

CHOIR HISTORY

Seven enthusiastic Swiss immigrants - Arnold Rutzer, Arthur Bachmann, Ruedi Peterer, Klaus Zahnd, Fritz Wagner, Hans Bossert and Peter Stapfer - founded the Yodel Club Heimattreu in the kitchen of Arnold Rutzer in Calgary, Canada back in the fall of 1976. Love of singing, fuelled by a small dose of homesickness, and the need to create a bit of Switzerland in the Canadian West, were, I am sure, powerful motivators. None of the founders, ranging in age from 25 to 50 years old, even thought about the profound impact this simple gathering would have on them and to so many others that would join over the years. Only two of the founders had a good knowledge of music and could read music, not that we had song sheets to read. So we learned by listening to tapes and records, which presented some challenges in getting the second tenor and first and second bass voices isolated. But it was fun and we started with songs we knew from the military service as none of us had actually sung in a choir before!. Sadly, both Arnold Rutzer and Arthur Bachmann are no longer with us. The aim then, as it is now, was to preserve, practice and perform authentic and traditional Swiss Yodel songs, uphold Swiss culture and language and to encourage other like-minded groups to do so as well.

The club is a member of the Swiss Yodel Federation (www.jodlerverband.ch) and the North American Swiss Singing Alliance (NASSA).

The Swiss Yodel Federation consists of hundreds of choirs in Switzerland and about 30 groups of expatriate Swiss around the world. Every three years, a national festival and competition takes place. Swiss-based groups have to qualify to participate.

Groups from abroad may get invited to compete and will be judged by the same standards as the local groups.

NASSA's judged competitions also take place every 3 years and are held at member locations in Canada and the USA.