

NASB Leadership Workshop
WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHORUS?
July 11 & July 12, 2009
Carpathia Club (Host Club)
Sterling Heights, MI

Day 1

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:20pm.

Handouts passed around (of those in attendance with contact info as well as the NASB contact info)

Lunch

A tasty and beautifully presented luncheon was prepared and served by the Carpathia Club members.

Following lunch:

Roll Call was taken with 30 guests present and four additional people, Tim Pecsénye (Workshop Mediator), Blondine Klimach, George Schemmel and a representative of the Carpathia Damenchor.

Opening remarks offered by NASB past President, Tim Pecsénye, NASB President, Blondine Klimach, President, George Schemmel of the German-American Cultural Center(GACC) and the representative of the Carpathia Damenchor.

GACC remarks included a brief history of the founding of the GACC and the purpose.

Attendees introduced themselves, stating their function within their club and number of years of singing.

First topic: *Define “your” chorus*

Questions to ponder:

Is your club a beer drinking choir or a chorus?

Two handouts passed around

(Singing Association or Chorus – Neue Chorzeit) and (Musical Museums - written by: Ernie Flamm)

Is your club a Singing Society first and social club second?

How do you look at your chorus....where does each chorus fall?

Is your chorus healthy? Unhealthy? Or somewhere in between?

Do you only look at the \$\$\$'s?

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The clubs/choirs who are in the unhealthy category.....will be the first to die.

Goal is to get all clubs/choirs into the healthy category or at least have a better understanding how to get there.

S-W-O-T Analysis – a tool any chorus or club can use

Handout passed around (SWOT)

Simply put, list your internal strengths & weaknesses and external opportunities & threats

S	W
O	T

Internal:

Strengths

Weaknesses

External:

Opportunities/Outside

Threats

STRENGTHS – we need to EXPLOIT

Kinderchor

Kind of music we sing

Dedication by singers

New uniforms

Hire an accompanist

Sing at more places-average number of sing outs per calendar year 12 to 14 times

Spend the money for a Professional Director

Handout passed around regarding hiring a Director from Teutonia Maennerchor/Damenchor

Gemutlichkeit (camaraderie)

Family (accommodate all generations of German, including 2nd and 3rd generations) including widows

Germany trip

Kind of music we sing

Quality of music - know your audience and have a variety of music

Website and keep it updated

Encouragement/mentoring new singers and members

Scholarships

THREATS – we need to CONFRONT

Computer

Publicity (not enough)

Sports

Taxation

Kind of music we sing

Audience

Suburbanites

Investment return

WEAKNESSES - we need to FIX

Lack of Tenors or other voice sections

More than one club in area and no one knew about either one

Aging

Snow birds
Unable to accept change
Debts
Fewer native German speakers around to help with language/pronunciation
Quality of music
Variety of music
Fixation on the past

OPPORTUNITIES/OUTSIDE - we need to EXPLOIT

Computer
Grants (Arts money) – apply for them
501(c)3
Competent advice
School systems -tap into schools (German Clubs, etc. for help and growth)
Instrumentalists
Audience

How do you fix these lists where problems exist?

***Concentrate and exploit the strengths
Fix the weaknesses,
Build opportunities, and
Confront and minimize the threats***

Handout passed around (Basics of Identifying Strategic Issues and Goals)

What do you do to fix these lists above where there are problems?

Strength - (EXPLOIT)

Publicity

(NPR) National Public Radio
Free advertising – any kind
Website –clubs
Event websites (TV, radio, community paper, etc.)
Business cards
Posters/Flyers
Sing-A-Long song sheets w/chorus name and contact info
Community access
Dish satellite
PR Chairperson at club
Recording/CD - available for sale
Connections with other clubs, church choirs, other organizations, etc.
Marquee at venue
Radio personalities to help recruit
Personal contacts
Facebook / LinkedIn
German Life / German World

Community Calendars
Onsite advertising

Ideas to Recruit New Singers

Quality in Director/Accompanist
Ask for new singers
Talk to people – giving personal touch and personal invitation
Bring a Guest nite
Business cards
Sprechen nur deutsch
Sing-A-long auf Deutsch
Sponsor Member/Friend Nite
Strassenfest (get city involved)
Offer “free” membership of certain time period for people to potential members.
It’s kind of like giving them a “free trial period”.
Quality of Music (must have to entice new singers)
Theme Concerts
Dinner Concerts
Singers’ recognition
Walk-in
Free dues for a year
Kaffee Klatch
Ice Cream Social

What do you do with New Singers/volunteers?

Put them to work to get them involved
Do they want to work?
Mentoring first few rehearsals
Make them feel welcome
Share music
Make it worth their time
Treat as a musician
Respect singers talent

How do we interact with Director/Accompanist?

Clear idea of what Director is allowed to do – put into writing/contract
Hired as a Professional and should be treated like one at all times
Director has final say
What are singers allowed to do? Should have a written list for singers
Music Committee advisory
Are you hiring a Director or Artistic leader?
If you only have an Artistic leader.....then anyone can direct.
Quality of choir
People should not interfere with the Director and let Director do their job

Director: Let singers know that YOU as director expect them to give 100% at all times. If singers can't give 100%, then it will weed them out. If they can't give 100%, then it's clear the Director cares more about the German Music than they do. Singers need to understand, there needs to be wall up during rehearsal.....focus is on music and not on beer drinking. The Music must come first.

For those complainers (singers) who say, ***We are only a volunteer choir and we can't do this and that....a suggested response might be***What do you expect of your volunteer fire department? It's simple, you either give 100% to put the fire out or let it burn to the ground and be destroyed.

Ideas: (Exercising the mind helps the singers become stronger)

Memorize music

Index cards/writing the words down over and over, cd's with songs by other groups, recorders, utilize spare time to learn the music on your own.

Have a choir German class ½ hour prior to rehearsal for pronunciation/meaning of words in song.

Formal translation of songs to choir and/or audience is helpful.

Reminder:

A Singers attitude plays a big part of the choir and them learning the music. Everyone in the choir should be working toward the same goals.

How much time does a Singer spend learning/rehearsing music?

Singers need to look at music more than just on a rehearsal night.

Handout passed around (Choralnet.org) and a few websites were shared among attendees.

www.bach-cantatas.com

www.ingeb.org

www.germanamericanmetrodetroit.org (German-American Cultural Center)

Rotary article passed around (Club Leadership Plan)

What makes a good President or any officer position?

Who will take the job?

Good Follow thru

Focus – Have a strategic plan/vision as well as to know where chorus will go

Diplomatic/fairness

Listening skills!!

Ask for suggestions/improvements

“Know” German music

Lead by example (communication - time - order - organization - learn to listen - carry out)

Dedication as a Singer/Member

Knowledge of Const/bylaws and ability to follow them

Business skills – including Roberts Rules of Order

Communication and support of other clubs

Know what is going on in Saengerbund

Commitment

When to delegate and when to stop

Handout passed around (How to Organize and Run an Effective Meeting)

How to run an effective meeting?

Knowledge of Constitution/bylaws & ability to follow them

Business skills

Diplomatic/fairness

Planning

Follow thru

Communication

Listening skills

Cooperation

Geoffrey Kroening – NASB Webmaster

Geoffrey spoke to the group as to how each club’s website can hook up to the national site, which would allow us to look up answers, check on other districts’ events, direct links to other clubs, etc.

Clubs are asked to send info they’d like to share to the NASB webmaster for uploading to the NASB site.

This could include all club info, including Board members list and photos, choir photo, or any other club news you wish to share.

Wolfgang Wengler - Archivar

Send any “old German memorabilia” to Wolfgang.....ex. Anniversary editions programs, old Saengerfest books, pins, etc.

The assembly was informed on Pins/Awards/Certificates on District level and National level.

Awards/Certificates: National and District

National (pin and certificate) – 25 yr., 40 yr., 50 yr

Cost breakdown per pin:

25yr. – 3.00 each

40 yr - \$5.00 or 7.00 each

50 yr. pin is free

Pins are ordered from District and presented by a NASB Officer if at all possible, but can also be presented by someone else.

Individual choirs can order New Member pins at a cost to each club.

The amount of pin is unknown by anyone in attendance.

Also clubs can create their own choir awards for any # of years if they wish to do so.

Club pin/ awards available for 100 yrs. and 150 yrs., etc.

Meeting adjourned for the day at approximately 5:10pm.

DAY 2

Meeting called to order at approximately 9:10am with a recap of Saturday's session

Discussion followed regarding:

Good Business Practices

Financial accountability and stability

Run club in a business like manner, minutes taken and provided, posted audit report, etc.

Publicity/Graphics

How to write a Press Release? (Two handouts passed around)

Advertise - paid ads for some events

Contact with local universities

All advertising – Must be in a professional format and grab the attention.

Marketing – make use of local media

How do we grow our clubs, find our faults and fix them?

Idea:

John Kneller, Newark Maennerchor, shared that their club performed an exercise and identified 79 visions. They then narrowed that list down to 5 major areas and worked up a mission statement to accomplish these tasks.

Side Notes:

If changing constitution, recommend that the Choir is protected by making certain criteria that singers have certain positions on the board.

Some have a certain percentage of singers on the Board at all times for club protection.

Choir/Singers' Budget

Some clubs pay for full bus fare for singer's events.

No club seems to charge singers a music fee

Some clubs have separate accounts for singers within' the club.

Some clubs give options to only be singers and not members.

Seems many choirs are self supporting by the "large corporation" and have their own bank account, budget, fundraisers etc., and all fees for singers are paid out of singers' funds.

ASCAP ISSUES:

If you charge admission...you are considered a professional.

Website: If advertising on website and your playing or singing music, make sure music is out of date. ASCAP is watching for violations.

Also, if listing programs on website...BEWARE of copyright infringements if music.

What makes a good Singer?

1. Self Discipline in attendance and timeliness
2. Dedication
3. Courtesy/Respect
4. Appearance
5. Attitude – Positive
6. Belief in Quality of performance
7. Harmony
8. Professional Director
9. Professional Accompanist
10. Goals in common
11. Leadership and pride in chorus
12. Self promotion
13. Gemutlichkeit
14. Support of NASB and Foundation

NASB FOUNDATION- Tim Pecsénye spoke on topic

Purpose of Foundation:

\$10k Challenge was made for receiving an additional 10K if goal was met

Goal was met, so now there is 20K in foundation

How to grow Foundation: estate planning, donations, etc.

How to make contributions: NASB Foundation

How money will be spent: workshops, scholarships, music storage/resources, etc.

Budget for Foundation: No set amount targeted as of yet, but aiming at 100K

Foundation is a 501(c)3

A recommendation was made to the NASB, requesting a professional flyer on the Foundation so clubs can include in newsletters, distribute to families, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ISSUES: to address at Bezirks and NASB

1. Recognition under 25 years
2. Annual Financial Report (National)
3. Records retention
4. Succession planning...What if????
5. E-mail subscription of Sanger Zeitung

2nd Vice President, Thea Klabunde, Germania Damenchor and Maennerchor offered their clubhouse to serve as the site for the next Leadership Workshop on July 10th and 11th, 2010.

Workshop concluded at approximately 12:00pm with another tasty lunch provided by the Carpathia Club members.

HE WHO DOESN'T BEAT THE DRUM WILL NOT BE HEARD!!