



Associated Male Choruses of America, Inc.

THE
chorister
Newsletter



egan@amcofa.net

<http://amcofa.net/>

October, 2005

AMCA Officers

Chairman

Ric Addenbrooke

Vice Chairman

Ron Stenzel

NYP Representative

Robin Pinkney

WUM Representative

Bill Rowe

UMD Representative

Paul Carlton

Treasurer

Norbert Lehmann

Executive Director

Jim Egan

Legal Counsel

Paul M. Hassett, Jr.

**Common Repertoire
& Reviewer**

vacant

Historian

vacant

Scholarship Chair

Bob Torborg

Web Manager

David Thomas

Chorister Editor

Ed Armbruster

ed_armbruster@msn.com

New Executive Director

The Associated Male Choruses of America is happy to announce the appointment of a new Executive Secretary! Jim Egan, long-time member of the Associated, and current member of the Cold Spring (MN) Area Männerchor, has accepted this responsibility. The members of the AMCA welcome Jim with a big “thank you” for taking on this task, and wish him well in his endeavors.

Jim was born in Hoffman, Minnesota, and started singing for relatives at the age of three. He grew up in Eden Valley, MN. He enjoyed music in school and while he was in the third grade, was asked by his music teacher to join the senior church choir. He sang soprano in that choir until he entered high school when he switched from soprano to bass without missing any weekly rehearsals. After serving in the US Army, in 1965 he began a thirty-three year career with 3M, starting in New Ulm, MN, where he also began singing with the Concord Singers. In 1980, after completing a college degree in Business Administration at Minnesota State University in Mankato, MN, he transferred with 3M to St. Paul. There he began singing with the 3M Male Chorus. He retired from 3M in 1998 but continued singing with the 3MMC until 2002. He and his wife Kathy then moved to a lake home near Richmond, MN. Here he began singing with the Cold Spring Area Männerchor, which brings us to the present time.

All three male choruses were members of the AMCA. He often joked that he would not move to a town that didn't have an AMCA chorus. He has been a regular attendee at the International AMCA meetings since 1982 and is also currently a trustee of the AMCA Scholarship Fund.

Ed Armbruster

In Memoriam – George Pecor

On the evening of August 19, George Pecor, immediate past president of AMCA International, Vice President of Wisconsin Upper Michigan District, and President of the Milwaukee Male Chorus, fell down the basement steps, hit his head on the floor, was rushed to the hospital and did not make it through surgery. We extend our sympathy and prayers to George's family. His presence and his experience will be sorely missed in this organization.

Ed Armbruster

Note from the Chairman

See the latest correspondence from Ric on the AMCA Website, maintained as a “labor of love” by David Thomas:

http://amcofa.net/x/05Evaluate_Addenbrooke.shtml.

New AMC of A Organization

You may have noticed a significant change in the officer box on page one. The list reflects the new organizational structure approved by the membership last year. Each district has one representative, and the chairman and vice chairman are at-large representatives. The process for choosing the representatives is somewhat complicated, but this is the final result. Contact any of the officers if you'd like a more thorough explanation. The first face-to-face meeting of the entire executive committee (including the treasurer and the executive secretary) will be held in conjunction with the NYP Big Sing on November 5th. You can find the tentative agenda on the password-protected part of the AMCA website.

Ed Armbruster

“Together We Sing”

The Upper Midwest District Big Sing, held in Rochester, Minnesota on April 29-30, was a rousing success, and I believe about every one of the 325 singers, many accompanied by their spouses, enjoyed a marvelous weekend. From the afternoon concerts some of the choruses sang in the new Mayo Clinic Gonda Building to the multi-ethnic Afterglow buffet, everything flowed smoothly.

For the Friday evening adjudicated concert, we had two very experienced judges, Daniel Johnson-Wilmot of Viterbo University (who also happens to be the Rochester director's college music professor) and Weston Noble, in his 56th year at Luther College. The choruses prepared challenging music, as usual, and we noticed a significant improvement in quality over last year. One of the groups sang a number with their members lining the auditorium aisles, instead of being on stage. The adjudicators had useful comments and compliments for all the choruses.

Once again Poppler's Music in Grand Forks, ND provided complementary copies of music for everyone who attended the sight-reading session. The AMC of A very much appreciates their generosity, and we urge member choruses to consider filling their music needs through this store (<http://www.popplersmusic.com/>).

We were pleasantly surprised at the speed of the massed rehearsal. Even the most difficult new song (“Shenandoah”), conducted by a rookie AMC of A director (South St. Paul's Patty Bjorklund), took much less time than we had all anticipated. As a consequence, all the singers had most of the afternoon to enjoy downtown Rochester's shopping and restaurants.

The Saturday evening concert was well-attended (one estimate was about 1300 in the audience), and drew many positive comments from the listeners. The massed numbers included, besides the standard openers, “It's a Grand Night for Singing,” “Bring Him Home,” “Steal Away” (new this year), “Who Are the Brave,” “Stouthearted Men,” “I Hear America Singing,” “Shenandoah” (also new), “Man of La Mancha,” and “The Awakening.” We were also treated to solos by South St. Paul, Staples, Clark County, Sine Wave (formerly 3M), Eagan and the host chorus, Rochester (celebrating their 75th anniversary this year).

The afterglow was a little different this year. Instead of a sit-down dinner, there were three buffet lines with different ethnic cuisines, which remained open during the whole event. The lines moved quickly, and everyone had as much as they wanted to eat. All the choruses had an opportunity to share some of the “fun music” you don't usually hear at regular concerts.

Thanks to the organizing committee for a wonderful experience. Admittedly, being part of the host chorus makes me a little biased, but I thought this was one of the best-run Sings in my 15-year association with the AMCA (including our last one in Rochester 13 years ago). Scheduling was excellent; we finished on or ahead for every event. Just an example: Rochester was scheduled last of eleven choruses in the adjudicated recital, at 8:20 PM. We started singing at 8:21 PM. That's pretty amazing. The men from Marshall, site of next year's District Big Sing, said they have some big “shoes to fill.” And I think we actually came out of the event in the financial black a little bit!

Ed Armbruster

Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Big Sing

Editor's note: This was the last news item George Pecor submitted before his untimely death.

The weekend of April 29th and 30th brought together the six choruses of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District for their annual District Sing. The Forsyth Singers of Gwinn, MI, at Gwinn High School, hosted this year's event.

Friday night, members of visiting choruses had to split up their groups to be able to attend both a concert by the Marquette Male Chorus at the Marquette Masonic hall and the 75th year Anniversary concert of the Negaunee Male Chorus, our district's oldest chorus. Both concerts held some surprises, but everyone enjoyed them.

At the Negaunee concert, the music was divided into nine segments with one segment for their chosen scholarship winner plus another with a young group called Voices in Motion, performing a Decade Medley of music from the 1970's, 80's and 90's.

The Negaunee Chorus itself did six sections with headings called Opening, Primordial Mist, Down to the River, Dedicated to Those We Love, Decade Dance and Reflections on Freedom. Their Gospel Group called Strictly Gospel, a 20-year tradition within the chorus, did two sets named Strictly Gospel and Spirit Lifting.

The audience was treated to our normal starts plus "The Lost Chord," "River in Judea," "Wade in the Water," "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," "Nessum Dorma," "Mood Indigo," "Without a Song," "Route 66," "Sixteen Tons," "Unchained Melody," "The Great Pretender," "Reach Out, I'll Be There," "Who Are the Brave" and "An American Salute." Gospel offerings were "Jericho," "I Heard It First on the Radio," "Soon and Very Soon," "Long Black Train" and "You Raise Me Up." This, coupled with the scholarship solo and Voices in Motions selections of "Bridge over Troubled Water," "Steam Heat," "Footloose" and "Climbin' Up the Mountain," made for a strong, entertaining evening. I wish I had been able to attend the Afterglow. They even brought back Mary Trolia and Mary Margaret Reichel, two past directors, to share in their celebration.

The Marquette concert at the Masonic Lodge was much more subdued, and more like a traditional concert than a major celebration.

Saturday provided a whole day, beginning with the annual district meeting, which will be covered under separate cover when Steve Butz, secretary/treasurer, files his report. Three main issues were decided. First, the district scholarship increased to \$750, given to a chosen candidate of the host chorus. Next, the itinerary was set for future sings: 2006, Negaunee; 2007, Marquette; 2008, Milwaukee; 2009, Rhinelander; 2010, Munising; and 2011, back to Gwinn. Finally, they published a preliminary notice to upgrade the district by-laws. The directors developed a central theme for the 2006 Sing hosted by Negaunee, "Music of America", and picked mass numbers in line with that theme, including one selection using actual music on stage. This program will also be covered elsewhere.

The annual district sing began with the National Anthem and "Salutation," followed by three mass numbers, "Just a Closer Walk with Thee," "River in Judea," and "I Sing a Song for America." Changing tradition, the Forsyth Singers of Gwinn began the solo numbers with "Let There Be Music," "My Lord and I," and "Luck Be a Lady." The Marquette Chorus followed with "The Pasture," "America, Our Heritage" and "I Believe," while Negaunee sang "The Lost Chord," "You Raise Me Up," and "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face." Before the intermission, the Gwinn High School Barbershop Quartet, with the Scholarship Winner, Emily Stazzinski, closed with "Lida Rose."

After intermission, the Nicollet Chorus from Rhinelander performed "In the Still of the Night," "Halls of Ivy" and "Tribute to the Everly Brothers." Milwaukee followed with "Bring Him Home," "Russian Picnic" and "The Beer 'Can'Tata." Munising closed the solo section with "Man of La Mancha," "Till the Stars Fall from the Sky" and "Mister Cellophane (with Razzle Dazzle)." An additional treat was the Gwinn High School *Mostly Men* who entertained us with "My Heart's in the Highlands" and "Softly, As I Leave You." Three mass numbers closed the concert: "Wade in the Water," "Unchained Melody" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The afterglow followed with a delicious home style meal and a continuation of singing and frivolity.

George Pecor

New Scholarship Chairman

The AMCA is also pleased to announce that Bob Torborg has graciously accepted the position of Scholarship Committee Chairman. While it's too late to grant scholarships this year, Bob has already started the process of screening candidates for next year. Please get your submissions to him! See the AMCA Web site (http://amcofa.net/scholar/fromChair_05Sep.shtml) for details.

Robert H. (Bob) Torborg is 67 years of age, and has been married for 47 years. He and his wife Shirley have two sons and four grandchildren. He and his wife live close to the communities where they both grew up. He served a four-year tour in the U.S. Air Force in the 1950s. His work experience includes over 35 years with a central Minnesota manufacturing firm, starting in Research and Development and finishing as a Senior Product Manager for automated products. During this time he was an advisor for a technical program at the St. Cloud Technical College for a period of 25 years. After "retiring" from this employment, he has been and is performing consulting and training for clients throughout North America. In this activity he writes and publishes all required training texts and support documentation.

His interest in music began at age four with playing the home pedal-organ and an older brother's accordion. School offered singing, including harmony, starting in the 5th grade. His interest and activity in music has continued through today, with participation in the Cold Spring Area Männerchor, where he is currently the Associate Director. During this time he has also been directing area church choirs for a total of 18 years.

Now all we need is a music reviewer to have a solid organization again.

Ed Armbruster

Two New Directors

New directors have been selected at Milwaukee and South St. Paul. Don Crouch, former Milwaukee Male Chorus Director, moved to Minnesota and was contacted by the South St. Paul Male Chorus to replace their one-year director, Patti Bjorklund, who resigned just recently. The Milwaukee Male Chorus had to replace their long-time director, Don Crouch, and selected Rob Clark. Contact information for these people can be located in the AMCA Directory and/or in the AMCA Online Database. Welcome!

Dave Thomas

Tax Exempt Status - Another Look from a Professional

Several messages about tax exemption and 501(c) status apparently came in last winter and the tax advice given in response was inaccurate. The whole issue of our "blanket" exemption is a complicated subject and I frankly don't know what it means and neither does anyone else associated with the AMC of A. Bill Bates and I have had several discussions on the subject and without a copy of our application for exemption (which is nowhere to be found), I don't think anyone can tell to whom our Determination Letter applies. Ric Addenbrooke is also fairly familiar with the problem.

One thing is clear: the tax-exempt status is a function of Federal Law but it requires some state law application relating to organization and operation of a particular chorus. In addition, exemption from income tax by an organization does not guarantee that contributions to that organization are tax deductible by the donor. That's a different issue and doesn't necessarily follow.

The best advice I can give to anyone wondering about our exempt status and its application to individual choruses is to **consult an attorney well-versed in this area of the law and not to pay any attention to what you've heard from others.**

Paul Hassett, AMCA Counsel