



Progress



How We're Doing,
How We Expect to Do,
How We Get There

Another week, another missive.

We on the Music Team want to be upbeat about things and, in reality, are both upbeat and excited about where we're going. But every now and again we come up against something that needs fixing. So we agree that we need to bring it up and to solicit ideas.

Not to repeat myself, but I've mentioned that the Music Team meets immediately after every rehearsal to review that night's work, to look at trends, to talk about next week, and to look at how things are going overall.

I thought I'd tell you about where the team thinks we are.

This past Monday, the Team agreed, we finished our "Performance Mode" singing the two songs of the night, "Till There Was You" and "Live Till I Die" at, as our resident judging person put it, a "78 or 79%," and that's the level we are achieving most often when we work at it. This would be good, but some hold-over habits are exacting a toll.

- We get to our 78-79% level in our rehearsals, according to our resident judge, only after consistently starting our rehearsals (after the

warm-up) at about a 67% level just about every Monday.

- We start at 67% because of our seeming urge to gang sing and/or to "sing to the room" whenever we have been away for a week
- One reason that starting at 67% is disappointing is that it is a drop-off from a point in our experience we all found unacceptable: our general level of singing at the most recent District Fall Contest, according to what our two Singing category judges told us at our A&R session, averaged out at a 72%

As I've suggested, we are generally pleased and excited about where we see the Chorus going. It is an upward curve on the graph.

But we're also puzzled about how to get everyone to come in the door ready to sing at the level at which we finished the week before. We're spending too much of our rehearsal time doing remedial work that gets us back to where we were last time rather than working from the get-go where we ended up. Spending that unproductive time slows our improvement considerably, and puts farther into the future our reaching our goal to sing always at 85% or better.

We have some ideas. You've heard them before, but perhaps not heard them personally in a way that affects your own

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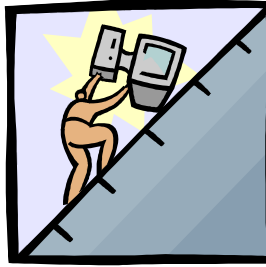


Progress – continued

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preparation. None of this takes all that much time, and it can be a lot of fun.

- Singing during the week, exercising and stretching your voice
- Practicing the techniques we're learning in front of a mirror (an hand-held one works!)
- Running through the songs we will be working on - especially the current newish song(s) - a couple of times during the week
- Warming up in the hour before you arrive at rehearsal



We on the Music Team are very committed to making things work, and to making our singing much better than it has been. We wonder what your ideas are and what you can personally commit to so that we retain what we learn in any given

week and can start the next week where we left off.

Please let us know. Seriously.

Thanks.

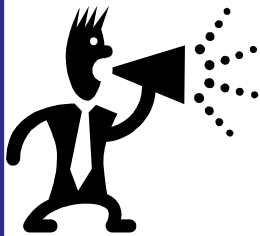
Ed McDevitt

VP, Music & Performance

For the Music Team



Progress – a Response by Bill Morgan



Ed & Music Team – I concur with your expressed sentiments ...

I have taught many years using a different instrument – Drums – & have implemented "re-alignment" approach/attitude/vision scenarios ...

Those would inevitably experience: "just short of the top of the hill" or "so close I can taste it" -isms

You have four excellent & fundamentally sound disciplines of which we should ALL subscribe to ...

One I would like to embellish is your step 3: Practicing the techniques **AND ALL SONGS** we're learning in front of a mirror (a hand-held one works!)

I keep working the previous weeks songs because if I do not – I tend to forget & will revert to undesired habits ...

IDAH voice training/**awareness** left me with

many little things that I AM working on ALL THE TIME:

- 1) Buzzing my lips with or w/out tone (gets many stares and chuckles)
- 2) Taking a "silent" full breath based on the yawn technique
- 3) Reciting the words to songs in a singlish with an over enunciated exaggerated high pitched manner
- 4) Enjoying coffee every morning (drifted – sorry)

Remember when we get together we should approach it as a rehearsal and NOT practice ... Big difference !!!

Let me leave you with this:

To practice is to do something regularly.

Perfect is the best you can be.

Practice makes perfect means that the way to become the best is to practice often.

Morg ...



“Singlish” - by Jon Hoekema

We have been working on using “Singlish” since Mark Hale’s visit.

Here are a few notes to help us as we continue to learn to use this technique.

Why teach “Singlish”? What is the purpose?

Teaches vocal placement

1. Tall and lifted inside (OH vowel harmonics)
2. Tucked corners, teeth exposed
3. Forward placement (bright vs. swallowed)

Teaches smooth, connected singing

Teaches us to turn words/diphthongs

Teaches the interpretation of the song

How is it properly done?

Higher pitched, not low in the register

Lifted/forward placement in the mask

Connected word sounds, legato not staccato

Lift end of phrases to fill the time correctly and propel energy forward.

There are always more things we can add later, but this is a good starting point. Learning to use this properly and regularly will not happen overnight, but we have already seen the positive effects.

This will take constant reinforcement in to become part of our culture, but we will certainly be the better chorus for it.



Board Meeting Notes

Treasurer:

- Received the treasurers report, we are in good financial shape.

President:

- Trying to be focused on the future
- Don Davia is our representative to the Illinois House of Delegates meeting held on Friday, April 16.
- Ryan Killeen, a representative from Harmony Foundation is planning to visit us at rehearsal on April 19

Music & Performance VP:

- The chorus is taking well to the new singing training program, showing noticeable improvement.

- Need to work on starting rehearsal where we left the previous week
- Planning to change rehearsal structure to help retain what was learned the previous week.
- "Culture change" has multiple aspects, and not all can be worked on at one time
- Section leaders and directors will be approaching individuals where indicated to assist with posture, breathing, vowel shaping, sound, singing
- Riser distractions will be addressed as quietly and unobtrusively as possible, but directly and immediately since nearly all

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members are working diligently and attentively and they express resentment that we don't fix such activity

- New music—at least two new pieces of music are being prepared
- Contest prep: sub-committee is seeking multiple venues with stages for us to perform contest set in July, August, September
- Future leadership: Joe Tomecek & Mark Betczynski will be stepping up with section leaders assuming greater roles
- Recording: Will be doing recordings at least once per month strictly as a tool for individuals to hear themselves and self improve and the music team to hear where we need work.
- Director Search: Two candidates interviewed and another in the works, with other possible candidates. Will continue to search to make sure due diligence is done.
- Peoria Fall Contest: Need to find out who is planning to compete in the fall. Admin section leaders will be asked to get this information.

Chapter Development/Membership VP:

- Guest night planned for April 26, new music will be introduced
- Working on a cabaret for mid-July
- Youth in Harmony—considering a mini-clinic in the fall, something that will help start building relationships
- Working on a handout for guests
- Need to find one or more persons to chair a spring show 2011—but need to get started now

Marketing:

- Marketing team meeting planned for Thursday evening, April 29
- DG Heritage Festival—town may be scaling back the July festival, but also considering other options for August.
- If there is a festival, consensus is to only have an informational booth, but get quartets to drop by and sing as often as possible.

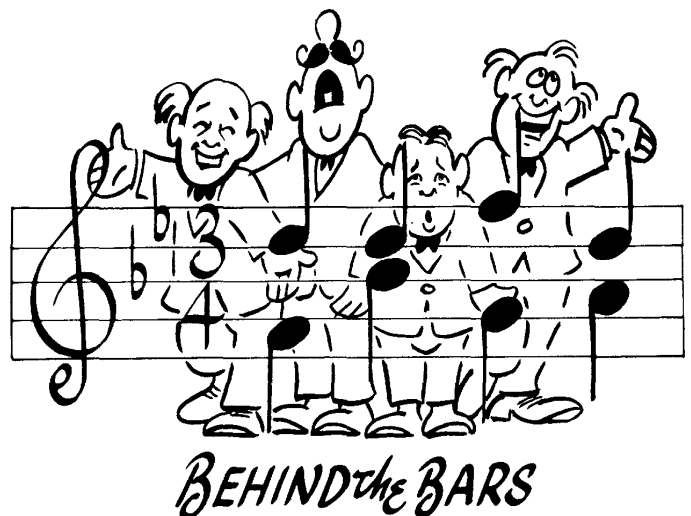
Past President:

- Four gaming nights have been set up (see schedule on next page)
- The LaGrange Country Club has been reserved for Saturday, Jan. 22, 2011 for our Installation/Awards banquet

Harmony University:

- The board approved the music teams recommendation to award one of the \$300 scholarships for HU to Dustin Wells

CS



Schedule of Events

April 2010

- ◆ 19 Rehearsal
- ◆ 26 Rehearsal—Guest Night

May 2010

- ◆ 3 Rehearsal
- ◆ 10 Rehearsal
- ◆ 17 Rehearsal
- ◆ 24 Rehearsal
- ◆ 31 Memorial Day—Rehearsal at Horizon Community Church



April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

2010

- ◆ June 19— Chicago Rush—Nat'l Anthem
- ◆ June 27 - July 4 - International (Philadelphia)
- ◆ July 8—Gaming night—E. Dundee
- ◆ Aug. 5 Cougar outing
- ◆ Aug. 18—Gaming night- Mt. Prospect
- ◆ Sep. 16—Gaming night—Elk Grove Village
- ◆ Sep. 24—26 Illinois Fall Convention
- ◆ Oct. 14—Gaming night—Elk Grove Village
- ◆ Oct. 18—Monday Full Chorus Performance—Monarch Landing
- ◆ Dec 10, 11 & 12 —Christmas show

2011

- ◆ Jan. 22—Installation Banquet—LaGrange Country Club

May 2010

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2010

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

The West Towns Chorus

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The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Chicagoland West Suburban Chapter aka The West Towns Chorus



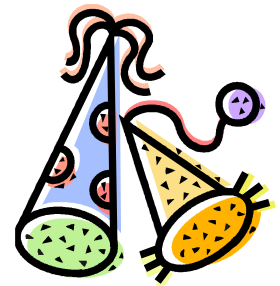
2010 Music Team

Joe Kronos	Joe Tomecek
Mark Betczynski	Ed McDevitt
Craig Lancaster	Jay Bentz
Jim Brown	Eric Sutherland
Jon Hoekema	Don Thompson
Trenton Ferro	Bryan Reeder
Email: musicteam@westtowns.org	



Happy Birthday to

Bob Vokal 4/19
Ron Welch 4/22
Bob Stone 4/23



Last Week's Visitor

Paul Carlson
Larry Galuszka
Jeff Gronemeyer
Don Nichols