



MEMBERS MANUAL

2008-9 EDITION

Preface

At an executive meeting in 1992, it was noted that when new members joined the Choristers, it took a while for them to get acquainted and know how things are organized - uniforms, music, practice tapes, and so on.

It was also noted that a listing of the executive and committee assignments with job descriptions would be helpful for all members but especially when members were approached to serve in positions of leadership or assistance.

In 1996, a committee composed of Irla Stewart, Joyce Shack, Janet MacRae, and Doug Bundy convened and completed the first edition in January 1997. The booklet was next updated and revised in January 2000 by Joyce Shack. In summer 2005, the booklet was again updated and retyped by Ralph Laviolette to be included in the website www.mackaychoristers.ca

Should any important information be missing, please advise the president so that the manual can be kept current and useful for new and current members.

MACKAY CHORISTERS MEMBERS MANUAL

This manual provides guidelines for the organization and operation of the Chorister choir group. We hope it will be useful to all members.

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Purpose

The purpose of the MacKay Choristers is to enjoy singing, enjoy those who are singing with us, learn more about choral singing, and bring enjoyment to others through performances.

History

The MacKay Choristers began in 1983 with 16 members under the inspirational leadership of Janet Kalbfleisch. In 2008, it had a membership of about 60. The choir sings locally in two annual concerts, one in May, the other in December, along with the Goderich Harbouraires, the Goderich Laketown Band, and the Huron Strings Youth Orchestra. As well, the Choristers have enjoyed singing in Bayfield, Clinton,

Gravenhurst, Ilderton, Kitchener, London, Mississauga, Monckton, Niagara Falls, St Mary's, Toronto, Welland and Zurich. In 1989 and again in 1990, the Choristers performed at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall in the Seniors Jubilee Concert series. Choristers have also participated in four-day workshop/holiday sessions in Muskoka in 1989, 1991 and 1993 and in Stratford in 1996.

In 1993 and again in 1998, Choristers were privileged to have composer-arranger Don Besig conduct two choral workshops in Goderich. Following his first visit, Don, assisted by Nancy Price, composed and dedicated a song for the Choristers - "Say It With A Song" - which has since become the Choristers' signature piece. Both Nancy Price and the Robert Wood Choir from Welland attended the 1998 workshop.

The Choristers have made four audio tapes – in 1988, 1991, 1996 and 1999. Five hundred copies of each of the first two tapes, and 690 of the 1996 tapes were made available for sale. The 1999 tape, a collaborative venture with the other musical partners in the "Goderich Sound of Music" to commemorate the Year 2000, was also cut as a CD. Tape-making projects are challenging fund-raising efforts for the choir and leave lasting mementos for friends and choir members alike.

Rehearsals

The Choristers are active for two sessions each year – a fall session from mid-September to mid-December and a winter-spring session – mid-February to the first part of June. Rehearsals are Thursday mornings at the MacKay Centre from 9:30am to 11:30am with a 10-minute break. Members are encouraged to arrive a little ahead of time to pick up any new information, put on name tags, and prepare music for rehearsal to start at 9:30am sharp.

Attendance

Ever since the Choristers began, there has been very high attendance at rehearsals. Attendance records are kept by the vice-president. If a member misses more than three weeks in a row, the director or a member of the executive checks to see if there is a problem. If members plan to be away for an extended period (holidays, health problems, etc) they usually let the director know or record the anticipated absence on the "I'll be Away" sheet. Knowing that members may be away assists in planning for concerts.

Membership Dues

For 2007-8, membership dues are \$75.00 for the year payable in February. Fees include a \$10.00 annual membership in the MacKay Centre plus the cost of music, honoraria and other expenses. Announcement of fee changes are made during November or December rehearsals.

Music

At the beginning of each session, each member receives a binder of music. The music is handed back at the end of each session unless otherwise advised by the Library committee. Each member is encouraged to keep the music in good order. If leaving before the end of a session, music should be returned to the librarian.

During rehearsals and when practicing at home, members can use pencils to mark special places or help with problem parts. No ink or highlighter please so that music can be used by others if assigned to someone else in later sessions.

Practice Tapes

Since not all our members can play or have access to a piano, we try to make arrangements that they can borrow tapes to help learn the music at home. These are available in soprano, alto, tenor and bass. If members wish to have practice tapes of their own, they may copy one belonging to the choir, or ask another member to make a copy for them. (Check with the president or librarian to see if someone is currently providing this service to other members.)

Uniforms

Through fund-raising projects, the choir purchased uniforms worn by the ladies and the ties and puffs worn by the men. Men must provide their own navy blue blazers, white shirts and gray trousers, and wear the accessories noted above. Women's uniforms are available for rent. Rental is \$25 per year. If a lady takes a leave of absence, she is asked to leave her uniform, with name attached, with a member of the uniform committee, so it may be used by another member if necessary. Uniforms may also be purchased; consult the committee.

Casual dress

In 1991, a sweatshirt logo was designed by one of our members, Leda McAlister. We are able to order these in various colours. In 1996, a summer-weight T-shirt was ordered using the same logo. These sweatshirts and T-shirts have become the casual uniform for informal singing occasions. The chair of the Uniform Committee has some on hand or can order others as the need arises. Cost is about \$20.

Fragrances

Members are asked to refrain from wearing scented fragrances (after-shave lotions, cologne or perfumes) to rehearsals or performances as some of our members are pre-disposed to allergic sensitivities or reactions.

Performances

Members are encouraged to memorize some of their music as requested. It is when the music is really secure that it can be performed with confidence and sensitivity. It is recommended that new members not sing in a concert until they have attended at least eight rehearsals. Any member who has been absent for three rehearsals or more during the month prior to a concert should not sing at that performance. There could be some exceptions to this depending on prior choir experience. Consult the director if in doubt.

Communications

Each member receives an introductory letter from the executive before the beginning of each session. In early December, members are given questionnaires which they are asked to complete, offering feedback and input for the executive when planning the next session's or year's activities. In addition to this, if any

member has questions, suggestions or concerns, members of the executive are available at break-time each practice, or can be reached by phone.

Leaving the Choir

When a member no longer wishes to be active in the choir, he/she is requested to return the music and uniform to the appropriate committee. Sweat shirts and T-shirts belong to each member so do not have to be returned. However, arrangements can be made to have them sold as second-hand garments, if requested.

Medical Emergencies

We are very fortunate to have some retired medical professionals in the choir. If a medical emergency should arise, or if you notice that someone needs help, please call on one of these persons or on the director to ask for someone to give assistance.

The Executive

The Executive committee is composed of the officers and chairperson or designate of each standing committee. The term of office is a minimum of two years.

Role of President

Chair executive meetings

Bring information to choir members through phone calls or announcements at rehearsals

Act as liaison between director and members

Monitor committees for needed assistance, information to be shared or announcements (attendance, sickness, librarian information, instructions for music, tapes and so on).

Provide leadership in making physical arrangements for meetings, concerts and rehearsals (risers, music stand, podium, chairs, car pools, ticket sales promotion, and so on.)

Role of Vice-President

Act in president's absence

Assist president in various assignments

Keep attendance records and inform president and secretary of extended absences

Supervise the "I'll be away" sheet for member use

Role of Past President

Member of the executive committee

Provide experience, stability and support

Chair the nominating committee

Role of Secretary

Keep minutes of executive meetings

Keep records of any business decisions made during practices

Responsible for correspondence and cards and notes to members for special occasions, illness or bereavement as notified by members or others
Together with treasurer, send flowers or donations in case of death in the family of a choir member.

Role of Treasurer

Collect dues from members, banks all receipts
Pay all expenses
Keep book-keeping records listing receipts and expenditures, provides financial reports as needed
Transfer funds to MacKay Centre for memberships and payment of honoraria
Forward a year-end financial statement to the MacKay Centre. MacKay Chorister fiscal year is the calendar year.

Standing Committees

Each standing committee selects a chairperson who attends executive meetings. Other members are welcome to attend.

Role of Library Committee (4 members)

Numbers and stamps music and keeps it filed in alphabetical order.
Puts music in brown envelopes according to member number, for pick up at the start of each term.
Helps members to find their sets of music.
Sorts and store music at the end of each term.

Role of Telephone Committee (4 members)

Phones members as requested by the president to relay information.
The chair checks membership list and makes sure each caller has a complete list so there is no duplication of calls.

Role of Social Committee (4 members)

Makes arrangements for refreshments as requested by the executive.
Plans and makes arrangements for a social event to end each session.
Sets up water and disposable glasses for rehearsals.
Initiates any other social activities and presents ideas to the executive.

Role of Uniform Committee (3 members)

Provides uniforms for new members
Checks uniforms of members on leave
Gets uniforms from those leaving the choir and stores in the choir cupboard at the MacKay Centre
Looks after re-ordering, collecting payment and distribution of sweatshirts and T-shirts as requested by the executive.

Role of Advertising Committee (3 members)

Responsible for publicity – placing ads, arranging for posters, and promotion of events as requested by the executive

Keeps copies of any newspaper ads, costs, coverage, posters, programs etc. for future advertising and for archives.

Role of Archivist (1 member)

Keeps old records, correspondence, newspaper items, photos, programs, etc. in a neat and tidy manner.

Role of Nominating Committee (3 members)

Composed of the past-president, incoming president and past past-president. Finds candidates to fill all positions on the executive committee and presents the slate at end of the last December session.

Role of the Director (1)

Chooses and purchases music which has variety and is of suitable difficulty to challenge the choir

Conducts rehearsals and concerts

Suggests activities, and concerts which stimulate interest

Works with executive to put ideas into place

Attends most executive meetings as non-voting member as requested by the executive

Works with other community groups to schedule and help organize joint musical events

Receives honorarium as negotiated by the executive

Role of Accompanist (1)

Performs for rehearsals and concerts

Provides support to the Director

Attends some executive meetings as non-voting guest, as requested

Receives negotiated honorarium.