



Associated Male Choruses of America, Inc.



THE chorister

Newsletter

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AMCA Officers

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Vacant

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Don Crouch

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Promotional Items

Norm Goodling

Chorister Editor

Vacant

HELP!

We need your help and support. I think the Chorister is important and critical to the growth of the AMCA. As you may know, the Ontario District has withdrawn from the AMCA. Many of us do not agree with their decision, but there are many factors. Since they have withdrawn, I emailed each Canadian chorus an affiliate membership form so their members may choose to affiliate if they wish. When I prepared the applications, I went to the Wall Street Journal and found that the exchange rate that day was 1.335 Canadian dollars to 1 US dollar. I do not know what the purchasing power of their dollar is compared to the same items we buy in the US, but I think it could have been a major factor.

With their withdrawal, we lost many experienced leaders, including Dan Plunkett, the previous editor of the Chorister. Also, Bill Bates is no longer Executive Secretary. When I saw his many pleas for help with the secretary position, I said that I was willing to help, but that I only have 2 years with the Michiana Male Chorus. As it worked out at the June meeting, I now have the "whole enchilada!" I want to see the organization continue to grow and provide a service to the continuance of Male singing. It has a tonal quality totally different from a mixed choir. I even really enjoy a mixed men and boys choir. Years ago I sang as a soprano in an all male choir. The delicateness of the young voices was experienced again a few years ago at the funeral on TV of Princess Di and the cathedral choir. Our chorus has a promotional brochure and I always try to have some available if I go somewhere to sing. I retired in 2001 and our chorus sang on the local PBS TV station before I retired. An associate from work asked me if it was my new retirement club. We need to work to recruit youth who have the energy level that many of us find sneaking away. Many of the choruses have young members which is great. But those of us with choruses where the average age is greater than 50 need to work aggressively on attracting younger members. Not only will it help to perpetuate the service and music, but it will also bring a new energy level.

I need a volunteer to assume the duties of Chorister Editor. I will keep it going until a replacement can be found. But someone with more experience in the organization can add a flavor that will take many years for me to develop.

I also need your suggestions of how to improve my job. Bill left me with excellent files. But I know that I will be missing things. Don't hesitate to call, write, or email me with your ideas.

John Fleming, Executive Secretary

Rochester Male Chorus fundraiser

The Rochester (MN) men have found a tasty way to raise money for chorus activities. Three times each year (May, August, October), there is a huge antique show at the county fairgrounds south of downtown, called Gold Rush Days. Many people from the area come to these shows, and they get hungry. So we rent a space on the main roadway, get a concession trailer from Pepsi, and cook and sell steak sandwiches, garnished with fried onions and green peppers. We also have chips and soda (Pepsi products, of course -- that's how we get the trailer). The steaks are 5-ounce portions from a local meat store, and are quite tender. We cook them on outdoor grills, so the fragrance draws customers like the pied piper called the children. Members and friends of the chorus staff the booth in four-hour shifts.

The chorus usually clears over a thousand dollars during a three-day event. We used to sell ice cream at the county fair, but there was too much competition, and the weather often would not be conducive to a cold product. At Gold Rush, there are a lot fewer food vendors, and the steaks are popular no matter what the temperature (we do offer hot coffee in October).

Rochester Male Chorus Christmas concerts

The RMC will have plenty of opportunities to sing Christmas music this season. Our main concert is Sunday afternoon, December 14, but the previous day we will be warming up in a supermarket (!) before boarding a bus for a trip to Wabasha (of "Grumpy Old Men" fame) and an evening concert (our first ever in that town, I think). Then on Monday we will be touring a Mayo Clinic hospital (St. Mary's) singing Christmas carols for the patients. A lot of singing packed into three days.

Our director is reaching deep into the music files for this year's concert. We have pieces ranging from the 13th century ("Lo, How a Rose") to the 21st ("Beautiful Snow"), and a lot in between. Instead of our normal weekend retreat, we resorted to two all-day Saturday practices at a local school (actually in our director's chorus room). We have several new and almost-new members this year, so they have a lot to memorize. We're looking forward to sharing our music with the community

Ed Armbruster

Seasons Greetings to all! From the Niagara Men's Chorus December 5, 2003

Bill Bates

The fall season has been a very busy one for the Niagara Men's Chorus; our fall show, "You Must Remember This" was a big success selling out the evening and matinee performances. With the show focusing on songs around the war years we involved a number of folks from our community in the event. *eg. Colour guard from the Legion. Boy Scouts laying a wreath, Ladies' group to sing a few Andrew Sisters' songs, Salvation Army brass ensemble to accompany us with our patriotic numbers, a piper for Danny Boy*

In the program, we advertised the Big Sing for May 1, 2004 and have already received many requests for tickets. We are anticipating a sell out with a waiting list for tickets. So it will be imperative that you give us an accurate count of the number of tickets that you need. We will not require that information until the end of January. A separate e-mail will be forthcoming in early Jan. with more details.

Good News from Michigan!

We are also pleased to have the Schubert Male Chorus from Port Huron joining us for our cabaret evening, so we truly will have an International flavor to our event with Schubert, Wellsboro and Lock City.

News from the Ontario Lottery & Gaming Corporation

Niagara's new casino (\$900 million) will officially open around the 3rd or 4th week in Aprilso for those who are so inclined you will have an opportunity to visit a world class casino and invest some money.

New York Pennsylvania Big Sing on Nov 1, 2003

Richard A. Keffer

Regardless of their AMCA status we invited the AMCO to join us. We had done this in the past and we really enjoy the singing and camaraderie working with our Canadian Brothers in Song. The Queensmen from Toronto with Harry Learoyd and the Karwatha Male Chorus with Eleanor Bailey Conductor and Bill Bates chorus contact joined with the six choruses of NY-PENN. We had about 160 on stage representing a total of eight choruses.

The Chinese Auction and the handling of it was the brain child of our member George Poole. I give him great credit it making it happen. He has had much experience here and between his using his business contacts and getting tools either at very low cost or donated plus another one of our members Tom McCray who is a local radio personality getting many local items donated such as theatre tickets, restaurant coups etc. Plus members donating items (leaf blower, wine, two baskets of cheer donated by our bass section - you know those basses, plus other items) our costs were kept to a minimum and we could group four or five items each in thirteen groups - could have been more could have been less.

The key was -- that for \$5 you received a card with 25 numbered tickets for use in the auction, a large numbered ticket on the card for a door prize - (One of the best items donated) and then you kept your numbered copy of the ticket to prove the prize was yours.

I had my doubts about how much would be taken in and was as shocked at the numbers as you were. We had thirteen groups of items with thirteen bags for tickets and of course the door prize which was an expensive tool set.

We opened the purchases up to anyone (wives, family members, and custodial staff) and closed it off after the massed rehearsal. We immediately pulled the tickets - two members of visiting choruses verifying the efficacy of the draw. Put the numbers on three by five cards and attached the card to the prize group. Someone then verified your win and you took your prize.

Scholarship

The number of scholarships has been reduced by 1 to a total of 5. At the same time, each scholarship value has been increased. The Scholarship Committee now has four \$1,000 scholarships plus the Lester Axdahl Scholarship of \$1,200. Be sure to spread the word and promote the AMCA. Information is available from **Donald Peterson, Scholarship Chair** Williamston, MI 48895 Email: scholarship@amcachorus.org

AMCA Database update

The data in the AMCA database is getting stale. I noticed that our own Chorus is not up to date. Please send me a membership listing, preferably electronically, to make the information current. I have received information from a few choruses. Your help is appreciated.

John Fleming

2003 Income Tax Information

When you file your 1099 information for services paid by your Chorus, please double check name and address spelling as well as the social security number. I have received one notice from the IRS on an item that did not match. Thank you,

John Fleming

Wisconsin – Upper Michigan District News

The Wisconsin - Upper Michigan District will be holding its annual district sing in Munising, MI. on May 1st, 2004. The central theme will be around a repertoire of Broadway music from Broadway shows.

The Milwaukee Male chorus has enjoyed a strong holiday singing period not only with Christmas music on Saturday December 13th with a four hour session at the Governor's mansion in Madison, WI, the Howard Village Center and the Oak Creek Community Center but with patriotic performances at the Brookfield, WI. Legion Post 449 for the flag disposal ceremonies plus for the Pearl Harbor Survivors on December 7th to commemorate the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 at the War Memorial Center.

We also sang for the funeral ceremony for a member of our bass section - Lloyd Uhren.

George Pecor

Notes from Wisconsin - Upper Michigan District Meeting on January 10, 2004 at Schoegel's Restaurant in Menomonee MI.

1) The agenda include a recap of the International meeting with dialogue shared by Don Crouch, Bill Rowe and George Pecor to give information to representatives of all six choruses of the district.

Since elections for the district will not be held until the Spring 2004 District Sing in Munising, Officers will remain status quo with the exception that Paul Naacz governor of the Munising Vanguards will temporarily cover the District Governor position. Steve Butz of the Milwaukee Male Chorus is Secretary/Treasurer and George Pecor of the Milwaukee Chorus is president.

At the spring election besides the District President or District Governor, an alternate to the International or will it be national board will be established to assure attendance for all meetings.

Music for the Munising District Sing was selected with each district director assigned a mass number plus invitations will be sent to two pass directors to lead Salutation and our National anthem. The main concert is to feature music usually heard at our afterglows but centered on the music of Broadway shows. Hosts are the Munising MI. Vanguards.

Communication and the use of the electronic media was a strong topic of discussion with the issue still open. Feeling is that chorus governor should have the experience to use this media and be the liaison between the choruses and the district officers. WUM Talk to remain the main correspondence of our directors.

There are several accompanist and director changes in the district as follows:
Milwaukee Male Chorus - Eric Saunders and Jonathon Wade accompanists
Negaunee Male Chorus - Vicki Holsworth Director Anna Anderson Accompanist
Marquette Male Chorus - Wayne Hunmer Director Joy Yuill Accompanist
Gwinn Male Chorus - Fran Smith Accompanist

Munising and Nicolet remained unchanged.

Bob Hicks governor of the Negaunee Male chorus shared that the proceeds of their sold out Christmas concert, 901 paid of a total 913 attendees at \$4202.59, will go to four schools in their Upper Michigan area. Ishpeming, Negaunee, Republic Michigamee and Westwood will each get \$1200 from the chorus. Four members have passed away in the last 14 months but one member recently recruited five new replacements bringing their numbers to 43, the largest chorus in our district.

Directors and Mass Number Selections for District Sing May 1st 2004:

Another Openin, Another Show - Vicki Holsworth - Negaunee
It's a Grand Night for Singing - Wayne Hanmer - Marquette
Hey Look Me Over - Peter Jonas - Munising
Step to the Rear - Charlie Frasetto - Gwinn
Once Upon a Time - Don Crouch - Milwaukee
There's No Business Like Show Business - Jim St. Charles - Nicolet

Submitted by George Pecor Chorister Field Editor Wisconsin-Upper Michigan

Tip of the Month

How do you know where your diaphragm is?

Count out loud until you can't get another number out (you may have to start whispering) - literally, until you can not get one more sound out. The first muscle to expand when taking that next breath will be your diaphragm, the soft spot located between your bottom ribs, just below your sternum.

Gayle Pohl, thank you for this tip.

If you have a tip to offer please email it to amcaintloffice@sbcglobal.net. Thanks.

GLMCA Winter Meeting--January 17, 2004--East Lansing

I. Welcome and Call to Order - 1:15 PM by Don Peterson, GLMCA President

II Salutation - Directed by Jan Berghorst, Kalamazoo

III. Introductions - Introductions by those in attendance

IV. Proxies - Ralph Freed for Rex Hornish (Kalamazoo)

V. Treasurer's Report - Submitted by Tom Giddings, GLMCA Treasurer. Tom noted that all choruses have paid their dues, although the report does not reflect that status for two choruses most recently paid. The variance of \$4.00 in the amount paid for Associate dues (\$7.50 vs. \$11.50) was explained as the amount of the GLMCA dues which had not been paid for Associate members by some of the member choruses. Tom preceded that discussion by pointing out that our current balance, \$5,910.05 is indeed healthy, and he urged members to be sure to submit any outstanding bills for payment / reimbursement. Those two discussions taken together, Bob Weber moved that the GLMCA eliminate the \$4.00 dues assessed for Associate members. Jake Jacobson seconded the motion. In discussion, the question was raised regarding the requirements of our By-Laws about this issue. There was then a motion to table the decision until the June meeting. John Bracewell moved that the "previous motion constitute notice pursuant to the By-Laws," if an amendment is necessary. The motion was seconded. The intent of John's motion was to satisfy the 90 day notification requirement, should an amendment be necessary. In concluding, Tom reported that the GLMCA District membership at the present time is 275. The motion to accept the treasurer's report was seconded and approved.

VI Secretary's Report - Minutes of the June 7, 2003 meeting, provided by secretary Rex Hornish, were distributed. An updated roster was circulated so that additions, corrections, and deletions could be recorded.

VII. Old Business - Direction of MMCA (Name Change: see VII.C. below)

A.1. Discussion ensued concerning existing and/or developing affiliations with other Districts / choruses. There were no new "hot prospects" proposed, despite the mention of several "possibilities" (mostly revisited). Don Peterson will contact the Negaunee Chorus, following through on that chorus's expressed interest in District participation. Tom Giddings raised the question of requirements for the newly reorganized Men of Orpheus to be a part of the GLMCA. The determination was that the chorus only need meet the requirements for any member chorus participation (such as pay dues, share in other responsibilities of GLMCA membership).

A.2. There was no movement on the discussion of a District retreat.

A.3. There is continuing effort being made, on the part of the Port Huron group, to connect with the Ontario District. This involves both hosting and participating at their respective Sings.

A.4. A reminder that the Inter-City Sing will be March 6, 2004 in Port Huron. The rehearsal will begin at 1:30 PM with the performance commencing at 6:30 PM. The Port Huron chorus reports that although they have had continuing problems with microphones at the performance venue, new ones are on order and the problem should be resolved in time for the Sing. In addition,

since acquiring access to equipment storage, they have applied for a grant from a local foundation to support the acquisition of a grand piano.

A.5. Recruitment of new choruses to the District: (see A. 1. above)

A.6. Considerable discussion occurred as to the relationship of this District to the AMCA. Discussion of AMCA business included the pending reorganization of that group and the format for selection of our District representatives to the June 12, 2004 meeting. Jake Jacobson and Don Peterson will represent the GLMCA District at that meeting with John Chenoweth “likely” serving as our third delegate. Don will make the District report. Charles Bash moved that, under the new organization of AMCA, the District president serve as the representative with the vice president as an alternate in the event of the president’s unavailability. The motion was seconded by Bill Murrmann and passed by those present. There are still issues concerning the plan for the scholarship program to move from the national to the District level. Discussion favored not making such a change. Any suggestions for changes to the proposed AMCA Constitution / By-Laws must be forwarded by March 6, 2004. John Bracewell raised the issue of the International Big Sing, suggesting that the financial and organizational responsibilities belong to the AMCA, regardless of the venue. All agreed that no one chorus or District should bear that burden. Gayle stated that non-participation, not organization, was the reason for the failure of the most recent event planned. More discussion suggested that the AMCA has not been forthcoming with information about its finances. The three main issues expressed (International Big Sing, Scholarship program, and more “open financial books”) were then addressed in a motion by Don DeMatio: The continuing affiliation of the GLMCA District with the AMCA is contingent upon the AMCA taking financial and organizational responsibility for International Big Sing events, maintaining the administration of the Scholarship fund, and being more forthcoming with regard to the financial details of the AMCA. The motion was seconded by Grace and passed unanimously.

VII.B. Gayle reported having negative experience with the free website, while she found the one she is using for two of her own websites (at a cost of \$8.00/month) is great. Tom Giddings moved that we support the \$8.00/month to put the GLMCA on the website recommended by Gayle. The motion was seconded by Charles Bash, and it passed. Member choruses need to get information for the website to Gayle in a timely manner.

VII.C. Discussion regarding the name change to Great Lakes Male Chorus Association: Fred Bettner suggested that we move forward by making all appropriate adjustments required by the new name. A request will be made of Norm Goodling to design a logo appropriately reflecting the name change.

VIII. New Business

VIII.A. The president of the Men of Orpheus/MOO (Lansing) reported on the demise of the Greater Lansing Orpheus Male Chorus and the “birth” of Men of Orpheus.

VIII.B. Don Peterson advised the group that the format for scholarship application and awards would remain the same, at least for this year. The AMCA Scholarship Committee has reduced the number of scholarships while increasing the amount of the regular scholarships and the Axdahl Scholarship.

VIII.D. The report of the Fall, 2003 meeting of AMCA was distributed by Jake Jacobson, our District’s only representative in attendance at that meeting.

VIII.E.F.G.H. Member choruses of the GLMCA were asked by Midland to provide an estimate of numbers of singers for the upcoming Sing, and to get solo, bio, etc. information to Grace Marra as soon as possible. Jake Jacobson identified April 30, 2005 as the date for the District Sing in Dearborn. Findlay was not represented, leaving the 2006 Sing date to be announced. Port Huron is still in the dreaming stages in anticipating 2007.

IX. The summer meeting will be June 4 (directors meet that evening) and June 5, 2004 in Dearborn.

X. Open floor discussion: We were reminded that there are CDS available from the District Sing held in Lansing in 2003. They will be available for purchase at the District Sing in Midland.

John Bracewell raised the possibility of financial support to MOO in view of the fact that the resources at this point consist primarily of a library of music. The question of whether a \$2,000 loan would be preferred over a \$1,000 grant. Lansing's response was that a loan is just one more bill to be paid. Grace moved that GLMCA grant MOO \$1,000 for seed money as the chorus works its way forward from the bankruptcy. Dave Amtower seconded and a unanimous vote in favor of the motion was cast.

John Fleming asked that any GLMCA chorus news be sent to him by e-mail, in a timely fashion, for inclusion in the Chorister,

XI. Adjournment was moved by Bill Murrmann as the clock read 3:15 PM. Unqualified assent!

*Submitted by Jan Berghorst, Kalamazoo, for Secretary Rex Hornish
January 19, 2004*

Michigan Axdahl Scholarship Winner for 2003-2004 Tim Bucholz report

The Axdahl Scholarship winner for 2003-04 Tim sings with the Kalamazoo Male Chorus as much as he is able to schedule around a bounty of conflicts at the University. He is a member of the University Chorale, the premier student chorus at Western Michigan University. The schedule of rehearsals and performance for that group is demanding as is the repertoire. In addition, Tim is a member of Gold Company3 WMU's internationally recognized vocal jazz ensemble. As if that weren't enough, he is a member of a sextet that has grown out of the Gold Company experience. This group recently toured in Europe. Just so Tim isn't sitting around with nothing to do; he works as a residence hall assistant at Western. The most refreshing thing about Tim (aside from a wonderful tenor voice) is that he has one of the most positive, sunny dispositions one could hope to encounter at rehearsal each week. He works hard, no matter how tired he is or how simple the music. Kalamazoo is blessed to know him and to be a part of his musical journey.