

THE chorister

Associated Male Choruses of America

October 2002



“What does AMCA do for me?” These are words you never hear from Tom Rayner. As long as I have known Tom, he has always been interested in what he can do for us and his work has spoken even louder than his words.

The following is from the AMCA web site:

Music has always been an important aspect of my life. My first involvement in choral music was in our church children's choir, then at fourteen I was invited to join the tenor section of the adult church choir. Wow! I have been involved in church choirs ever since. Throughout my 35 years in elementary education, as a teacher, program consultant, and then for the last twenty years of my career as Principal, I continued to work with choirs in each of my schools. My wife and I sing together in two SATB choirs - the Toronto Choristers and our church choir.

About 18 years ago I was invited to join **The Queensmen of Toronto Male Chorus**, and I was "hooked" on male choirs. I have been actively involved as an Executive member for the past 17 years. I have also served 4 years as President of the Ontario District (AMCO) before moving on to AMCA responsibilities. I have had the honour of serving as AMCA Scholarship Chair from 1999 to 2002, and now have assumed the responsibilities of 1st Vice-President of AMCA.

My immediate responsibilities as 1st VP have me chairing several committees. First, a committee is reviewing our **Constitution**. Any member who is familiar with this document is invited to provide input to this committee. What changes would you recommend we consider? I am also chairing a subcommittee of The **Blue Print for**

Progress - "Keys to Chorus Success". I welcome input on this topic as well. What are some features of your Chorus that help to make it so successful? Recruitment of members, fund raising, successful events/happenings undertaken by your chorus, copies of material which you have produced about your chorus, all of which have helped to make your chorus so successful. We want to gather these successful ideas together and share them with all the AMCA member choruses. Please send you thoughts/ideas to me by email or mail, both addresses are available on this Website.

Over the past years we have seen a decline in our membership and in the number of member choruses. This Blue Print for Progress is intended to help "revitalise" AMCA. However, this will only be successful if our members take the time and effort to get involved in this process. I challenge all AMCA members to "get on board" and help strengthen this great association.

I look forward to hearing from many of you. Secondly, I look forward to meeting many of you personally in Lansing at the International Sing. The planning thus far undertaken by Gayle Pohl and her committee has been outstanding. We are all in for a super three days!



WHO IS LEX AXDAHL?

Les began his illustrious career in AMCA leadership roles in 1956 when he was elected President of the (then) Midwest Conference, and automatically became a Vice President of the AMCA.

Then, in 1957, he was elected Governor of the Upper Midwest District, a position he held until 1965. In the early 1960s, the AMCA Treasurer was Jerome Brabb, who held that position until 1965, when some changes occurred in the top leadership of AMCA.

Executive Secretary Guy Stoppert died unexpectedly (heart attack) on March 11, 1965. On the following May 1st, the Board met in Rhinelander, WI and elected Elmer Rehbein to assume the Executive Secretary position. (The AMCA Scholarship Fund was established in memory of Mr. Stoppert.) My research of AMCA meeting minutes indicates that Les Axdahl was elected Treasurer at the fall meeting in 1966.

Beginning in 1966 and ending in 1997, Les served 31 years as AMCA Treasurer -- a very impressive record! At this point in my research, it would appear that he set the longevity record for all AMCA elected officers, including Clayton Old, founder of AMCA (1924-45). Possibly there are others, at the local chorus level, who have held a single office for a longer period or time but no one longer at the International level.

Thanks to Bob Esko (former AMCA VP) for research on this

AMCA ANNOUNCES NEW CHAIR OF SCHOLARSHIP FUND

As Tom Rayner moves on to a Vice President position with AMCA, we have had to look for someone to take on the huge task of chairing the Scholarship Fund. This is arguably the most important committee of the Association because it is a very tangible way we give back to our society and encourage the continuance of male voice singing.

Congratulations to Donald Peterson who comes from the great state of Michigan (home of my beloved Detroit Red Wings (sorry Leaf fans).

**Don can be reached at:
525 Barton Road, Williamston, MI, 48895
scholarship@amcachorus.org**



The chaplain at my children's school gave them an interesting message the other day. He said that the most important part of our lives is the dashes. On our gravestones it will list our date of birth and our date of death. In between will be a dash. It's what we do with the dash that's important.