was an especially rewarding experience. ■

My favorite mode of transportation at Zermatt was the trains, especially the cog railway called the Gornergrat which ascends to the top of the ski terrain from the village of Zermatt. You can use the train instead of chairlifts or cable cars; it is much more relaxing. Take off your skis, hang up your parka and get rejuvenated for the next long run. The longest runs from the Klein Matter-

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