

October, 2004

The Power of We...

Communication, Commitment, Contribution

by Michael Frasier, President, NW ACDA



This is intimidating! My first Northwest Notes article as the President of the Northwestern Division of ACDA and I don't know what to write. What could I possibly say that would be inspirational, informational or entertaining enough to be read by some of the finest choral musicians in the nation? I've got it! How about an article on style? Now that would be valuable.

Okay, style.... Never wear a polka dot tie with a plaid sport coat! No good. All my colleagues know that already. Let's see, how about technique? Head down, slow back swing, smooth follow through... wrong again! This is hard. What can I say? I know that everyone who reads this newsletter put together by our outstanding editor, Howard Meharg, expects the best in quality educational writing and I am failing them. How can I possibly communicate to my constituents the need for commitment...or encourage them to make a contribution to the ACDA NW Division? Wait a minute. Communication? Commitment? Contribution? That's it: my inspirational, informational, educational, and entertaining theme for an article. I'm saved!

Enough silliness, I do have something to say that I hope will cause you to think about our organization and your part in it. I call it The 3 C's of membership: Communication, Commitment and Contribution. What follows are my thoughts on the 3 C's, how I can serve as a facilitator of each in our division and what YOU can do to personally address the issues of Communication, Commitment, and Contribution.

Communication

We as choral directors understand the importance of Communication when we are conducting a choir. We need to be clear, precise, and have a multitude of tools available to get information across to the differentiated learners in our groups. What works for one, doesn't work for everyone. We also know that Communication has two parts. It needs a sender and a receiver. I need to keep those things in mind as I communicate with you. As your president I am going to be a transparent leader, communicating through our newsletter, and by email as often as possible. I want to keep you informed and feeling a part of decisions and why they were made. I also want to visit as many areas of our division as possible and talk with you about the strengths of your state or

region and about your concerns, suggestions and ideas that might help make our division operations better.

Already we have set-up a division leadership list serve, where your division officers can share operational ideas, discuss board issues and communicate rapidly whenever we wish. I think it will enable to do a great deal of positive things that weren't easily done previously.

Tywla, Howard and I have started work on a new division directory so that we all have a hard copy directory of our membership.

I am also planning a videoconference meeting for this winter that will enable the board to meet without us all having to go to a central location. This will save the board time, and the division money.

You can help with the Communication piece in three ways. First, send in the information card that you received as soon as possible. If you didn't get one, or it got misplaced, send the information electronically to me at mfrasier@eou.edu. Do it soon. Secondly, you can drop me an email and let me know about the great choral happenings in your area. Invite me to come to a concert, festival, clinic anything that you want to brag about. I love seeing different parts of our region, hearing great choirs, and learning more about the great things happening in the Northwest. I might not get to them all, but I will know what is happening around the division. Thirdly, talk to your R & S folks. Ask them for ideas; make suggestions for the Northwest Notes or for convention interest sessions. They want to be used, but they need to have you communicate your thought and needs.

Commitment

Commitment is another word we choral folks use a lot. Who doesn't want choir members who are always at rehearsal, ready to work, focused on the musical and group goals? So it is with ACDA. My commitment to ACDA and the profession has always been to do the best work that I could, regardless of the time needed. I am sure that most of you have the same philosophy. We are often the first one to get to work and the last one to leave. Much of our job is extra-duty and unpaid. We don't complain (well, sometimes a little) and go the extra mile because we know it will pay musical dividends and because we love what we do. That's how I feel about ACDA. Much of what I do is done for the love of our profession and personal satisfaction and not for any tangible reward.

I have made a Commitment of the next 6 years to help our division prosper and I am honored to do so. I ask each of you to find a way to commit to ACDA NW. Go to an ACDA sponsored workshop, conference, in-service or festival. Take a colleague along and invite them to become a member. Go to Los Angeles in

February for the National Convention. Be an advocate for ACDA and choral music. These are necessary and vital to the growth and health of our organization.

Contribution

What do you think of when you hear the word Contribution? In our choral groups Contribution is usually the word used when we list the things someone does to help the group succeed. So it is with ACDA. I hope that my contributions as your president will be evident with the evolution of my term. Already I feel that the steps I have undertaken with regard to communication and transparent leadership are making a difference. We have a complete board, with all R & S positions filled, and the convention planning is under way. I am feeling pretty good about my first 100 days.

What can you do? Along with your commitment to ACDA you might volunteer to write an article for the Northwest Notes. R & S chairs would love to have other choral directors share their thoughts. It also takes some pressure off of the R & S folks to be “inspirational, informational and entertaining” (see paragraph 1) on a regular basis. Develop an idea for an interest session at a State or Regional conference. Become an “expert” on a choral topic and become a resource to others on that topic. Help a new choral director by sharing ideas, literature, and day-to-day nuts and bolts about what you do that makes you successful.

These are only some of the things you can do for ACDA. ACDA is a great organization. It is great because ACDA members are able to communicate, commit, and contribute to their craft, their singers and their audiences. And it is great because of people like you who inspire, inform, educate and entertain me every day.

I always close with a quote, and today is no exception. This is from “Hoop Dreams” by Phil Jackson:

The power of WE is greater than the power of ME.

Michael Frasier, Division President