

Cathi Ramsden: One Singer, Many Voices

These days, I can safely say Westwinds is my life. As Vice President of the Executive Board (and thus responsible for communications) as well as chair of the 20th Anniversary Planning Committee, not to forget singing with the Women's Choir and the Choral Ensemble, I am thoroughly immersed in the Westwinds experience.

I first joined Westwinds when the Viscount Bennett Grad choir, directed by the beloved Marilyn Perkins, folded. I was looking for another choir and was working at the time as an assistant principal at Lord Beaverbrook High School where Mike Gardner was the choral instructor. He invited me to a year end Westwinds choir concert and I was sold on the quality of the Choral Ensemble and decided to join. Unfortunately, Mike was not influenced by the fact that I was his AP and made me audition along with everyone else. After a year, I volunteered to be the group manager which was my first introduction to the organizational side of Westwinds. In the summer of 2005, I went to Scotland with the Westwinds group where I met Jamie Finstad, then president of the executive. He invited me to act as facilitator for the review process that the organization wanted to undertake the next year. That was the beginning of my involvement with the inner workings of the Westwinds organization. I volunteered to be the conduit for weekly announcements to give Jackie Trowbridge, our executive assistant, a hand, and I also took on organizing the volunteers for the year end concert as well as helping with the planning. That led to my role as Vice President for two years as well as taking on the 20th anniversary planning committee.

As anyone who has worked with me knows, I have opinions which I'm not reticent to share and I have really enjoyed being able to put my money where my mouth is, so to speak. That part has been a really rewarding experience for me but the enriching highlight is really the singing. I am fortunate to sing under the direction of both the Gardners, Mike and Anne. With these groups, I've had the opportunity to sing with the Civic Symphony, travel to Drumheller to sing in fundraiser concerts, share music with seniors and less fortunate Calgarians, as well as perform in the amazing venues of the Jack Singer Concert Hall and the Jubilee Auditorium.

I am very proud of who we are as an organization and what we offer to Calgary as a whole. The standard of music and the quality of directors and performers – as well as the great people themselves – make Westwinds the place to be for music.