

?Sweet Ads? to sing next week at renovated Westminster Church

By Constance Scrafield

The Sweet Adelines Orangeville Chorus will be the first to perform at the newly renovated Westminster United Church in Orangeville, coming up Dec. 10.

Everyone is thrilled about the new look of the church interior, which was designed to accommodate such concerts and many other types of performances. Considerable attention has been paid to the acoustics and the layout, both for its beauty and practicality. Over the years, the church has been used and engaged for so many concerts, recitals and programs of many kinds. They used the space for its attractiveness and size, so the decision was made to completely overhaul the interior. It was a leap of faith that, if the job was done right, people would come and pay to use it.

So, the Orangeville choristers are thrilled to be presenting the first concert at Westminster.

Indeed, it is not simply a performance on the part of the Chorus, for they have included others: actors and musicians to fill the bill. At the time of our interviewing Joan Borden, president of the Chorus, she said it was the actually 35th anniversary of the Orangeville group that very day.

She was pleased to give us the lineup for the two performances scheduled for the 10th, matinee and evening times.

?The male Barbershop Quartet, Super Tonic, are singing,? she said. ?Barbara Penker is doing a solo ringing the bells.?

Westminster's organist Nancy Sicsic will be playing some jazz pieces with Dave Duncan and Kim Stevenson ? a diversion from the sacred music that the organ usually intones in the sanctuary.

Then, the Chorus will sing their songs. The style of singing, for those who do not know, is a capella (no accompaniment) and still, in the manner of barbershop, but with many more people.

The Chorus is all ladies and their music is whimsical, light, sometimes serious, tender ? always wonderful.

Invited as a guest to the show is actor Roy Young, bringing a story to the stage along with two young actors, Wyatt Ellacott and Ella Barnhouse. They will tell a tale of family members who share a stack of old letters they have found, tied with a ribbon, and they blend this discovery in with the whole afternoon/evening of entertainment.

As this is actually an acting performance, it is being directed by Laurie Moore, who is a teacher at Alton Public School, famous for its theatrical productions.

Wrapping the show is the young women's chorus, called the Accapalusa, with 11 young girls, aged 11 to 18, who participated in the Young Women's Festival in association with the Sweet Adelines, learning the ropes of chorus singing with all the harmony and none of the accompaniment.

Before we parted company, Borden had a story for us.

It happened when the Chorus had participated in the Memories and Music calendar, for which about 15 of them posed naked in the tradition established by the Calendar Girls of the U.K. They were going to breakfast after their shoot. The April day had been cold and rainy, and they were all ready for a warming breakfast.

They were lined up in one of the Highway 10 restaurants, famous for breakfast, when a gentleman came into the line up and worried about there being so many of them.

However, they consoled him by saying they were all one group. They explained what they had been doing ? namely, posing naked in April outside, for this calendar which was promoting such a cause: music apparatus for people with dementia and Alzheimers.

They made short work of their numbers, ordering their breakfasts with efficiency and let him move on without too much delay.

When they were just about finished their meal, he came up to them to say: ?I loved the story about the calendar and since I don't live here, I can't buy a calendar, but I have bought all your breakfasts.?

The concerts with the Orangeville Chorus, Sweet Adelines and so many others include a matinee starting at 2 p.m. and the evening performance which will begin at 7:30.

Tickets may be purchased at Westminster United, from any member of the Chorus and online at www.orangevillechorus.com