



THE chorister

Newsletter

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Associated Male Choruses of America

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WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE (or is it?)

The words of Slim Pickens in *Cool Hand Luke* have been used by many people leading discussions in organization change seminars. I even have them as a way file to throw into some Powerpoint presentations at work. They suggest that we can fix all of our problems by communicating faster and more effectively.

The biggest budget item we have in AMCA is for communications (meetings, correspondence, the Chorister, and our web site). Providing effective communications among our members is one of the main reasons we exist as an organization. And we have taken steps to improve the way we communicate with each other and the outside world.

Dave Thomas, the creator and keeper of our web site, has initiated an on-line poll to determine how we want to communicate with each other. As of the middle of the month 80 members have responded. This may sound discouraging when you consider the number of members we have, but it really is not bad when you consider how most polls do and if you factor in the number of people who have computers and have access to the Internet.

This past summer, I put out a Chorister strictly on our web site and asked members to print copies for those who don't have access. We probably will publish one next summer strictly for our web site.

At our Ontario District executive meeting, we agreed that the best way to distribute the minutes of our meetings was through the secure AMCA web site. We are really moving ahead even though we have a long way to go.

For this issue, I thought it would be appropriate to feature our web site and let everyone in on the newest tool we have to communicate with each other on the best ways we can promote good singing, good fellowship and service to others.

Dan Plunkett
(Editor)

WHERE CAN I FIND GOOD MUSIC?

AMCA has a number of vehicles to communicate with our member choruses how to find good music. We have compiled a lending library for our member choruses, we have a music reviewer (Don Crouch) who looks for and reviews music for male voice singing, and we sponsor an annual music contest for new music for male voices.

Don Crouch has included reviews on 22 pieces for August. Don has reviewed *Shake, Rattle and Roll* Charles Calhoun/ arranged by Kirby Shaw. He notes that it is a familiar pop/rock melody that has strong audience appeal. It has easy parts to learn. Its range is high and is only in three parts (TTB). The song is available from Hal Leanoard #08201245.

Reviews are available on line at our web site. Don has provided quick point-form reviews of the pieces and I urge all directors to visit the site to see all of the reviews.

The music contest is chaired by Harry Learoyd. The goal of the competition is to encourage song writing for male choruses.

The 1998 award winner, *There's A Wideness in God's Mercy* (Rhonda Steffey Woodward), was published by Kelman Hall Publishing and is available through Music Plus Corp, 100 Ahrens Street West, Kitchener, ON Canada N2H 4C3.

The 1999 winner, *Holy Peace* (David M. Bruhn), was published by Leslie Music Supply Inc. and is available through Leslie Music Supply Inc., PO Box 471, Oakville, ON Canada L6J 5A8.

If you want to enter the contest, contact Harry at our web site or mail him at 23 Dalegrove Crescent, Etobicoke, ON Canada M9B 6A5.

The lending library is available on our web site in the public and secure sites. Dave Thomas has also included a page on our web site listing "favourites".

INTERACTIVE WITH BILL BATES

Executive Secretary Bill Bates has been a champion of communications since I have known him and he works hard to get our minutes out to our Board of Directors through the secure part of our web site. He has also written a regular page for the web site called *Interactive with the Executive Secretary*. Here is a sample of the latest.

SINNING YOUR WAY TO LANSING

The beginning of another exiting choral season is upon us and the challenge for many of our choruses is find the income to pay for our many endeavours (including funds to subsidize a trip to the Big Sing in Lansing). Various levels of government have found a simple and effective way to generate revenues to help pay for their endeavours - fines!

Not only do these fines and "sin taxes" encourage our public to be more responsible, but they support programs of public awareness - sin supports service. What could be better! Our choruses have our fair share of miscreants, sinners and violators. Let's make them pay.

The following fine schedule is offered for your consideration:

- Quiet late arrival to rehearsal - \$1.00
- Noisy late arrival to rehearsal - \$2.00
- Found by librarian to be holding duplicate copies of a piece - \$1.00
- Found by librarian to be holding duplicate copies of a piece in short supply - \$2.00
- Artfully highlighting all your music with non-erasable marker - \$5.00
- Not using a pencil to mark in special instructions by conductor - \$1.00
- Not doing #6 and repeatedly asking for those instructions - \$5.00 per time
- Falling asleep during rehearsal - \$2.00
- Falling asleep during rehearsal and snoring - \$2.00
- Talking while conductor is giving instructions to others - \$1.00
- Talking while conductor is giving you instructions - \$5.00
- Complaining loudly about your neighbour singing a passage out of tune - \$1.00
- As in #13, but you are the guilty party - \$2.00

Look for the complete text and other fine suggestions at our web site

JOE LOVE RESPONDS

The following is from AMCA President Joe Love and may be found on the Love Notes Page of our web site.

I would like to take up the CHALLENGE. In the last (August 2000) Interactive article by Bill Bates he issued me a challenge. This was to find someone who may be interested in a Recruitment Program.

An EXPANSION OF THE AMCA

- Why can't we go west to California and Vancouver?
- Why can't we go south to Florida and Texas?
- Why don't we have more districts?
- If S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. can do it why can't we DO IT?

Perhaps each our existing districts could discuss such a idea or perhaps have someone in mind (to take up the task). The AMCA board members are all hard workers and have a full plate but can help with ideas. DO WE HAVE A MEMBER OR TWO TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?

KIDS SAY THE CRAZIEST THINGS!

I have been using the *Chorister* to communicate with our members some jokes that they might be able to use in mixed company. Here is one that I have received recently in my e-mail:

Several years ago, I returned home from a trip when a storm hit, with crashing thunder and severe lightning. As I came into my bedroom about 2:00 a.m., I found my two children (apparently scared by the loud storm) in bed with my wife. I resigned myself to sleep in the guest bedroom that night.

The next day, I talked to the children that it was ok to sleep with Mom when the storm was bad, but not on the nights when I was expected home.

After my next trip several weeks later, my wife and children met me at the airport. There were hundreds of people waiting for the my plane to arrive. As I entered the waiting area, my son saw me and came running to me shouting that he had good news for me. I shouted back to him what the good news was and he shouted right back,

"Nobody slept with Mommy while you were away this time!"

THE LONGEST JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP

AMCA Historian Bob Esko produces regular articles for his page, Reflections, on our web site. The following is taken from the current page.

In July, my wife and I found ourselves travelling up the expressway from Toronto to Montreal, heading for Nova Scotia. We knew our immediate destination was Truro, NS. We had a rough idea of the distance (close to 1000 miles) and the time required to get there (two days) via the route we had mapped through Vermont and New Hampshire, then on to Bangor, Maine.

On the map it looked doable. On the roads, it was a different story. The first day went according to plan, but to reach our destination by the second day, we needed to make some adjustments. The second day turned into a marathon run of 725 miles and 16 hours.

Was it worth it? You bet. By sticking to ur adjusted plan and our schedule, we got lucky and eventually found ourselves in Halifax harbour for the flotilla of Tall Ships 2000 as they headed back to Europe. That was a fabulous experience we shall cherish for a long time.

I did some reflecting on this after we returned home. Planning a trip and planning the future for an organization like AMCA are quite similar. Both journeys require planning, effort, time and money. They will not happen without these.

We need a destination because if you don't know where you are going, you'll probably end up somewhere else. Joe Love is proposing that AMCA's destination should be growth in membership and in geography.

Is it a worthwhile destination? You bet. Will we need to plot a route to get there? Absolutely. We will need to measure our progress by the number of AMCA towns we see on the map. We will also need to measure the time it takes to reach our goals. Just like in driving, a schedule and time line is essential to keep us motivated and moving ahead.

Bill Bates has proposed a dozen specific items for action to help AMCA reach its destination. We need to focus on two or three per year.

The destination is before us on the horizon. We need to plan a route to get us there one town at a time. If

we encounter road construction and obstacles or detours, we must be ready to make the necessary adjustments. The journey will take some time, so we need a schedule. It will cost some money, effort and experience to reach our destination. Let's go.

ANOTHER KID'S STORY

A mother was teaching her 3 year old the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime she repeated it after her mother. One night she said she was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride as her daughter carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer.

"Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us from e-mail. Amen"

AMCA LOGO STUFF

Canadian Choristers pay in Canadian funds but add 25% for the exchange. This is a deal!!!

\$1.00	Red Caps and Letter Openers
\$2.00	Money Clip or Key Pouch
\$3.00	Lapel Pin
\$0.65	<i>Salutation</i> (Bentz) or <i>You'll Never Walk Alone</i> Stickles) (per copy price only available to AMCA members)

Send your order to:

Executive Secretary, PO Box 106, RR#1 Dunsford, Ontario, Canada K0M 1L0

Posting and Handling is 15% to a maximum of \$5.00.

The Chorister is the official newsletter of the Associated Male Choruses of America, Inc. You are encouraged to participate in the creation of this newsletter by submitting articles, letters, photographs and pictures.

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AND ANOTHER THING

One of the things that the conductor of my chorus (Burt Warkentin) reminded us at our practice the other night is that our singing communicates something to the audience. He told us we should never let the songs become like habits or second nature to us to such an extent that we lose the emotional message that the composer is trying to convey.

We must never lose sight of that important communication tool.

WHERE WILL YOU BE IN 2003?

I'll be in Lansing for the International Big Sing. Look for more about this in subsequent issues.

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