



PO Box 1005
Downers Grove, IL 60515

2008 Illinois District Champions!

2008 Calendar

Monday

- 7:30 Warm-ups
- 7:45 Polecat Songs/Tag Singing
- 8:00 Christmas Songs
- 9:10 Meeting & Break
- 9:30 CD & Christmas Songs

October

- 13 Rehearsal
- 16 7:30 PM Board Meeting
- 20 Rehearsal
- 27 Rehearsal

November

- 3 Rehearsal
- 10 Rehearsal
- 16 Sing Downers Grove Library
- 17 Joe Connelly & Recording session
- 20 7:30 PM Board Meeting
- 24 Rehearsal

December

- 1 Rehearsal
- 8 Rehearsal
- 11 Tech Rehearsal
- 12 – 13 Christmas Show

2009

January

- 24 – Installation dinner
- 25 – 31 Midwinter Convention

February

- 23 Joe Connelly & Recording session

March

- 16 Joe Connelly & Recording session

April

- 17 – 19 Spring Convention (sing as outgoing champs)

May

- 29-30 Tentative date for a retreat with Kevin Keller as coach

- June 28 – July 5 – International (Anaheim)

September

- 25–27 Fall Convention (compete to qualify for International 2010 Philadelphia)

2010

- June 27 – July 4 – International (Philadelphia)

West Towns rehearses every Monday evening, 7:30 PM on the 2nd floor of the Moose Lodge, 1030 Warren Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515

Different Rehearsal Location for Oct. 6

We are planning to rehearse this upcoming Monday at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in LaGrange. The address is 203 S. Kensington in LaGrange. This is in preparation for our initial recording session on Nov. 17 which will also be at this location. The sound engineer specifically recommended this location, and will be attending this rehearsal so that he can heat us in this location and get an idea of exactly what he is dealing with.

It is located south of Ogden and north of 47th St. It is east of Brainard and West of LaGrange Rd. It is south of the Burlington Northern RR tracks.

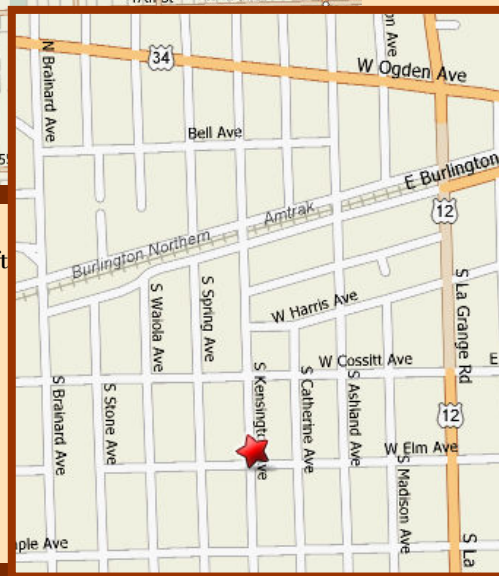
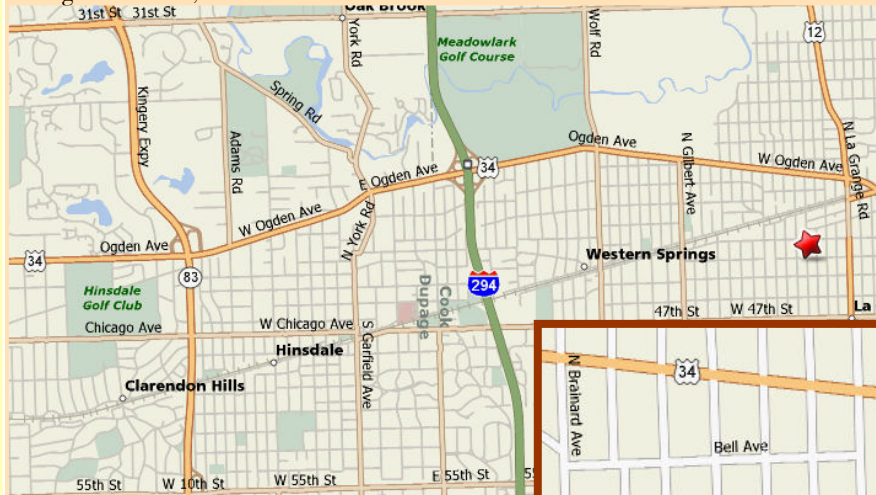
There is a SMALL parking lot located at the church, so most of us will have to park on the street. If you can carpool, that might be a good idea, so that we do not over run the neighborhood with cars. The church is very good about letting the neighborhood know when they have events that might disrupt local traffic and parking.

Please arrive promptly so that we can make efficient use of our time, and be ready and warmed up when the sound engineer arrives by about 8:00.

I will provide a list of the first songs that we will be planning to record on Nov. 17, when I know what they are.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Craig Lancaster, Music VP



2009 Board

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| President: | Darryl Nordentoft |
| Executive Vice President: | Jack Fagan |
| Chapter Development: | John Morrison |
| Music & Performance VP: | Craig Lancaster |
| Program VP: | Joe Tomecek |
| Marketing VP: | Jon Dobosenski |
| Membership VP: | Bruce Rhoades |
| Secretary: | Bob Nicodem |
| Treasurer: | Tony Tumea |
| Member at Large: | Mark Johnson |

Christmas Show Songs

1st Half:

Most Wonderful Time; While By My Sheep; Jingle Bells; Jingle Bell Rock; Deck the Halls; Need a Little Christmas; Secret of Christmas; Christmas is Coming/God Rest Ye Merry

2nd Half: Do You Hear What I Hear; Mary Had a Baby; Silent Night; O Holy Night; Joy to the World; Let All Mortal Flesh; Adeste Fidelis;



Thoughts on West Towns Performance – by Ed McDevitt

Hello guys.

Our performance and result in the Illinois District Fall, 2008 Chorus Contest was intriguing. It points up a number of things about us that I think are worth discussing.

For context, here are our percentage scores over the last three contests, in all of which we presented the Music Man set:

- Spring, 2008	78.1
- International, 2008	78.6
- Fall, 2008	78.2

Taken as a whole, the comments we have received from judges in A & R sessions are consistent: we very often sing at an "A" level, but also very often disappoint the judges when we sing at a "B" or "C" level during the same song.

When we are excited about a package and are physically involved - as we certainly were with the Oz set - we achieve high Presentation scores; but we still sing sometimes at an "A" level and sometimes at a "B" or "C" level during a single song .

One way to look at our very consistent scores with the Music Man set this year is to suggest that the package is simply a 78 - 79% package, and that's the best we will do with it, no matter what.

Another way to see it is to suggest that were our singing consistently at an "A" level, it would also improve our Music and Presentation scores - something we've noticed before, oddly enough. That's the way I prefer to look at it.

Why do I care?

Let me assure you that I'm not here to campaign for West Towns to be in the Top 5 or Top 10 at International. Those are nice goals, but demand an entirely different level of dedication and grueling practice that I truly don't believe we are prepared to commit to. And our not being so inclined is not a bad thing. It's just a fact.

I care because I know that every one of us is capable of and willing to commit to singing always at an "A" level. But capability and willingness are not sufficient. Singing at an "A" level at all times requires a different mindset than we now have. It requires demanding better of yourself. Not of the chorus. Yourself. And it requires concentration and effort.

It's not complicated and it's not time-consuming. I'm not proposing a whole new regimen of diligent practice at home, in the car, or anywhere else but on the risers. I'm not proposing that we stop having fun. I would hate that.

What I am proposing is that new mindset: on the risers, pay strict attention to how you are singing and to our very hard-working director. As so many athletes like to say, stay within yourself. Make the constant effort to be an "A" singer or, if you're not quite able to do that, to contribute mightily to making your section an "A" section. Concentrate all the time. Just those things. Nothing more.

We will work on Presentation skills, of course. But aside from constant physical involvement, those are steps and moves that we learn for each set and that differ for each song. Singing is singing, and needs always to be great and consistent, song to song. If the singing is great, believe me that other scores will rise with the improvement in singing.

What would it mean if we sang always at an "A" level? In the 2008 Fall Contest, singing at an 85% level would have required just 8 points per Singing judge. Our Music scores were just about even with Bloomington's to start with; had our singing been in the 85% range, our Music scores would have been higher too, so we could have been in the neighborhood of 85% overall just from better singing. Not better use of our uniforms. Not better marching. Better singing.

And while the context for my comments is contests, all of what I say applies in spades to our repertoire - especially in not singing our songs on "automatic." It is even more important to bring extra focus to our repertoire songs so that our performing them is a thrill for us and for our audiences, not just rote repetition of the mistakes we've always made.

Joe exhorts us to be better singers and sometimes we do. We always become an "A" singing chorus in front of our coaches. But somewhere along the way, despite Joe's pleas and the work of our coaches, we lose our edge, just about always.

I believe we can fix that. And by fixing just our commitment to "A" singing, not by adding rehearsals and beating our brains out to perfect a contest set, we can become that great chorus we say we are. It really isn't complicated: a new mindset, paying attention always, focus and concentration on your personal contribution to the "A" level.

Thanks for listening. Even better, thanks for the new mindset I hope you bring to the risers. I plan to do that. I feel I owe it to the West Towns Chorus and to Joe Kroner, our director, to do that.

Ed