

August, 2009

Susan Green, WA ACDA Membership Chair, writes a memo to choral directors who are not members of ACDA

To Our Non-Member Friends:



One of the greatest resources I have available to me as a teacher and choral conductor is the American Choral Directors Association. I have been to many seminars, reading sessions, and conferences that have enriched my professional life in countless ways. It just seems obvious to me that if you are a choir director then you should be a member of the professional organization that serves your art, but I'm always amazed at how many people choose to not be a member.

Yes, *choose*. When I talk to non-members about joining ACDA I often get a full litany of excuses, with the most common one being that they can't afford the membership on top of the other memberships they pay for. I'm often told this while they're holding a Starbucks latte in one hand or while they're fidgeting with the latest technological gadget. Hmmmm. Is it really the cost of membership, or is simply a matter of shifting priorities? Professionalism does come at a price.

So, why should you prioritize membership in ACDA? First, the workshops and conferences put on by this organization offer the finest resources for literature, rehearsal management, vocal pedagogy, and conducting technique for our craft. If you have attended our Summer Institute here in Washington, you already know that you will find quality literature at our reading sessions. You also know that we are going to bring the most preeminent master conductors as clinicians. You know that you're going to get to sit down and have valuable conversations with other people who do what you do.

Second, I do believe that is a matter of professionalism. Fine choral directors know that while ACDA offers them a wealth of resources, it's important to give back to the community as well. When you are a member of ACDA you become part of the collective whole and can be a resource to someone else. It is important to be associated with the premiere choral directing professional organization. Frankly, when I am on the hiring team for my school district, I *always* call into question why my district should hire a choir director that is *not* a member of this organization. As a public school music teacher, if I see a resume that does not have Music Educators National Conference and American

Choral Directors Association memberships listed then I assume that there is a certain lack of professionalism in this particular candidate. Yes, it really does matter.

If you are paid to direct choirs you get to write this membership off on your taxes. If you buy coffee or any other little luxury on a regular basis, buy a little less and put that money into an ACDA membership once a year. Shift things around a little and make this a priority. Your singers will feel the difference, because your conducting and rehearsal management skills will grow once you've experienced the influences of this organization on an on-going basis. We need you, and we believe you need us as well. This could be the start of a beautiful friendship.