

COMMUNITY

Gay Men's Chorus Sings its Way Across Vermont

PHOTO: LYNN MCNICOL



BY LYNN MCNICOL

BARRE — Want to start a new organization? Set up a booth at Pride - and - presto! Your fledgling group has begun.

That's exactly how the Gay Men's Chorus got its start in 1998. Rob Larabee, his partner, Yves Morrisette, and former member Tim Menk set up a booth at Pride that summer to sign up interested men, and did so well that they held their first performance a few months later. Tim Tavcar has been the director for all but one year.

People drive from the Northeast Kingdom, Hinesburg, and Wells River to take part in the group. Practices are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Barre to accommodate the distances many of the members have to travel.

Anyone can join the group who's interested, Tavcar said. There is a wide range of backgrounds, from professional musicians to those who don't read music. The chorus has ranged from six to eight core members and as many as 20 members at a time. Men ranging in age from early twenties to late sixties have joined up.

The group practiced songs such as "525,600 Minutes," "Dreams," and "Shenandoah" at a recent rehearsal. This was an extra session prior to the last two performances of the season this month. Normally they practice just once a week. The

group will take a break for the summer and begin rehearsals again in September.

Last month, the chorus performed at the gay-friendly Barre church where the men rehearse. On this Sunday, Beth Robinson, chair of the Vermont

Often, people from the audience will talk to chorus members after the performance, and say that they didn't know the music or words were written by gay men or lesbians.

Freedom to Marry Task Force, spoke at the service attended by many others involved in the civil union and marriage issues. Tavcar said he was moved by the service held in June, which is Pride month for many across the country.

"The more of our stories we can get out, the better it is," Tavcar said.

The Gay Men's Chorus has performed many benefit concerts, including for Outright Vermont, Habitat for Humanity, and the R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center. For the third year in a row, they have accepted the Legislature's invitation to sing at Farmer's Night, a series of weekly performances by various groups at the Statehouse. At Farmer's Night this year, the chorus sang songs written solely by gay or lesbian composers or lyricists.

"It's one more step towards equality," Tavcar said.

Often, people from the audience will talk to chorus members after the performance, and say that they didn't know the music or words were written by gay men or lesbians, Tavcar said. Some of the composers include Aaron Copland, Langs-

ton Hughes, Leonard Bernstein, Walt Whitman, or Steven Sondheim, who wrote the lyrics for *West Side Story*.

The social aspect of the group is wonderful, Tavcar said. Each year chorus members discuss their plans at potlucks, and they typically serve a buffet after performances.

There has been talk of making a CD, as the chorus has received requests for one. Chorus members also pay \$24 dues each year. They use the income to pay the churches where they practice, and for expenses such as sheet music.

The Gay Men's Chorus typically asks for a \$10 donation for admission. ▼

➔ For more information, call Rob and Yves at 802-633-3605, email robnyves@hotmail.com, or go to www.vtpwac.org



Terry Light
Sales & Leasing Consultant
terry@burlingtoncars.com
1.800.833.5945
802.660.8099 x107
999.7351


See Subaru.
by Burlington Subaru
333 Shelburne Road, Burlington, VT, 05401



RE/MAX North Professionals
(802) 655-3377 x223
(800) 639-4520 x223
JackieMarino@verizon.net

JACKIE MARINO
REALTOR

#1 RE/MAX North Professionals for 2005.
"Out" and serving our community since 1989.



JACKIEMARINO@VERIZON.NET

Stowe Theatre Guild 2006 Season Schedule

TITANIC a new musical June 21-24
June 28-July 1
July 5-8

BYE BYE BIRDIE July 19-22
July 26-29
August 2-5

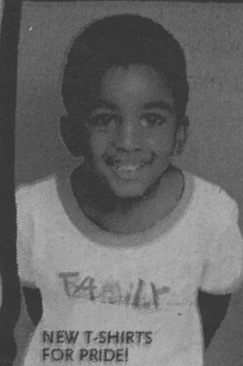
My Name is Alice August 16-19
August 23-26
August 30-Sept. 2

Morning's at Seven September 27-30
October 4-7
October 11-14

All performances are at 8:00 PM
Town Hall Theatre in Stowe, Vermont
Comfortable Seating
Air Conditioned • Handicap Accessible

Reservations - 253-3961 • tickets@StoweTheatre.com
www.StoweTheatre.com

PRIDE GEAR!
OUTFIT YOURSELF,
YOUR LOVED ONES AND
EVEN YOUR PETS!



NEW T-SHIRTS FOR PRIDE!

peace & justice store
Open Seven Days • 863-8326 • 21 Church Street, Burlington

