

THE WOODLANDS



Staff photo by Michael Minasi

Betty Clipman, Master Director of The Woodlands Show Chorus, leads the chorus through some vocal exercises during the rehearsal for an upcoming concert on Monday, Oct. 20, 2014, at Grace Crossing Church. The chorus will be performing for Friends and Family Night at Grace Crossing Church on Oct. 27 before going to an international competition.

Woodlands Show Chorus sings around the world

By CAITLIN KNOX
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Sweet harmonies, jazz hands and sparkling costumes can be found in The Woodlands each Monday night at The Woodlands Show Chorus rehearsals. Their motto is "the joy of singing," their color is purple, and their goal is to win.

The Woodlands Show Chorus, a women's ensemble with 78 members, will compete in an international competition on Nov. 3 in Baltimore, Maryland. Ranging from ages 17 to 79, these women sing barbershop style tunes, and come from all over.

"We have members that drive here from Austin, Beaumont, League City and South Houston," said Mary Smith, Membership Manager for the chorus. "People want to belong to a competitive, championship-level chorus." The tight-knit group is directed by Betty Clipman, master director and renowned Sweet Adelines International coach, who came out of retirement to lead The Woodlands ladies.

The chorus is a chapter of Sweet Adelines Interna-

FREE CONCERT

When: Monday, Oct. 27, 8:30 p.m.

Where: Grace Crossing Church, 105 FM 1488.

tional, a worldwide organization that, according to their website, is "committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through education, competition and performance."

This independent, non-profit music education association has members in five continents and over 500 choruses, making it one of the world's largest singing organizations for women.

"We are currently ranked number nine in the world," said Smith. Since The Woodlands Show Chorus began in 2012, it has been climbing the charts in competitions. This is the first time they will compete internationally. "We won first place in our regional competition in March 2013, which is how we qualified for the Sweet Adelines International Competition this year," said Smith.

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HARMONY

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"I've been in Sweet Adelines for 37 years," said Denise Fly, Operations Manager (equivalent to chorus president). Fly had previously lived in other parts of the U.S., competing with different Sweet Adeline choruses over the years.

"It's a heavy duty commitment," she said.

Each rehearsal is three hours, and includes learning music and choreography. Show chorus members also provide their own transportation to competitions. Most members plan to fly to the competition in Baltimore.

Before they leave, the chorus would like to show

The Woodlands what they can do, with their Friends and Family Concert on Monday, Oct. 27. The free concert begins at 8:30 p.m. at Grace Crossing Church, 105 FM 1488, The Woodlands, and will be a brief half hour, with refreshments afterward. The women will reveal their new costumes and perform songs including "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Time After Time" and "All Bound Round."

Chorus members hope to return to The Woodlands as champions, but they know that no matter what place they come in, they will keep singing as long as they are able.

"I can't imagine my life without Sweet Adelines," said Smith.