

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY



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THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

July/August
2002
VOLUME
LXII
NUMBER
4

HER MUSTACHE IS RATHER FULL for a girl her age, but this "Dorothy" of Most Happy Fellows fame could still attract quite an audience. However, would the cross-dressing ever make it in contest? See page 14.



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America's biggest opera star loves barbershop, and is our latest honorary lifetime member
Dr. Greg Lyne

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When does creativity cross the line? The head Presentation judge discusses some gray areas
Larry Clemons

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Let these Eastern pillars give you the peace and humility to grow individually and as a group.
JOHN PERRICONE



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THE TAG

Roses Bring Dreams Of You

On the Cover:
They actually read
the contest manual?

FRED photo by Miller Photography
Cover by Lorin May



Oh, Canada; public relations on the local level

More Canadiana

Darryl Flinn's wonderful recounting of his Canadian musical heroes has made our day up here in God's Frozen Country. One of my favorite Canadians was that Gentleman Songster, Hugh Ingraham. Canadians also wrote the words and/or music to "The Old Songs," "Some Of These Days," "Peg O' My Heart," "If You Were The Only Girl In The World," "Darktown Strutters Ball," "Till We Meet Again," "At The Moving Picture Ball," "When My Baby Smiles At Me," "Peggy O'Neill," "Three O'Clock In The Morning," "Tumblin' Tumbleweed," "I'll Never Smile Again," "Put Your Dreams Away (For Another Day)" and many others.

I guess we Canadians had little else to do on those long, cold nights.

JOHN FORD
East York Barbershoppers

We need more PR

Great job on the recent edition. I especially liked the articles on public relations. After 54 years of this hobby, I see far too many chapters ignoring what they can do to promote both the Society and membership in their own chapter. Well done. Do some more, okay?

CARL HANCUFF
Edmond, Okla.

Big Chicken grant

Thanks for the recent *Harmonizer* article about **Big Chicken's** successful grant effort. "Health, Happiness & Harmony, Building Bridges With Song," received more than \$10,000 to help keep kids in school to increase the graduation rate and improve communication between students and their families. Our five-week series consisted of after-school visits to three middle schools and a Boys & Girls Club. **FRED, Four Voices, them, and Sentimental Journey** made initial visits, and four senior quartets worked the following four visits (**Vintage, Free Agents, Fore Fathers, and Fits and Starts**).

The kids have learned many songs from the Harmony

Explosion youth package and attended the chapter's spring show. We believe it will be the beginning of an ongoing program within the schools and our community. Thanks again for bringing attention to this new Big Chicken program and the grant that made it possible.

ARTHUR BRAUSE
Marietta, Ga.

Midshipmen Barbershoppers

I enjoyed reading about the Naval Academy Glee Club and its quartet **Clean Shave** in the May/June issue of *The Harmonizer*. As a '78 grad of USNA and a four-year member of the Glee Club, I can tell you there's been a quartet at least since 1974, and they've always been a highlight of any performance. A few of us graduates have sung on the international quartet and chorus stage.

One minor correction—at the Naval Academy, the young men and women are called midshipmen, not cadets. Cadets attend the Military Academy at West Point or the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

ALDO KUNTZ
Whitefish, Mont.

Where's this Terra Haute?

You've probably already received several of these. I don't know of a place called Terra Haute, Ind., but I have been in Terre Haute, Ind., many times.

GARY PRENTICE
Houston Tidelanders



Editor's note: After several calls to city offices, the editor of The Harmonizer has been unable to convince the receptionist that the spelling of their city, "Terre Haute," is incorrect. The French-language city name, which means "high ground," is a lesser rendition of the half Italian "Terra Haute," used on page 32 of the May/June Harmonizer, and which spelling is preferred by this Italian-speaking editor. The receptionist apparently didn't have the authority to make the fully Italian "Terra Alta" an official alternate city spelling, and was not persuaded to begin using "Terra Haute" as a transition into the much-easier-to-spell Italian language, which, unlike French, has no silent letters. ■



Not just a slogan—it's also a tag

How does a Society president decide on a motto? From experience, I can assure you that he spends a lot of time thinking about it—weeks, perhaps months. I experimented with a few ideas, bounced them off some creative Barbershoppers I know, but I must admit, nothing clicked.

Then, one evening while coaching the Great Lakes Chorus in Grand Rapids, I noticed that director Jamie Carey was wearing a shirt that said, "Music is Life ... the rest is just details." It reminded me that a few years ago, my kids or grandkids gave me a shirt for Father's Day that said "Golf is Life ... the rest is just details." It was a well-tread concept, but "Singing is Life ... the rest is just details" perfectly captured my philosophy: We're a singing organization, and we need to focus primarily on singing. The other "details" are secondary, and there should be fewer of them.

So the promotion began. In a phone conversation, Rob Hopkins asked, "Are you going to ask someone to write a tag with the motto?" (A talented arranger like Rob should never ask that question, unless he might agree to handle the task ... and he did). Here is Rob's perspective:

A president's motto doesn't always use words like "the rest is just details"—words that don't quite trip off the tongue easily! As I got thinking about it, I decided on a tag that would highlight the most important part of the motto: "Singing is life." "The rest is just details" could be set to a speech-like rhythmic pattern. I also wanted to create an overall shape to the tag so that it built to a climax on the final chord. I composed an early version of the tag and sent it to my good friend Eric Jackson for his recommendations, and then made some changes based on his excellent advice. As a final test, I taught it to my chorus to see how quickly they picked it up. They did just fine! Here's hoping you have fun singing it, too.

Singing is Life ... the rest is just details,

Lewis4bbs@aol.com



We're a singing organization, and we need to focus on fewer details.

SINGING IS LIFE

Words by ROGER LEWIS

Music and Arrangement by ROB HOPKINS

the rest is just de-tails the rest is de-tails

1 2

Tenor
Lead

Sing-ing is life, _____ de-tails, sing-ing is life, _____ de-tails, sing-ing is

Bari
Bass

the rest is just de-tails

3 4 5 6

life! _____ it's life, sing-ing is life! _____

our life, _____ it's life! _____



A young, very different kind of chapter

Hello friends, I've asked another of my all-time barbershop heroes, past Society president Ed Waesche, to join me as a guest contributor to my column. Aside from being the hardest working leader/administrator/methods genius ever, Ed is a musician, a great harmony man, arguably our Society's most successful arranger (over 700 arrangements to date), immediate past everything, a staunch member of three MAD Chapters, bari of **The New Yorkers** quartet, and president of the newly formed **Five Towns College Chapter**.

D: Ed, as recently retired Society president, music judge, quartet man, multi-chapter member, arranger and, better said, a guy who has done it all, why in the world would you feel called upon to be the president for a new college chapter?

Ed: Two reasons. One, I'm living up to my presidential motto: "Let's Grow Young Together." This is a great way to do that. (I'm acting my inner age, again!) And two, my dear friend, Dave Johnson, lead of the New Yorkers and one of your old JAD quartet compatriots, has had this as one of his goals since becoming a music professor at the college. It's been a privilege to help him achieve that goal.

D: Would you recommend starting a college chapter to others?

Ed: Let me pass on that! Each opportunity needs to be addressed on its own merits, upside and downside, risks and rewards.

D: Was it hard or easy? What have been some of the challenges and rewards in starting this college chapter?

Ed: It's been relatively easy because Dave had a solid music program going at the college, and he's been supported by the college president. The challenge will be to keep it going. Right now, our membership is roughly 60 percent students, past students, or student's parent, 20 percent is the New Yorkers quartet, 20 percent past or currently dual members. So it's a mix of youth and veterans. Just like any new chapter, there are obstacles ... like not having any money! Our chapter show was a blast! Then came our first competition, this June. As to the rewards, for me, number one is being treated as an equal by the students. They are the greatest—there should be a law against having so much fun! Challenges? These are difficult times for the students and recent graduate members. As much as they love the camaraderie and the style, they're under a lot of pressure: schoolwork, side jobs, starting new professions, etc.

D: Is there any quartet activity in Five Towns College Chapter?

Ed: There are currently two active quartets, both of which qualified for the MBNA America Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest at Portland.

D: What are these young men enthusiastic about? What kind of music are you introducing to these fellows?

Ed: They're really into the style as practiced by our top quartets. A lot of them know many of the New Yorkers' numbers, as well as favorite songs of the **Suntones**, **The Gas House Gang**, **Acoustix**, **PLATINUM**, etc. We sing simple ("I Believe," "The Halls Of Ivy") as well as challenging music ("Running Wild," "Sound Celebration"). We did seven numbers on our charter show. We're also learning a number arranged by a talented member, Wayne Grimmer (lead of **4-BE-WE**), one of last year's MBNA competitors.

D: Is this college chapter more or less multicultural in its makeup than most of our chapters?

Ed: Somewhat more multicultural. For example, in one quartet, two members are African-American.

D: What are your best thoughts about our Society's YMIH program, including thoughts about our collegiate quartet contest?

Ed: I've been impressed by the work being done in the Sunshine District, an excellent model to follow. I've seen Gary Plaag's and Eric Ruthenberg's YMIH Committee work and am extremely impressed by it. As to the collegiate quartet contest, we have to learn to think like college students!

D: A couple of issues ago, The Harmonizer dedicated an issue to the most serious topic of mem-



Why in the world would Ed feel called upon to be president of a new college chapter?

bership recruitment and retention. The cover suggested we are bleeding to death, albeit via a "slow bleed." With the average age of the Society now being over 60, what do you think about our aging population, our youth imperative, and membership issues in general?

Ed: I said in one of my articles as president that we need to focus not only on youth, but the 45-year-old parent of the young singer. I'm not as pessimistic about the future as *The Harmonizer* issue seemed to suggest (with its dire and unsupported prediction of future membership trends, which I have challenged earlier with my more positive predictions). But it will take hard work to reach out to the 20-45 age bracket. And we must constantly ensure that our product is good (read "in tune") and entertaining. Put out a good product, market it well, and they will come.

Thanks for asking.

Sing Along?

Because I still manage to croak out a little bari, my quartet, **Harmony** (2001 seniors champs), still lets me sing with them from time to time. Something we've noticed is the willingness and downright enthusiasm of show audiences to sing along with us. The centerpiece of our act is five minutes of audience participation and sing-along. The chapters for whom we perform seem to appreciate that part of our act as well.

I'm reminded of "the good old days" when the song leader was a much anticipated feature of a chapter show. I so fondly remember Lloyd Steinkamp, Freddie King, Paul Schmidt, Tom O'Malley and others, all of whom could stand an audience on its ear by bringing a polished sing-along act to the stage.

To the extent that community singing has faded away in your town, you might want to ask if we have we simply let it fade away. Our Society's vision statement suggests one of our purposes is to get and to keep singing in our communities. I'm here to tell you that it's fun, it's easy, and you can do it, too!

Let's harmonize,



THE HARMONIZER

WWW.SPEBSQSA.ORG/HARMONIZER

July/August 2002



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SPEBSQSA Vision Statement

The Society is to be an ever-growing fraternity of barbershop-style singers, leading the cause of encouraging vocal music in our schools and communities.



The official charity of SPEBSQSA, coordinating the Society's charitable mission to "preserve our musical legacy through support of vocal music education in our schools and communities." Call 800-876-7464 x8447 for donation, gift-planning, grant or sponsorship information.

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The Perfect Gents nearly sweep Sweepstakes

As **The Perfect Gentlemen** finished the tag for their opening song, "Blue Skies"—with a Tony DeRosa-esque hanger by lead Dan Jordan—the mostly non-barbershop Harmony Sweepstakes audience absolutely exploded. It was yet another enthusiastic reception for barbershop in America's most prestigious non-barbershop a cappella contest.

By the time the night was over, The Perfect Gentlemen had completed a Sweepstakes first by nearly sweeping the awards vs. seven other regional winners. They won "Audience Favorite," "Best Arrangement," and the big enchilada as 2002 Harmony Sweepstakes Champion. The win marks the second time they finished in the top three; they took second in 2000. This is the fourth time in five years a barbershop group finished in the top three. (Metropolis won in 1998 and Freestyle placed third in 2001.)

Jordan, also lead of **The New Tradition** (1985 international quartet champion) led the group in his winning arrangement, "Salute to the 20th Century," which he originally performed with the **139th Street Quartet**. The Perfect Gentlemen were formed in 1998 and are members of the **South Bay** and **Main Street USA** chapters.



THE WINNERS: Dan Jordan **D**, Tim Reeder **T**, Mike Economou **Br**, Jim Campbell **Bs**.

To compete in or watch future Harmony Sweepstakes contests, visit www.harmony-sweepstakes.com

What do *you* want out of your Society? Results of phone survey

Ninety-six randomly selected chapter presidents were recently interviewed, half from chapters above the Society's median size, half below. Each was asked this open-ended question: What five things should the district or the Society do for your chapter to help make the chapter experience even more fulfilling for your members? How do their priorities line up with your chapter's needs?

76% discussed music education

- 47% mentioned music education programs and visits from Society and district music men
- 27% saw the need for music experts to talk with school music educators
- 19% mentioned a need for free coaching, or less expensive music education programs or learning tapes

60% discussed reducing costs

- 49% wanted help reducing costs and/or getting grants
- 19% mentioned a need for free coaching, or less expensive music education programs or learning tapes

58% discussed membership growth

- 34% mentioned help with membership growth and retention, finding particular singers, etc.
- 35% wanted a Society-wide advertising campaign to attract new guys

36% discussed fun

- 19% mentioned interchapter activities and festivals
- 16% saw a need to bring back the Program Vice President position
- 5% mentioned a need for convention activities other than contests

18% asked that we visit or call them

For the full study by the Society's Chapter Support and Leadership Training committee's advisory team, go to www.spebsqsa.org/***.



Enhanced search: search the entire site, from anywhere on the site. A powerful new search engine gives you a summary of the stories you're looking for, and takes you to the right material.

Know someone who would benefit from something you've read on our site? Simply click the icon to send the page!

Want a copy for your chapter bulletin, personal reference or upcoming workshop? Click the icon to get a printer-friendly version.

Presto! A new, better Web site for SPEBSQSA

Following a radical rethinking and re-engineering, the prototype of the Society's flagship Web site is now online at www.spebsqsa.org

Code-named "presto," the new site is faster, more attractive, and easier to navigate. "This represents a major stride forward in the Society's education efforts," said Executive Director Darryl Flinn. "We are poised to unlock the knowledge of 33,000 brains and bring it all to the Web quickly, effectively, and securely."

Most core knowledge of the old site has moved to presto—which may mean, paradoxically, that it's harder to find as visitors become accustomed to the new locations for old favorites. Never fear: most "old" addresses will point to the new locations during the switchover. Project leaders Scott Hoge (Manager of Information Systems) and Brian Lynch (e-Business Strategist) welcome your feedback at presto@spebsqsa.org

PROFESSIONAL MUSIC POSITION OPENING

SPEBSQSA is now seeking qualified applicants for a Music staff position.

DUTIES

Major duties would include conducting music activities for you and music teachers, developing music festivals and workshops, and travel to various districts to facilitate the Society's mission statement.

BACKGROUND and SKILLS

- Bachelor's degree in music/music education required; master's or doctorate preferred
- Previous music teaching experience
- Experience as a music director of a barbershop chapter
- Excellent teaching skills
- Quartet experience desirable

If you have serious interest in this position, please contact Dr. Greg Lyne at 800-876-7464 x8549 or glyne@spebsqsa.org

Society briefs

New Music Premiere titles released. An annual Music Premiere subscription gets you two six-song packets, one in the spring and one in the fall. Each comes with a demo tape of the songs. Part-predominant learning tapes are also available for purchase. The first six titles this year are: "Cross That Mason-Dixon Line," "Got My Thumb Out," "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands," "I Love To Hear That Old Barbershop Style," "If My Friends Could See Me Now," "Love Letters."

Subscribe through Harmony Marketplace at 800-876-7464 x8410. The subscription cost of \$14.95 (USD) includes shipping and handling.

Sing better. The Society has recently produced a basic vocal production videotape suitable for both the novice and the experienced Barbershopper. Joel Rutherford, bass of Acoustix, and Tim Brooks, one of the leads of **Yesteryear**, demonstrate the fundamentals of good singing, in an easy-to-understand style. "Basic Vocal Production for Barbershoppers" can be ordered through Harmony Marketplace: 800-876-7464 x8410.

Big convention season still going. The week-long Buckeye Invitational includes PLATINUM's last-ever U.S. appearance. Quartets and choruses from across the country will also compete that week. Other headliners include **Nightlife**, **Revival**, **FRED**, **Showtime**, England's **Rockaholix** and Russia's **InterMelody**, perennial Sweet Adelines champ chorus **The Melodeers**, and **Uptown Sound**, 2001 international silver medalist. Visit www.singingbuckeyes.org or call 614-459-0400.

Bolton Landing Festival, Aug. 30-Sept. 2 at Lake George in Upstate New York, includes three shows, chorus and quartet contests, lake cruise and more! Headliners include **Metropolis**, **Reprise**, **Saturday Evening Post**, **Roadshow**, **The Perfect Gentlemen**, SAI Queens **A Cappella Gold**, HI Queens **Upstate Rhythm**, **Reveille**, **Tortilla Flats**, **Injoy**. Call 518-644-3831 or visit www.boltonbarbershopfest.com.

And now, live: Mike and Carolyn's wedding!

When it comes to marriage, some people are looking for a quiet engagement and a small, intimate ceremony. And then there's Barbershopper Michael Laurel. He's far from the first man to propose via a barbershop quartet, but when this Great Northern Union member proposed to his fiancé, Carolyn Lowe, with the help of **Bravo**, the quartet's role in the upcoming wedding was only just beginning.

Mike and Carolyn appeared on Minneapolis'



KARE-11 TV's Morning Show with the quartet to discuss the details of their musical wedding proposal. The preparations for the proposal, which had been dubbed "Operation Girlfriend Has No Clue," culminated with a

"chance" meeting of college buddies in a crowded restaurant, some well-placed recording equipment and lighting, a love song by the quartet and ... well, you've heard similar stories many times.

Four other engaged couples shared their unique stories on the show over several days, and viewers were encouraged to go to the Web to vote for the best proposal. Michael and Carolyn won, which was merely the beginning of their less than private engagement. Viewers got to vote on all aspects of the wedding (her dress, his tuxedo, cake, honeymoon, etc.); however, the estimated \$30,000 in expenses of the wedding were paid by the TV station.

At least they got a private ceremony on May 18. It was just the couple, their family and friends, and the camera crew of KARE-11. Hey for \$30,000, what's a few thousand strangers watching your wedding?



SHE HAD A RING on her finger before she knew what was happening. This very public marriage proposal was eclipsed by their televised engagement and wedding. (Now add international magazine coverage to the list.)



SPEBSQSA / 2003
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Barbershop: La joie de vivre

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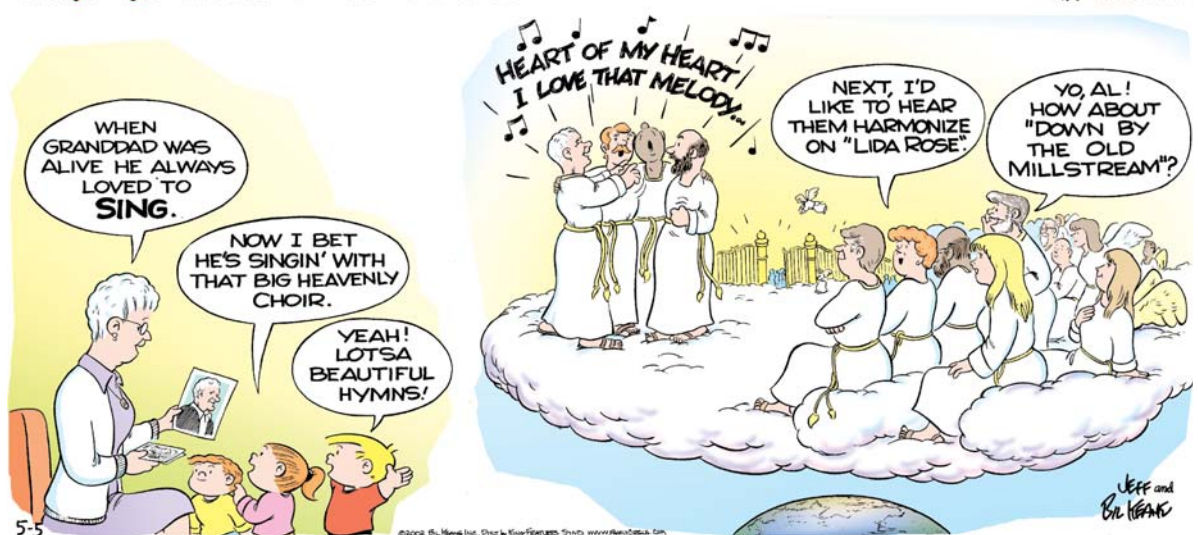
MIDWINTER

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2004
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HARMONY
COLLEGE /
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS®



NO SURPRISE HERE. In case you weren't reading the comics on May 5, cartoonist Bill Keane reminded us that even if we don't know what the afterlife looks like, we've got a pretty good idea what it sounds like. Perhaps one day we can all join for some serious chorus singing in Seventh Heaven. ■

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HARMONY HOW-TO

Kevin Keller, Music judge and Cheers! baritone



Avoid a “premature delivery” at contests (Or, perform your best on stage—not in the warm-up room)

You should have heard us in the warm-up room. Our contest set was awesome!” May I never hear those words again. It breaks my heart to hear quartets and choruses utter them. As a chorus and quartet performer, here is a vital lesson I’ve learned about putting your best effort on stage in competition.

Enjoy all your regular routines and rituals on contest day ...

There is an electricity, an energy, a magic that occurs when you go to contest. From the moment you arrive, the energy builds. The butterflies shake the dust off their wings and begin their stretching exercises. The rest of the world’s trials and tribulations are set aside for that six minutes on stage. You go through some preliminary meetings, chit-chat, etc. That’s all fine and good—it gets all the butterflies fully awake and ready for action.

Then, finally, there’s the meeting of the singers—hotel rooms for quartets and ball-rooms for choruses. You sing through the songs. *“Holy cow—we’ve never sung it that well!”* Well ... of course! After all, you’ve been practicing, and more important, you’re focused on the task at hand. The moment is *now*. All this singing and practicing is productive. Tweaks here and there. More focus. The excitement builds, the anticipation!

Then rehearsal is over. “Gosh, if we could sing like this all the time!” Time to put on the duds, put on the makeup. Energy is beginning to heighten. Looking sharp. Butterflies have been put into stage alert. The group reassembles. You begin “The Pattern”—walking from room to room, the photos, the trips in cars/vans/buses, all which increase your adrenaline and sense of the magnitude of the event. The electricity heightens. You anticipate that magical moment when you want to unleash your very best to a hungry crowd of family, friends, and judges.

... but don’t you dare do this!

You’re directed to your warm-up room. All systems go, and then it kicks in: You’re feeling a little nervous. You haven’t sung a note in 15-20 minutes or more, and you wonder if it’s there? *“Let’s run a set, guys!”* And that performance of your contest set is absolutely the pinnacle of your barbershop career. Everything is working, even the stuff that normally gives you problems is magical. What fun—you don’t want it to end. Whoops and high-fives all around. “Cool, let’s get the show on the road!”

And with that backstage performance, all of the hours of pent-up energy, excitement, and magic is gone and unrecoverable in time for the stage. Only the butterflies remain.

There’s one person you’ll need to disappoint, however

I’ve yet to figure out why singers and directors are obsessed with putting on a performance right before they go on stage. Not all do, and they are usually the ones that have learned from experience! The worst story is, “Our host wanted to see and hear the contest set.” Sure, that host is a wonderful person who, bless his heart, doesn’t get to see the contest. But given the choice of a disappointed host and the performance of my lifetime in front of thousands of people, or a thrilled host and a disappointing performance, I’ll take the former.

Here’s what to do in the warm-up room

When I walk choruses and quartets through the pattern, as well as in any of my quartets, we sing the intro of each song, and then the intro of the first song once again. This is our “making sure the voice works” reality check, which provides the assurance that each of us needs. Do nothing more. Keep the lid on the pot and let it simmer, let it cook. The rest of the time, focus on the positive reinforcement of the journey and your love for each other.



When I directed a chorus in district competition one year, several members were somewhat nervous about how little we were singing as we got closer to going on stage. Obviously, they had previously sung up until the stage. My response was, "You'll be awesome. You sound great right now. We're ready." And they were. They sang to their potential because they wanted to unleash what was inside them, and I didn't let them do so until they were on stage. In the warm-up room, I wouldn't even let them stand on the risers.

Trust the members of your group

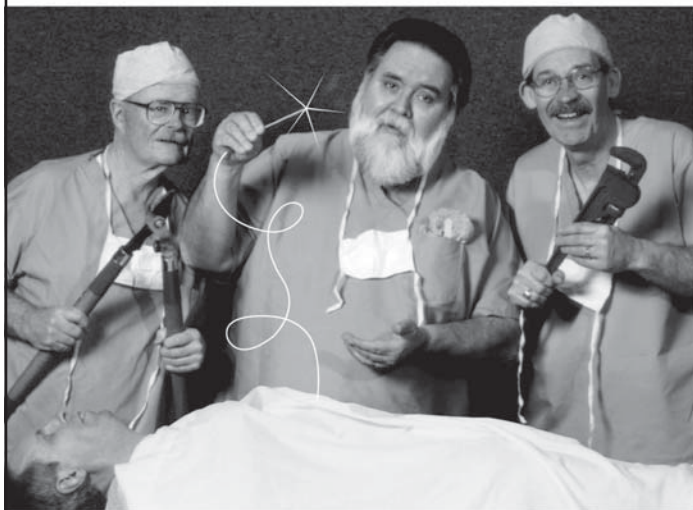
You've sung each of the songs 1,537 times—you've got the notes and words pretty well down. If you don't have it now, nothing will help! Trust that when you go on stage, the guys in your group will do their jobs. Trust that they feel the same way about your level of preparation. Trust that when you open your mouth, a sound will come out. Trust that if the changes you worked on don't happen, the judges wouldn't know the difference—the fact is, they *won't* know whether you'd practiced it differently! Trust that your "muscle" memory and the habits established in rehearsal will carry you.

Bank on that trust and get caught in "the zone"

Now that you're trusting that things will go right, choose to be captured in that magical moment and ride it for all its worth. Trust that the excitement, energy and magic will control the butterflies and get them "flying in formation." In that magical moment that you're actually on stage, choose to be caught up in the moment with your fellow singers. You're trusting the technical details will be taken care of by your subconscious mind while you consciously remain caught up in the emotion of the song and the performance—that's the "zone" that many experienced performers talk about. Trust that you and members of your group know each other well enough to take advantage of that special opportunity.

With this approach, my trust has never failed me or anybody with whom I've walked through the pattern. Save your magic for the stage! May no one say, "You should have heard us in the warm-up room!" ■

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Barbershoppers, take note: your baritone jokes don't apply to this opera star.

A real baritone ...

If you know opera, you know Sherrill Milnes—the foremost operatic baritone performing today. A commanding performer and breathtaking singer, for decades he has appeared on the world's most prestigious opera stages. He is the most recorded American opera star ever, and is a noted operatic conductor as well.

Milnes is also a fan of barbershop, having sung it in high school and as an undergraduate student at Drake University. And now he is the Society's newest honorary lifetime member, having received the honor at a May 5 reception at Harmony Hall. The reception also honored 2001 international champion Michigan Jake.

Milnes visited Kenosha from nearby Chicago, where he is presently Distinguished Professor of Music at Northwestern University. During the visit, our Society's chief music professor, Dr. Greg Lyne, took a few minutes to discuss music with Milnes.

Greg Lyne: Mr. Milnes, you have received many honors through the years. What do you think of being presented an honorary lifetime membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society?

Sherrill Milnes: Well, barbershop was part of my musical background. In addition to singing *Messiah*, *Elijah* and Brahms *Requiem* in high school and college, I was also in a barbershop quartet. In college, we weren't really an official barbershop quartet because we'd throw in some **Hi-Los**, some **Four Freshman** harmonies, and I know there were certain parameters which might have somewhat changed. I don't know, but in the '50s there were certain things you couldn't do or it became too much like jazz. All four guys in our quartet played trombone (I was a tuba player actually), but the four of us used to do barbershop quartet material on the trombones. Four trombones playing barbershop-style music is just great!

G: Absolutely ... nice and rich.

S: And, I always loved the clarity and crispness of barbershop. Barbershop harmony is never fugal, and it is always vertical. It is very sharp, clean and exciting. There is a lot of muscle in that kind of harmony. And it was great on trombones. I remember we had the harmonies all worked out, and we would sing "Grandfather's Clock" or "Coney Island Baby" and a host of songs. We would finish a phrase and the leader would put his thumb up or put his thumb down and we would just start the next section up a step or down a half a step.

G: So it was somewhat improvisatory?

S: Rather, I guess that would be fair.

G: Obviously you are known worldwide as a soloist. Do you make any adaptations when you perform with an opera ensemble? More generally, should a singer make

any vocal adjustments when doing ensemble work?

S: No, the simple answer is no. You don't have to be quite as loud because there are other folks with you. So you can save just a little bit, but every time there is a quasi-solo passage where your voice is supposed to come out over, you tighten the screws and kick a little harder. But when you are a harmony part, you can save a little bit. In fact, I would say that in ensemble singing, that's the time when I would use the words "fun," or "satisfaction." When singing with an ensemble, you are not being shown off as a soloist. When it is time for your aria, your mind knows that this is what the audience is waiting for and your heart goes faster, there is no question about it.

G: That leads into another question that I have for you. You have perhaps the most commanding presence on stage of any performer that I have ever seen. Could you share with us some thoughts on how you prepare when performing and how you bring your personal best to the stage?

S: I don't think it is a thing that just happens. You have to dig into your guts and into your soul muscle. Careers are made up of many performances and doing your best at each performance. Not the best there ever was, because we are humans, not machines. I always tried to sing every performance as though it was my only performance, and perform to the maximum that I could, and thinking of each performance as its own entity. Of the 654 performances I sang at the Met in 35 roles, I never thought of a performance as just one of many. There is only the one that you are performing right now. And I suppose that maybe that is the answer with any skill. You must give it your utmost at the moment.

G: In the case of your performances, that shows.

"Barbershop is very sharp, clean and exciting. There is a lot of muscle in that kind of harmony."

Barbershop harmony may have peaked in public awareness and popularity about a century ago; in opera music, probably two centuries ago. Yet, we are witnessing a surge of young singers interested in barbershop harmony today. How do you feel the opera world is doing in creating interest among youth these days?

S: I'd guess that there are more young people coming into barbershop singing. There is a lot of interest in opera today, also. The use of supertitles or subtitles has made a huge difference. This has given people permission to enter into the spirit of whatever is going on, whatever the story line. Now people can stay with it.

There are more opera companies in the United States of America right now doing performances of opera than ever before in history. The back of *Opera News*, the magazine of the Metropolitan Opera Guild, used to be two or three pages. Now there are 10 pages in small print of what is happening this month and next month.

Tony Randall, who was a good friend of ours, said to me, "You deal only with masterpieces and minor masterpieces." All operas being performed are proven masterpieces. Even some of the lesser operas are still tried and true and known. *Othello* as an opera is probably greater than *Othello* as the play. An opera singer doesn't have to deal with mediocrity, and our business is performing music that we know. Opera is a tribute to the music's indestructibility.

For those going into opera as a career, the numbers probably haven't changed. Do remember that at age 20, in gymnastics, you are an "old-timer!" Twenty would be an embryonic age for singing opera. At 20, you might begin to develop a love for opera and develop your music skills and slowly begin your work with the voice. Somewhere around 25

or 30, or even older, the voice begins to settle into its maturity.

G: *Our Society is filled with men who love to sing and who wish to sing better. What general guidelines about singing and approach to singing might you like to share with us?*

S: You can't really give a voice lesson with words, but I'd say to stand tall, chest and shoulders comfortably high, feel wide across the chest, not sunken. At the same time, never in a stiff, bloated manner. Always with flexibility.

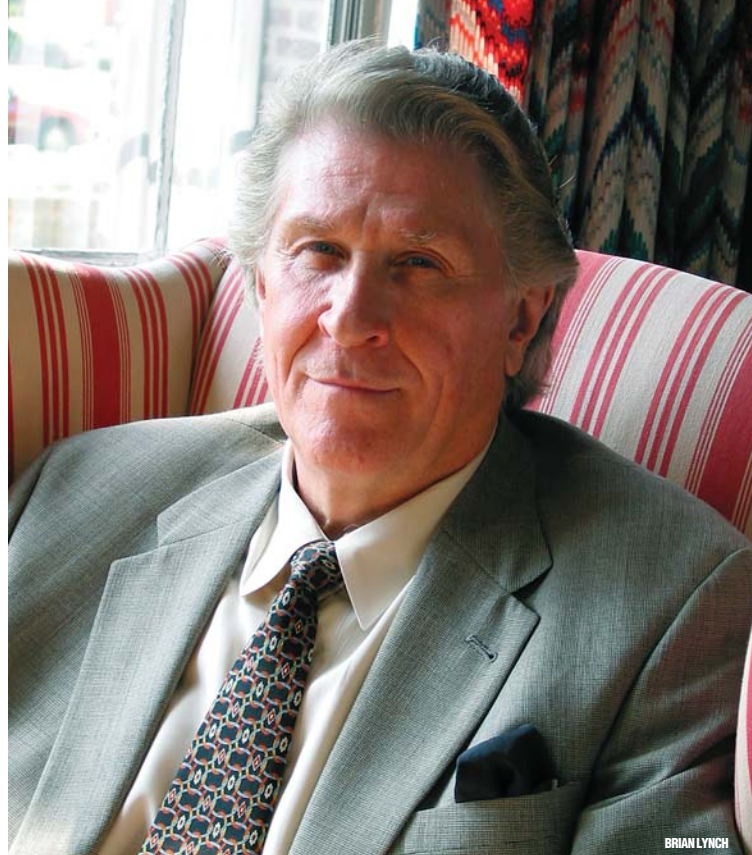
Feel the breath low on the sides and the back. Amateur singers sometimes sing with a throaty quality. To avoid this, the singer must keep an open throat as much as possible. A quiet breath makes an open throat. (He breathes with a noisy audible breath) See, the noisy breath I just took dries out the throat. I am going to swallow immediately to re-lubricate. If you breathe quietly, you do not dry out the throat, and the breath has gone lower.

Try to keep your chin from going up like someone is going to take a jab at it. Keep your chin flexible and down.

G: *If you could choose a dream quartet, considering all of the people you have sung with, who would be the other singers in that quartet?*

S: What kind of music—opera, oratorio and must they be all living singers?

"An opera singer doesn't have to deal with mediocrity. Opera is a tribute to the music's indestructibility."



SHERRILL MILNES at Harmony Hall.

G: *Just four male singers singing in a cappella style that would produce a fabulous sound and be a wonderful performing ensemble.*

S: Sam Ramey would be singing bass. I think the melody singer would be Richard Tucker, because you would always hear the melody. And the top tenor would be Nicolai Gedda. I guess I'd sing the baritone part.

G: *Wow, what a foursome that would be! That means Sherrill Milnes would be singing baritone in a barbershop quartet! That is a most exciting thought, Sherrill!*

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Milnes. It means a great deal to me, personally, that you and Maria are with us today, and it will be an honor for our Barbershop Harmony Society to present you with an honorary lifetime membership later this afternoon.

S: Thank you. ■

Sherrill Milnes

Opera fans, take note: this world-class singer is also a Barbershopper.

When crowd-pleasers like The Entertainmen of Sweden go over the top, Presentation judges will usually reward their originality. But other types of performances can cross the fuzzy gray lines of the contest rules.

Pushing the envelope in contests

A closer look at some **GRAY AREAS** in the Presentation category

If we beat some drumsticks together and sing a parody about a French revolution while dressed in female attire, waving a religious flag, and then tell a stuffed dog to sit, will we be disqualified?

Nobody has ever done *all* of the above at the same time, but each has happened on a contest stage. Could any of those acts result in penalties or disqualification? The answer is, "It depends."

Barbershoppers can be a very creative people, and we Presentation judges appreciate creativity as much as anyone else. We love it when a group makes us laugh, makes us cry, or pulls something out of its hat that makes us want to stand up and cheer. You can almost always expect to see a well-executed idea rewarded in the Presentation score.

And then there are the gray areas. Sometimes, a group puts something different on stage, and neither the audience nor the judges can decide whether it falls within the contest rules or pushes the envelope too much. Presentation rules are designed to maximize the rewards for creativity—but within reason. Because we can't write a rule to anticipate everything that will ever be seen or heard, many potential rule violations must be left up to the judgment of, well, *the judges*.

Occasionally, we Presentation judges see a clear contest rule violation—an off-color reference, a non-member on stage, and the like. More often, we see areas that are not clear and which fall into that ever-growing "gray area." Let's see if we can clear those areas up a bit by discussing a number of gray area performances that have been seen on our contest stages.



Larry Clemons
Presentation Category
Specialist
clemons@earthlink.net



A GUY IN A DRESS on stage?
Judges wouldn't care about this inoffensive Most Happy Fellows routine; however, in some other contexts, a man dressing or behaving as a woman could carry a variety of penalties.

cross-dressing

Musical accompaniment

The rule: Songs must be sung without any kind of musical accompaniment and without instrumental introduction, interlude, or conclusion.

Gray-area performances

- **Case 1.** A chorus member blows a single note on a trumpet to give the group its pitch. Is this musical

accompaniment, or no different than a sound made on a pitch pipe?

- **Case 2.** A quartet member plays “Reveille” on a trumpet, and then the quartet sings a soldier song. How many notes does it take to be musical accompaniment?
- **Case 3.** A chorus uses several pitch pipes to make a chord, which emulates a train whistle in preparation for “When That Midnight Choo Choo Leaves For Alabam’.” How many notes does it take to become a musical instrument?

Interpretation

The intent of this rule is to maintain the integrity of a cappella singing. Here is a guideline that may help: Any use of a musical instrument that supports the song in meter, melody or harmony would clearly violate the rule. Any other use of musical instruments would be at risk for score reduction.

How they were judged

- **Case 1.** This has occurred with single notes from various instruments. The single note on the trumpet would probably receive no penalty. (Note the word *probably*—it depends on the context.) If that same trumpet player were to have played two notes, *maybe* the group would still receive no penalty—we’ve all heard the key note and then a different starting note blown on a pitch pipe.
- **Case 2.** Playing “Reveille” is a clear rule violation. This song was scored zero.
- **Case 3.** The sounding of more than one pitch pipe was deemed to be the same as what some choruses sound two or even three pitch pipes—nothing says they have to sound the same note. This case received no penalties.

Non-member on stage

The rule: Persons who are not members of the competing chorus or quartet may not appear on stage during the performance.

Gray-area performances

- **Case 1.** As a quartet mentions the name of a well-known Society arranger in a song, the arranger steps from the side curtain onto the stage, gets an audience reaction, then steps off the stage. Did a non-member of the quartet appear on stage during the performance? Was this too brief for concern? Did the quartet know it would happen? Given audience reaction, was this part of the performance?
- **Case 2.** A chorus parody includes a chorus mem-



NON-SINGING INTERRUPTIONS were a hallmark for FRED, but the quartet wasn't penalized for them. Why? The gags worked smoothly within the themes they'd established (and they were funny), they weren't excessive, and they were bookended by singing. Had FRED spoken before, after or between songs, there would have been penalties.

ber in a full-body chicken costume. Another chorus member dressed as Colonel Sanders chases the chicken and “chops” its head off, revealing that the person in the outfit is a woman. She was not performing as chorus member, but as a chicken—is this a non-member on stage?

- **Case 3.** During a contest song, a chorus member plays the role of a celebrity. Women from the audience come to the apron of the stage, and the chorus member walks to the front of the stage, signs an autograph book, and returns it to one woman. Did this pre-planned exchange extend the performance area of the chorus to include the area in front of the stage? Did the women then become non-members on stage?



What do Presentation judges look for?

Presentation judges award the highest scores to performances that reflect outstanding levels of entertainment, resulting in totally appropriate and believable emotional effects.

- Emotions are presented from the heart
- The audience has totally bought into the emotional impact of the performance
- There are no significant traces of artificial or unnecessary embellishments
- The performance exhibits unyielding excellence

The best of the best performances have no discernible flaws, and can be described as superb, exquisite, breathless, captivating, hilarious, overwhelming, deeply moving, etc. (taken from *Contest & Judging Handbook*)

Interpretation

In case 1, five men on stage at any time during a quartet number violates the rule. However, an arranger appearing during a chorus contest would violate the rule only if he did not have membership in that chorus. (The judges would not immediately know whether he had dual membership. We'd check chorus records in that case.) In case 2, clearly, a non-member appeared on stage. Case 3 is less clear. Presentation judges define the term “stage” not only as the lit, curtained performance

LAMPOONING
THE SOUTH
while in Nash-
ville? Overture
did it with flair
last year and re-

taste issues

ceived high scores and plenty of
applause. That doesn't mean every
lampoon is fair game, however.
Judges measure taste issues by
whether many or even some in the
audience could take offense.



area, but as "wherever the performance takes place." Thus, pre-planned interaction with audience members could invoke a scoring penalty.

How they were judged

- **Case 1.** Two of the five presentation judges lowered their score small amounts.
- **Case 2.** Two of the three presentation judges forfeited their score and the third judge lowered his score.
- **Case 3.** The autograph seekers were judged to be part of the performance, therefore placing all of them "on stage." The song received a zero from that judge.

Actions in poor taste

The rule: Actions by any contestant that are deemed to be suggestive, vulgar or otherwise not in good taste will not be allowed.

Gray-area performances

- **Case 1.** A quartet song includes a reference to a bird flying over the quartet. The physical actions of the quartet indicate that the bird makes one or more "deposits" on a quartet member. (We have seen this routine several times.) Is this in poor taste?
- **Case 2.** A quartet is dressed in western outfits complete with hats and guns. One of the quartet members tucks a hand gun into the front of his pants. The gun goes off and the physical behavior indicates that the shot has affected

part of his male anatomy. Is this offensive?

- **Case 3.** A quartet is dressed as woodsmen, holding real axes. They sing two parody songs—one in which they chop a tree down, which falls on their dog and kills it. In the second song, they threaten their girlfriend with the line, "I've got an axe in my hand ..." accompanied by threatening moves with the axes. Is this offensive?

Interpretation

Whose good taste are we talking about? What if a judge at the division contest

thought the song was funny and the judge at the district contest forfeited their score? How can that be? The test for good taste stated in the Contest & Judging Handbook is: *Does the lyric or presentation dignify a subject that by today's standards is clearly offensive to most mature people? If "clearly" and "most" are not appropriate words, but "may be" and "many" are, then a light-to-moderate penalty should be given.* (C&J Handbook, p. 42)

How they were judged

- **Case 1.** Bird dropping incidents have received penalties from a few points to total forfeiture. The degree of penalty has been related to what the quartet does with the droppings. Smearing and tasting have received the highest penalties.
- **Case 2.** The modification of the male anatomy by gun shot has been done a few times. Usually, this action has resulted in forfeiture of score.
- **Case 3.** This was used as a test case at a Presentation category school. Some judges found the routine funny with no penalty, some lowered their score, and some awarded a zero. Some gray areas will always be gray areas.

When does a performance (and judging) begin?

The emcee calls for the doors to be closed, the house lights to be dimmed, and then announces the next competitor. The curtain opens on a chorus, or a quartet enters the performance area. Is this when Presentation judges begin to score the performance? Not at all. Here are examples of why they don't.

Once, prior to being introduced by the emcee, about seven members of the chorus that was about to be announced walked out in front of the curtain and performed the opening train scene from "The Music Man," then went backstage for the emcee's introduction. In another instance, one quartet member came on stage and lay down in front of the microphones while the emcee was still telling jokes before introducing the quartet.

Presentation judges begin judging when it is apparent that the performance has begun, and finish judging when it is apparent that the performance has concluded, regardless of where or when that takes place. That also means that whatever is against the rules after the curtain is up will be penalized if it occurs *before or after* that time.

Non-Singing Comment or Dialogue

Rule A. Non-singing comment or dialogue during a song is permitted only to the limited extent where used to contribute to the

theme of the song performance. Use of non-singing comment or dialogue deemed to be excessive to the Presentation judge(s) shall be penalized up to and including forfeiture. Rule B: Comment or dialogue, whether sung or spoken, before, between or after the songs, is not permitted, except for quiet spoken comments to correct legitimate problems or thank the audience during applause. Any other comment or dialogue outside the song performance, whether or not intended to be of the presentation, shall be penalized by the Presentation judge(s) up to and including forfeiture.

Gray-area performances

- **Case 1.** A quartet steps to the microphone to sing their second contest song and is interrupted by a cell phone ringing. A quartet member pulls the phone from his pocket and has a brief discussion about how their next song is a bad choice. After the call, the quartet again approaches the microphone, only to be interrupted by another phone call taken by another quartet member on the same subject. Is this a violation of the non-singing comment rule?
- **Case 2.** A quartet places a stuffed dog (in a sitting position) on the stage apron in front of the microphone. Prior to singing a song, one quartet member looks at the dog and commands, "Sit." At another point prior to a song, the quartet member commands the dog, "Roll over." Considering the visual set-up and the verbal punch line, doesn't this violate the non-singing comment rule?

- **Case 3.** Prior to the singing of a song, a chorus director audibly and rhythmically says "Ah 1, ah 2, ah 1, 2, 3." Isn't this talking?

Interpretation

Presentation judges have kicked this around for a long time, and there seems to be no end in sight (or sound, as the case may be). The smallest nutshell possible is this: measured and limited use of dialog during a song that clearly supports an aspect of the song/theme may be acceptable. However, dialog before, between or after songs is not acceptable in contests.

How they were judged

- **Case 1.** Both presentation judges awarded a 30-point penalty. It is just as likely that the same routine would receive zero scores.
- **Case 2.** There was considerable discussion among judges that the single word "sit," when coupled with the visual setup, constituted a one-word joke; however, a penalty

Definition of "stage"

The term "stage" was intended to mean the general area of the theater within and just behind the proscenium arch outlined by curtains and specifically lighted for performance. In a ballroom or similar setting, the stage is the raised platform area with lighting and microphones. This would seem simple, but the creativity of our groups forces Presentation judges to be liberal with the definition of "stage."

For example, one chorus tossed their director off the front of the stage as part of the performance. Was he not still on the "stage," his actions still being judged? Another chorus lined the front of the stage with non-member gangster characters who were not singing, but were clearly part of the act. (The gangster chorus forfeited its score for allowing non-members on stage.)

Those are only two reasons Presentation judges tend to define the stage as "wherever the performance takes place" rather than by a physical location.



Puttin' on the Ritz

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could have been assessed whether or not the word was interpreted as a joke. This use of the word “sit” did not result in a penalty. It did prompt considerable discussion and would be in jeopardy of a penalty if repeated.

- **Case 3.** The verbal tempo setup demonstrates the thin line between establishing a tempo and introducing a song. A simple setup of the tempo directed toward the chorus would not likely receive a penalty. However, if the director turns to the audience and delivers a vocal and visual dramatization of the verbal setup, it could be interpreted as verbally setting up the song. It depends on how it came off. Some judges may even interpret that the song started with the verbal tempo setting and therefore the verbal comment occurred during the song. It can't get any more gray than that. The actual case was mentioned in the evaluation as a caution, but was not penalized.

Religious Songs

The rule: A song performed in contest must be neither primarily patriotic or primarily religious in intent.

Gray-area performances

- **Case 1.** A quartet sings a “Do Lord / I’ve Got a Home in Glory Land” medley. Can these songs be sung in a way that is anything other than religious?
- **Case 2.** A prominent chorus per-

The most outrageous things seen on stage

Sometimes “over the top” can’t begin to describe some performances. Here are a few of the most outrageous presentations brought to our attention.

Between songs, two members exited the stage and one climbed into a coffin, which was then wheeled out by the other. Arising from the coffin was a vampire who proceeded to introduce the next song and spoke most of the song lyrics. Knowing his quartet would receive mostly zero scores, the vampire exited the front of the stage by “flying” into the judges area, picked up one of the judge’s score sheets and ripped it apart before the audience, then bit Presentation judge John *Coffin* on the neck. (The scores: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 20 & 81!)

A woman (actually, one of the chorus’s coaches) started the performance of song 1 as the director until a group of guys came on stage and removed her. They finished song 1 with a man directing. In song 2, the woman reappeared, trying to take over the stage and *performing!* One judge on that panel forfeited their score for that song and another took off 3.7 points for that, plus 4.8 for the director asking the audience to sing along (solo voice by director teaching audience the tag) plus 5.5 points for excessive dialogue. Another judge took off 15 points for general ruckus that interfered with genuine barbershop performance feeling.

The most outrageous thing ever seen. A comedy quartet called **The Aliens** sang a straight set the first night of district competition, then came up with a phony excuse to perform last the next night. That night, they came on stage and started to sing some beautiful chords. No wonder, because the quartet was *lip-synching* to a recording of the **Boston Common**, a point that was driven home when, at a pre-planned moment, the recording slowed down to a crawl. The Aliens continued to lip-synch in slow motion, until their charade degraded into a slow motion fist fight.

It brought the house down. Many who were caught off guard in the audience remember it as the longest, hardest laugh they’ve *ever* had! Of course, the performance scored a zero ... and wasn’t it great?

forms “Bring Him Home,” causing some to ask whether it is a religious song, since the song is a prayer.

- **Case 3.** A quartet sings “Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven, But Nobody Wants to Die” with a comedy slant.

Interpretation

Most songs that extol a deity or government are fairly obvious. Other songs would seem to be in the religious/patriotic category, but upon a closer look are really not. Yes, more gray areas.

How they were judged

- **Case 1.** Even if the songs were staged

and performed in a “camp song” format, they would likely be penalized. In this case, they were delivered straight out and received two zero scores.

- **Case 2.** When Presentation judges were through discussing every possible angle, we discussed it again. The song, as performed, received no penalties.

- **Case 3.** Even though the song was taken as a comedy theme, the religious and revival-type delivery received a lower score.

Conclusion

Contest rules are far less restrictive now than ever before. Many restrictions and rule verbiage have been removed. This was done to promote individual expression and creativity in our barbershop performances. For every rule that remains, there is a new way to interpret it and push the envelope. This is good. This is also the seed for gray areas on the contest stage. Knowing the rules is a good place to begin. Except for “blackface,” penalties for rule violations are “up to and including forfeiture.”

The creative energy of our groups keep our contests and shows alive and exciting. Presentation judges are not out to stifle performances that push the envelope. Rather, we are charged with determining what is stylistic of barbershop harmony and what may need to be penalized for crossing the gray line. So, let’s all sit back and enjoy **The Big Chicken Chorus**, the **Narragansett Bay Chorus**, and the many other barbershop performers who will keep our contests and shows full of creative fun. ■

DID YOU NOTICE? For the first time in many years, there was no Hal Purdy at the international convention inviting quartets to his large suite, where he supplied food and drinks to all who came for Purdy’s Corral. A successful golf course architect, even in his 90s, Purdy served a role model and mentor to Barbershoppers. He will be missed by thousands.

The calendar is packed with travel choices for you and your Barbershop friends!

-

2003 International Convention – Montréal

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	Adult	\$100 ea	\$
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add \$3 P&H for each 8 registrations ordered			\$
TOTAL (U.S. Funds)			\$
Price after Jan. 1 2003: \$115 Adult, \$58 Junior Price at the convention: \$125 Adult, \$63 Junior			



Do you have a hero? Honor him or her

In the past 10 months we've heard a lot about heroes—ordinary men and women who have “risen to the occasion.” They have given something extra to what they believe in or what they are dedicated to.

Perhaps you have a hero in SPEBSQSA—perhaps the person who brought you into the Society, your chorus director, the lead in your first quartet, or the guy who makes the coffee every Tuesday night at chapter meetings. Maybe it's your high school music teacher, your church choir director, or your wife who's always encouraged your singing.

Because Harmony Foundation supports singing and helps preserve our organization, for a limited time you can honor your hero through a special contribution to the Foundation

Between now and Sept. 11, 2002, for a minimum \$100 contribution to the Harmony Foundation General Fund, you may honor your “hero.” When you send the contribution, include a note that names the honoree and his or her address (if possible). Your hero will be notified that he or she has been honored by you. In addition, the names of all the heroes and those who honored them will be printed in a future issue of *The Harmonizer*. We also encourage you to include a note explaining why wanted to honor the person. We hope to include several of these when we list the heroes.

We need to honor our heroes. And we need to

be heroes to generations of singers. This is a great way to accomplish both.

How is your contribution used?

In the past year, Harmony Foundation donations helped:

- Provide grants for scores of vocal music projects in schools and communities (see details in the March and September issues of *The Harmonizer*).
- Fund 25 Directors College Scholarships
- Fund a quartet scholarship to Harmony College through the Larry L. Ajer Memorial Endowment
- Fund arranger scholarships to Harmony College through the Lou Perry Scholarship Endowment
- Provide general scholarships to Harmony College through the Earl Moon Memorial Endowment
- Fund six Harmony Explosion camps
- Support Young Men in Harmony programs
- Support projects at the Heritage Hall Museum of Barbershop Harmony
- Support projects in the SPEBSQSA Archives and Old Songs Library
- Provide chapter and district fund raising education
- Support grant and sponsorship seeking for Society projects

Your contributions impact thousands of lives with the gift of music. Your gifts to Harmony Foundation help others to *Sing ... for life*.



Barbershop performance has 4-year-old girl ‘talking’

The Lafayette Chapter (Tippecanotes Chorus) is a great example of how a chapter can support the Society's Charitable Mission through Harmony Foundation and do good work within its community. This chapter has consistently supported barbershop causes through Harmony Foundation and in 2001 was awarded a Silver Level Harmony Foundation award for its charitable activities.

Little Aubrey Lockard stood in the foyer at Burtsfield School surrounded by 10 Tippecanotes singers who were serenading the 4-year-old.

Not even tall enough to reach their waistlines, Aubrey beamed as the men continued their melody, singing a tribute to the vivacious girl with cerebral palsy.

“Aubrey, Aubrey, bless your heart ... you're the honey that I love so

well,” sang the Tippecanotes.

After completing their harmonious music, Jean Hall, former president of the Tippecanotes, bent down on one knee, put his hand on Aubrey's shoulder and gave her a small vocal device that will allow her to communicate better.

“The Tippecanotes are proud to give you this Dynamo speaking device,” Hall said. “You are such a cute little girl and you deserve this.”

Aubrey's mild cerebral palsy affects the muscles in her mouth, restricting



MICHAEL HEINZ, JOURNAL AND COURIER

her speech, explained her mother, Devon Fletcher. The device, a Dynavox Dynamo, features more than 3,300 symbols Aubrey can touch to communicate what she is thinking and feeling, or to carry on a conversation with others.

“What's the weather like today?” Fletcher asked.

Aubrey, who has attended Greater Lafayette Area Special Services at Burtsfield the last two years, pondered the question and looked down

at the pictures on the device. She touched a picture of a cloud with rain drops falling. A computer-like voice said, "rainy."

The Dynamo cost \$2,000. Fletcher wasn't able to purchase the device and insurance wouldn't cover it, so she gave up on the idea.

But GLASS representative Penny James made a few phone calls to several community organizations.

"When Penny called me and said she had made some contacts and found community members who were willing to buy (the Dynamo) for Aubrey, I instantly started crying," Fletcher said.

The Tippecanotes donated \$1,000, the American Legion Post 11 gave \$500 and the Cerebral Palsy Association offered another \$500.

"For someone that doesn't know her to do this for her was just unbelievable," Fletcher said.

Hall said the Tippecanotes look for community services and projects every year. Funds are raised through concerts and quartet requests for birthdays, Valentine's Day and other events.

To raise money, the Tippecanotes' quartets provide singing Valentines on Valentine's Day. It also will hold a concert 7 p.m. May 18 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts. Proceeds from the singing Valentines and the concert go toward community services.

Aubrey, who had a sweet smirk on her face from all the attention she was getting, gave each of the 10 Tippecanotes members a hug.

"When you make decisions as a



N HARMONY: Jean Hall of the Tippecanoe Chorus, kisses 4-year-old Aubrey Lockard on Friday after presenting her with a voice output device at the Greater Lafayette Area Special Services office in West Lafayette. The device will help Aubrey, who has cerebral palsy, communicate. The Tippecanotes is a music organization formed in 1947 and has about 40 members. The organization conducts several fundraisers throughout the year for various community services.

group, you feel good about it," Hall said. "But it doesn't compare to when you actually see her and see the smile on her face."

— By Naomi Reese, Feb. 2, 2002
Journal and Courier (Lafayette, Ind.)



COMMUNITY EFFORT—Dick Voakes, show chairman of the Oshkosh, Wis., chapter, displays a check representing the total of \$7200 raised during a Christmas concert by the chapter and five other singing groups. Other chapter members present \$1200 checks to the director of each participating group to donate to the charity of their choice. ■

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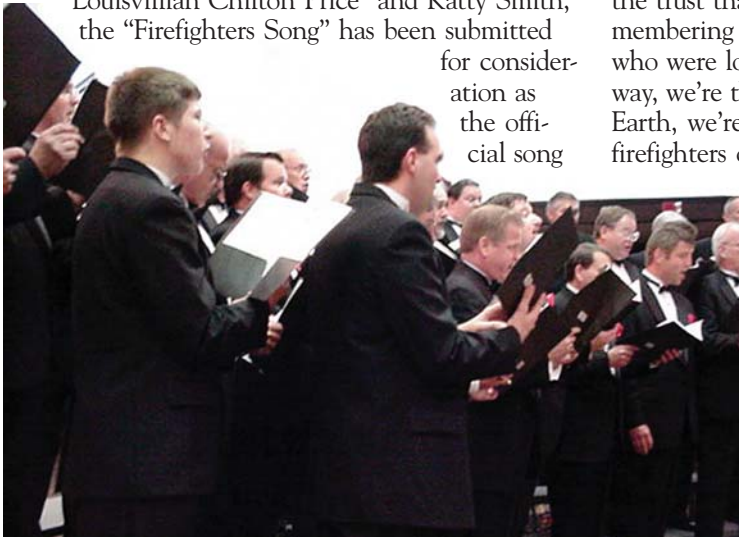
Chorus debuts song honoring firefighters

The **Louisville Thoroughbreds** chorus, directed by Allan Hatton, debuted a new song honoring America's fire fighters in its "Remember September" Armed Forces Dinner.

Written by double gold record composer Louisvillian Chilton Price and Katty Smith, the "Firefighters Song" has been submitted for consideration as the official song

of the National Firefighters Association and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

The lyrics, sung in march tempo, read in part: "Through smoke and flame we go, protectors of this mighty land. One thing for sure we know, we'll face the trust that's placed in us in one united band. Remembering our comrades who were lost along the way, we're the salt of the Earth, we're the firefighters of the USA."



Quartet keeps whole island afloat with song

VARIETY-PAK is keeping an obscure part of the world singing—Little Cranberry Island off the coast of Maine. The quartet from the Bangor chapter made a spring trip to the 60 full-time inhabitants, including the postmaster, two private homes, and the 11 students at the island's two-room schoolhouse.

Performing at the invitation of music teacher and Barbershopper Rob Mocarsky, the quartet beamed as some students performed "Down Our Way." This was a big deal for these kids, one of whom commutes to school from another island, and spent two days deciding what to wear for the big event. The students turned out to be quick learners who were enthusiastic about the sound. It's not likely to result in much of a boost for Society membership, since only one of the 11 students at is a boy! Variety Pak hopes to return this summer to sing at the island's only restaurant.





"Houston, we have a hero here ..."

When the Delnor-Community Hospital hosted its fourth annual Senior Vitality Celebration, who should they more appropriately invite to entertain than this year's senior quartet champion, Chicago Shuffle? More than 2,000 turned out to see the group's 30-minute performance. A few audience members were probably also there to hear from the speaker, Apollo 13 captain Jim Lovell (center). Ray Henders (T), Dave Boo (B), Howard Tweedle (L), and Darryl Cremer (B) were honored to share the stage with this genuine American hero.

Ever try to teach a tag to four boys whose voices are changing?

A lot of quartets have gotten to perform in "The Music Man," but few have gotten the applause **Gent's Night Out** got for a single bass note during its performance—and they weren't even on stage.

The guys were helping out in a fourth- and fifth-grade production at nearby Palmyra Elementary, which needed some help in the quartetting department. So when Professor Hill helped the 4-foot-tall quartet sing its first notes of barbershop on stage, it took the audience by surprise when from a back-stage mic, they heard the voice of bass Ed Neiman sing an outrageously mature, "IIIIIIICE.... CREEEEAAAAM!"

The audience exploded with wild laughter and applause that almost stopped the show, while the little guy on stage hammed it up with the best imitation of a barbershop squat you ever saw. From then on, every time the quartet had a voice over, the audience roared its approval.

At the cast party, the boys and girls had loads of questions for the Gents.

But the best moment for the quartet came when the on-stage bass told the quartet during a rehearsal, "Gee, I wish we could sing just once." They got him to sing a lead hanger for a tag. He beamed, and a few minutes later demonstrated his held note to other cast members.



BSQ meets BSA

Some two dozen men of the **Chorus of the Chesapeake** shared a patriotic moment with hundreds of members of the Boy Scouts of America at Camp Spencer in Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation recently.

The two groups retired 50 American flags through burning in a special evening ceremony that opened with the chorus singing "God Bless America." The flags then were retired in a 20-foot bonfire.

Earlier, chorus members sang for the boys at dinner and a pre-ceremony presentation. The scouts returned the favor, presenting a variety of songs, skits and cheers, while they waited for the bonfire to grow. Four chorus members got into the act with a very well-received rendition of "Bill Grogan's Goat."

It was a great evening for all, in which members of two old institutions got to share generations-old traditions worth preserving.



Building multicultural bridges in Denver

Members of the **Denver Mountainaires** chorus began making multicultural inroads this past Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in what is hoped to be the beginning of many cooperative efforts in the local community.

West Town Sound quartet members worked with black community leaders to coordinate performances during the holiday celebrations, reportedly the largest in the U.S. The quartet performed during an interfaith service attended by nearly 1,000 people, as well as on the steps of the state capitol building and other venues. As a result of the highly favorable reception they received, the Denver Mountainaires were invited to participate in a convention of black churches on Memorial Day weekend.

The quartet has performed in various venues and was joined by **Grace Notes**, other chorus members and area Barbershoppers for the convention's "men's emphasis" night. (See photo.) "There doubtless will be additional opportunities," said Tony Pranaitis, Mountainaires Young Men In Harmony vice-president. "I will continue to pursue YMIH objectives in the community and schools."



STAY TUNED



SOME OLD BRONZE medalists taught some new international bronze medalists how to fly when **Chordiac Arrest** and **Four Voices** recently appeared at the **BABS Convention** in Bournemouth, England. Both quartets appeared several times throughout the four-day competition. We can neither confirm or deny rumors that the temporary union of the two quartets led to some interesting mutations of signature tunes, including "No, No, Nose Job," and "If I Only Had A PPO With Cerebral Transplant Coverage." ■

The real meaning of SPEBSQSA

Last March, we asked readers what SPEBSQSA really stands for. Here are some their answers (Misspellings were allowed in the spirit of the game):

- Special People, Even Beginners, Sing Quiet Songs Acappella.
Don Loos, Sarasota, Fla.
- Savy People Enjoy Barber Shop Quartets Something Awful
- Some Peppy Energetic Barbershoppers Show Quite Spectacular Animation
Ray Spinosa, Hayward/Fremont (CA) chapter
- Smart People Everywhere Believe Singing Quells Sadness Automatically
Chuck McKown, Hilltop Chapter, MN
- Singing Pleases Everybody, But Singing Quartets Sizzle Audiences
- Stop Pursuing Entertainment—Barber Shop Quartets Satisfy All
L. Smothers, Hallettsville, Tex.
- Sing Pretty, Every Body; Sing Quiet, Sing Alot
Gene, Sound Waves Chorus

And, finally, the familiar:

- Some People—Especially Baritones—Should Quit Singing Altogether

Kurt Hoesly, Winner; SD (heard years ago)



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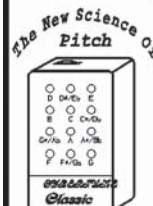
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DIRECTOR WANTED. Northern Gateway, a chapter of Sweet Adeline's International in Redding, CA, is seeking a director. We are a dedicated, hard-working 30-member chorus eager for dynamic growth in all areas. Contact Donna Moore at 530-243-1111 or dmoore@shasta.com.

DIRECTOR WANTED. Santa Fe Harmonizers, seeks a part-time paid director. Solid musical credentials essential. Santa Fe is known for its art and retirement possibilities. It is a city almost 400 years old, the state capitol, and has good year-round climate. Resume or inquiry to George Smith, president, 901 Galisteo St., Santa Fe NM 87505 505-986-3935.

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Zen and the art of barbershopping

Eastern philosophy holds important keys to greater fun and success

One evening, as I met with my chorus's music team to help chart a realistic course to improve our chorus, I had a sort of epiphany. It became apparent to me that much of our ability to grow as a group was tied to our ability to develop, articulate, and share a common philosophy—one that binds us and motivates us to evolve as Barbershoppers.

This realization alone was not as revealing as understanding that I'd already been trying to live such a philosophy during 27 years in my other discipline- and practice-intensive hobby: martial arts. The martial arts are far more than simply a series of kicks and punches—they stem from ancient wisdom and philosophies about life, much of which also applies to my newer hobby of barbershop singing.

If you'll indulge me, here are four pillars of that philosophy that may be helpful to many of us.

Pillar 1: Life is short, the art is long

You will never master all aspects of an art (like barbershop singing) because the potential for learning, if you are open to it, is literally bottomless. How exciting is that?

In martial art training, you are not measured by how good you are in comparison to someone

The martial arts stem from ancient wisdom and philosophies about life, many of which can apply to singing.

else, but by the effort that you put forth to better yourself. Whether you're a fifth-degree black belt or a first-day white belt in a wheelchair, you can strive to improve on where you are in any given moment in time.

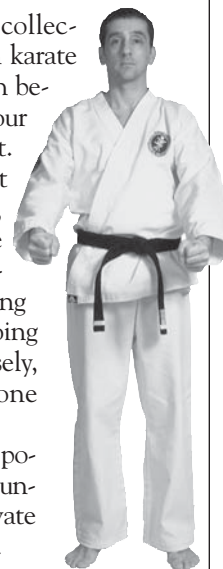
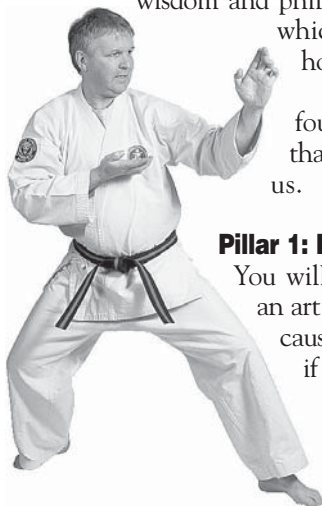
This is a concept that could use more nurturing among many of our performing groups. We must be collectively committed, regardless of where we are in our development, to help ourselves and to help each other become the best performers

that we are capable of becoming.

Pillar 2: Kill your ego

Without this pillar, you'll never collectively implement the first pillar. In karate training, we endeavor to distinguish between the healthy dimension of our ego and its unhealthy counterpart. The healthy dimension is that part of us that motivates us to practice, learn, and continually grow. The unhealthy part of the ego is manifest when we find ourselves indulging in thoughts like "Oh, I'm never going to be any good at this" or conversely, "I'm so much better than everyone else—I don't need to practice."

Both aspects will rob you of your potential to improve. Work to kill the unhealthy side of your ego and cultivate its healthy and inspired dimension.



Pillar 3: Differentiate constructive from destructive criticism



Again, this pillar is key to the previous pillar. One of the first observations I made as a new member of my chorus six years ago (and I was shocked) was how much people had adapted to being yelled at in order to accomplish anything. I remember thinking, "Do grown men really need to be yelled at to get the point? What's fun about this?"

I can only speak for myself, but rarely in my life have I been motivated to do good work by having someone scream at me. Even though there may be some temporary gains made from this method, the long-term effects generally do more damage than good. Slowly, you may come to associate something that is supposed to be bringing you joy with some very negative feelings.

Since that early negative experience, our directors have returned from various workshops reignited and inspired, and in so, doing have acknowledged and practiced the art of motivating through "positivity." It has made a huge difference in our chorus' receptivity, enthusiasm, and quality of singing.

By the same token, if you are open to making progress, your directors, coaches, and friends on the risers should not have to pussyfoot around your feelings if there is something that you need to hear that's in your best interest. Extend to others a basic trust that recognizes that all criticism voiced during practice sessions is constructive in its nature and given for the sole purpose of nurturing your growth in this art—never intended to hurt, demean, or diminish your dignity. In the spirit of killing your ego, take it one step further and perceive such comments as a gift from people who genuinely care about you.

Over the last couple of decades, our society's consciousness has been permeated with a "never say anything is wrong" approach to building others' self-esteem; therefore, this pillar may be easier stated than achieved. But imagine the psychic energy that could be saved if none of us had to walk on eggshells every time we

were thinking, "This guy behind me is singing those notes flat, but I'm not going to say anything because he might be hurt if I do." Friends don't let friends sing flat. Although there may be some initial adjustments to this level of honesty, the ultimate result is a better performance and more authentic, deeper relationships with our friends in harmony.



Pillar 4: Cherish your beginner's mind

We've all experienced the excitement of taking a new class, meeting a new and interesting person, or of being in a new relationship. We have all similarly discovered that everything in life has the potential to become monotonous unless we continually work to keep a fresh perspective and renew our passion for these pursuits.

In the martial arts, we try to enter the practice floor each day as though it was our first time. After 57 years of training in the martial arts, my world-renowned teacher, Hidy Ochiai, puts on his white belt (beginner's belt) when he trains every morning to remember his beginner's mind. This helps him maintain his humility, which helps keep his teaching inspired, focused, and enlightening. Maintaining a "fresh mind" is likewise directly applicable to our love of the barbershop hobby.

To avoid the trap of complacency, each time you step onto the risers, try to renew your passion for this wonderful hobby. Remember what it felt like the first time you heard the magic of those chords ring, or the first time that you saw a face light up with a smile because of what you were singing.

The great news is that the average Barbershopper is upbeat and optimistic to begin with. This converging of Eastern philosophy and barbershopping can only serve to reinforce and enhance an experience that is already deeply and intrinsically rewarding. ■



John Perricone

Sings lead with The Troubadours quartet and the Binghamton (N.Y.) Southerntiersmen

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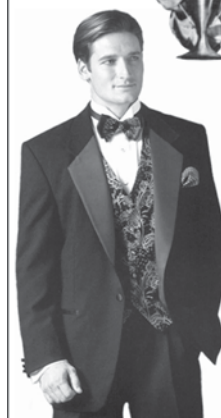
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THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster

A great new tag from a Tom of all trades

I recently judged a Far Western division contest in Visalia, Calif. As always, when there is a gathering of lovers of harmony, there was a considerable number of opportunities to sing songs and tags with Barbershoppers, including other judges. During a break in the contest, Music judge Tom Gentry taught a foursome of us guys a new tag he had put together. Well it was awfully sweet and "purty" so I twisted Tom's arm and told him we had to put it in *The Harmonizer* for others to enjoy. And here it is.



Tom Gentry

Most all of you have heard of Tom Gentry and have sung something he has arranged. He's also composed some wonderful music. "Sound Celebration" is a good example. But you may not know of the wealth of experience this young man has had in barbershop.

Back in the mid '60s, he sang in two high school quartets, starting with "The Music Man." He later directed his fraternity chorus. He joined the Society in 1969 and has been on the international stage with two medalist choruses, **Houston Tidelanders** and San Diego **Sun Harbor Chorus**, and **Friends of Old** quartet. Tom was a judge in the old Arrangement category, was on the Board of Review, and now serves in the Mu-

sic category.

While on the Society headquarters staff (1985-1992), among other tasks, he:

- arranged a folio of songs, "Introduction to Barber-shop Harmony for Youth," in conjunction with Shawnee Press
- worked in arranging, editing arrangements, music publishing, presentations to chapters, high schools and colleges
- wrote a manual for quartets
- taught in district and international schools
- sang tenor and/or baritone on Society learning tapes

He has also coached and taught in many lands besides the U.S. and Canada: Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, South Africa and New Zealand. What a guy! Thanks, Tom, for this neat tag! ■



Roses Bring Dreams of You

Music notation for the tag "Roses Bring Dreams of You" in 3/4 time. The notation is for Tenor Lead and Bari Bass parts.

Tenor Lead:

1. you. 2. Red ros - es bring

Bari Bass:

you, on - ly you. Red ros - es bring

Tenor Lead:

4. dreams of you. 5. dreams of you. 6. dreams of you.

Bari Bass:

dreams of you. dreams of you. dreams of you.

Tom Gentry, 2000

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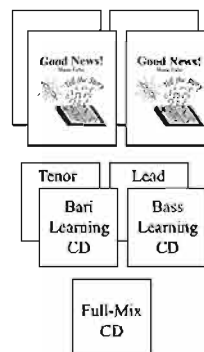
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