

May 3, 2008. Last night I had the opportunity to attend the very fine 25th anniversary concert of the Ypsilanti Community Choir. Several of our brass players participated in the rousing final number, "Battle Hymn of the Republic"--Kim Graor, Jack Werner, Rich Valencourt, Jane Bishop, Marge Taylor, Paul Vaughan, Mark Jeffers, Nathan Sparks, and Carter Adler. Several YCB players sing with the YCC, as well. From the printed program and from exhibits that were on display during the reception that followed the concert, I learned things about YCB history and YCB's important role in supporting YCC during its early months. Further, the several YCB leaders that were present picked up a lot of good ideas to consider when planning for YCB's 30th anniversary this coming January. YCB was mentioned prominently several times during the event and I happened to sit in the midst of a number of our "regular" audience members for YCB concerts--all of whom had nice things to say to me about YCB performances.

May 1, 2008. This past Sunday afternoon I had a chance to see the award-winning documentary "Young@Heart." This is a very touching story of a "community" choral group (average age = 80) in Massachusetts that undertakes to sing only covers of pop/rock songs of recent years--and how they cope with the deaths of two of their members as they are preparing for a "big concert." In addition, of course, there are subthemes of coping with individual decreasing physical abilities and with musical "literature" that is quite foreign to singers whose musical background is classical or gospel or vaudeville or the like. The movie ends with a rousing performance before a "sell out" audience of several thousand--a typical-sized audience for this group nowadays. There is a powerful message here--with which we share and relate to in YCB--about how music (of any genre) is and can be a tremendous unifying force across generational lines. This movie is playing in Ann Arbor in the near future and I think it would be well worth your time to see it.