

November/December 2008

# THE HARMONY NITER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

SOCIETY

## Mike Rowe of "Dirty Jobs" fame blames his success on Fred King

**DANGER**

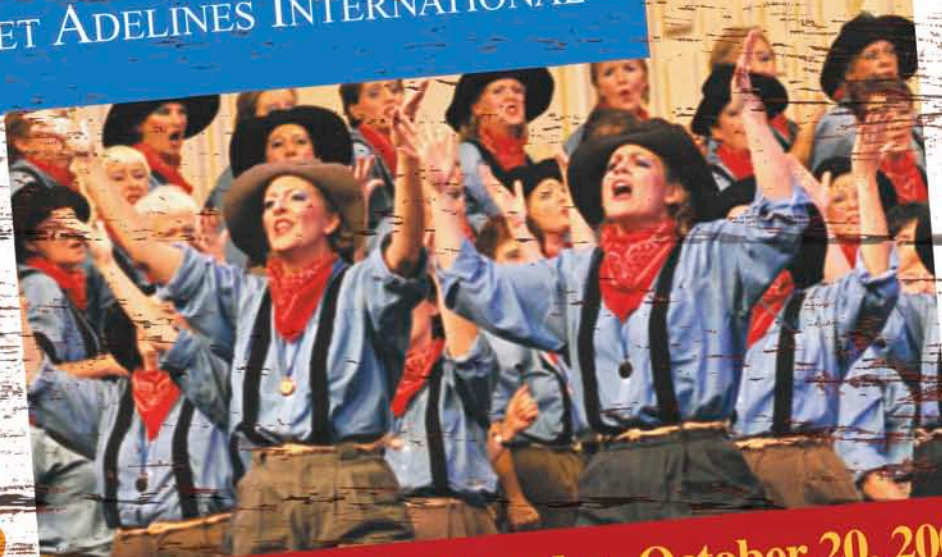
**RESTRICTED  
AREA**

INSIDE: Bill Biffles Not status quo • Youth in Harmony challenge 2 • Singing Valentines in photos





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Photo courtesy of  
The Discovery Channel

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## “Together in Harmony” brings success

**T**wo men, Jim and John, who are strangers to each other, board a cruise ship in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. heading to the Bahamas for a nice vacation. Midway in their journey, the ship's engine catches fire and the alarm goes up to abandon ship. Unlike with the *Titanic*, there are plenty of lifeboats and these two men find themselves alone in one. Jim checks the emergency supplies—food, water, medical—and John starts putting the oars in the locks. Just then, the cruise ship rolls over, creating a large wave. John drops one oar into the water and Jim drops most of the supplies into the ocean as well. The cruise ship fire caused a lot of smoke, so the cries of the two men for help are lost in the confusion. They see all the other lifeboats rowing away in one of two directions, apparently heading for land, as the cruise ship slowly sinks into the ocean.



***Finding fault, arguing over issues, or waiting for someone else to take action will not save your chapter or the Society.***

Finding themselves alone, with almost no supplies and only one oar, the men have several options:

- A. They could decide all is lost, sit in the lifeboat hoping someone will come along, and do nothing until either they are rescued or die of thirst or starvation
- B. They could argue about who was most at fault in their predicament
- C. They could create a plan and wait for the other one to take some action
- D. They could work together with their limited resources to maximize their chances to be rescued or find land

This little story also could be an allegory for the present state of the Barbershop Harmony Society. As our average membership age increases and our total membership numbers decrease, we need to make choices similar to Jim and John in my story above. Which of the options do you think we should take? I like option “D,” myself. Finding fault, arguing over issues, or waiting for someone else to take action will not save your chapter or the Society. And I presume that our membership wants to save the Society.

In the past two years I have heard many wonderful stories about lifelong friendships, incredible acts of dedication and perseverance, and about how barbershop has fulfilled, sustained, and satisfied so many men and their families. I know how much joy it has

brought me for 27 years, and every week I look forward to getting my “barbershop renewal.”

### **“Together in Harmony”**

On January 1, 2009 a new leadership team takes over in guiding the Society. I have been honored to serve you as President these past two years, and now I look forward with enthusiasm to the leadership Bill Biffle will bring. Bill and I have worked closely together on committees and as officers. Bill is a talented and dedicated barbershopper, and a man with many good ideas. I also like Bill because we often think alike. We discovered that was true when Bill developed his motto for his term, “Together in Harmony.” This resembles my own mottoes of “Harmony for Life!” and “Harmony 4 Life!” Like me, Bill sees the promotion of musical and personal harmony as key elements to our growth and success.

Back to our available options, Together in Harmony sounds like Option D doesn't it? Two men, working together, with a single purpose, are likely to have success. What we need now, more than ever, is for all members to believe in the possibility of success, and then commit themselves to being a part of it.

Your lifeboat is your chapter. And unlike the dire situations above, for our chapters the path to long-term sustainability doesn't have to be wrenching or desperate. In fact, the path to get your chapter on solid ground will likely be more enjoyable and rewarding than what you are doing right now. But remember that sitting where you are and waiting for someone else to start rowing is not a viable option!

Changing analogies: In pioneer days, a fire brigade was a necessity when a fire broke out in a community. No one person could bring enough water to douse a house fire. It took every man, woman, and child, doing as much as he or she was able, to save the house, and the surrounding buildings.

I encourage each member to react as if they were in a fire brigade. Do as much as you are able, but don't give up until the job is done. Barbershopping is more than a hobby. It is a part of our lives that we don't want to lose for ourselves, or the generations that follow us. Together in Harmony is a great call to success. May we grow as we enjoy. Thank you again for the privilege of serving you.



[pronoah@me.com](mailto:pronoah@me.com)



## Can you imagine your life without barbershop?



Ed Watson  
CEO / Executive Director

What activities do you have planned in 2009 to inspire, influence, and enrich your life and the lives of others?

The future of our Society depends on healthy chapters that can identify who they are, what they want to accomplish, and are willing to work to turn those dreams into reality.

It's time to take that responsibility. The future of the Society depends on you!

If you need help formulating your 2009 plans, send an e-mail to [itsyourchapter@barbershop.org](mailto:itsyourchapter@barbershop.org) or call **800.876.SING.**

What I love most about the International Convention:

*Seeing my brothers from around the globe*



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## LETTERS

harmonizer@barbershop.org

# Rumors of HotShots retirement unfounded

It wouldn't be a *Harmonizer* convention recap without at least one egregious factual error. Apparently the rumor about **HotShots** was just that, and one we should have confirmed before going to print. The quartet that brought you the riser set and the bubble suits is not retired but is simply searching for a permanent new bass. They're still filling and booking shows.

of the members of our chapters until just before he passed away.

MIKE MCCOY  
Madison, Wis.



### Bills bari went out singing

Herschel Smith, whom you featured in the recent issue about **The Buffalo Bills**, died Aug. 5 in a care center in Antigo, Wis. about 10 minutes after he had serenaded the nurse who had delivered his breakfast. Unfortunately, he died before that issue of the magazine was released. Herschel had joined our Chapter after leaving Buffalo and the Buffalo Bills and was still in touch with some

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or call 800.876.SING, ext 4137



## Don't get low, it's a perfect time to grow!

**T**he skipper of one of the fighter squadrons at Miramar used to have a sign posted in front of his hangar: "If you aren't having fun, you aren't doing it right!" But sometimes life isn't as much fun as it should be. Current markets—credit, financial, housing, and job—all tend to darken our mood and increase our anxiety, often in the background where we don't grasp why we feel low. And, of course, the paucity of sunlight in winter months doesn't help.

You know how to fix that? We can't fix the economy, we can't fix the markets, we sure as heck can't fix the sun, but we can fix our moods, and one great way to do that is to *sing!*



Experience shows that when times seem the darkest, certain areas or segments of the economy do better than ever. I want the Barbershop Harmony Society to be one of those segments. In 1938, the economy was still trying to recover from the worst depression in modern times. Yet, in 1938 the greatest men's singing organization ever known was born as an escape from the daily grind. O.C. and Rupe got together and started our Society—in times much more difficult than today's. Here's O.C.'s very first invitation:

*"In this age of dictators and government control of everything, about the only privilege guaranteed by the Bill of Rights not in some way supervised and directed, is the art of Barber Shop Quartet singing ... The writers of this letter have for a long time thought that something should be done to encourage the enjoyment of this last remaining source of human liberty. Therefore, we have decided to hold a songfest on the Roof Garden of the Tulsa Club ... What could be sweeter than ten or twelve perfectly synchronized male voices singing 'Dear Old Girl!' Just thinking about it brought back to your Committee fond memories of a moonlight night, a hay ride and the soft young blonde visitor from Kansas City we dated on that occasion years ago."*

Does that sound like fun to you? Escape from the cares of the times? Remember, the times were tough and the threat of a world war loomed. Every man needed to find ways to be happy, and focus on the bright side of life. The Society offered and still offers that to every member, so don't be afraid to ask your friends to come down to a meeting and see what it's all about. You might be surprised. Of course, your chapter meetings have to be fun and exciting and forward looking if you want to attract new members.

### Let's fix ourselves

Next meeting night, as you walk into your chapter

meeting, look around for a minute with fresh eyes and a questioning attitude and see what's going on. Are you having as much fun as you used to? If not, why not? What can you change? What can you take to your board that needs fixing? I get messages all the time from people who say things like:

*"We practice our music for three hours on the risers with one break and no program. No quartetting, no fun, just work, because we want to compete and win. Now we're down to 20 guys and the judges tell us we're too small to win the big prize. What happened? Help!"*

Or this:

*"My guys don't want to dance, they don't want to expose themselves to criticism from judges, they don't want to compete, they just want to sing and be a local force in the community."*

Or this:

*"We had a new, younger member come to our meeting last week. We got into an argument over the logo, then we complained for an hour about the new music because it wasn't what we consider Barbershop, then we sang Keep AMERICA Singing because we don't want to change anything, then when we looked around, the guest was gone before we could get his name or number. Why isn't our chapter growing anymore?"*

Okay, I made that last one up, but it could have been a real message, because I see that attitude all the time. For the first two: I'm not saying there's something wrong with quality riser time, although I bet you'd sing better and attract more singers (and keep more!) if your chapter meetings offered more than just rehearsals every week. Nothing wrong with making an impact on your community, although you'll make a bigger impact if you sing better because of the outside help, focus and motivation that a contest inspires.

So what's wrong? I'll tell you what's wrong—we're a volunteer organization. Nobody has to come to your chapter meeting or chorus rehearsal (too often one and the same). Nobody has to be the chapter president, or go to a division, district, or international convention. Nobody has to come back next week. You, I, and everyone involved in leadership has to give members and potential members alike a good, sound reason to put their faith, trust, money, and time into this hobby. That's why we sent each chapter in the Society a copy of Dave Stevens and Jim Henry addressing Harmony College/University. If you haven't seen it, please ask your chapter leaders where your copy is. Watch it, and then ask yourself if you still love this hobby or if you're just marking time.

If you're just marking time, I still want you as a



member. But if you love this hobby, then help me, help the Society Board, help each district and each chapter and each member save it. That's right, *save* it, because we refuse to go the way of the buggy whip and the dodo bird. The music we sing and the impact we have on each other and our communities is not a

relic of the past. We're not about to roll over and bemoan the fact that we're dealing with a text-messaging society that didn't grow up singing around the piano. (I heard a rumor that piano sales often go up during hard times and down during good times. People must know when they need to make beautiful music, even

if they don't always recognize why!) Our basic product (harmony singing) is solid. Our delivery mechanism (chapters, particularly the typical chapter night) needs some help.

### Know what you do well

If you like to recruit members, by all means, bring in new members. Jerry Orloff of California is about the best I have ever seen at bringing in members, and I sure don't want to get in his way. But not everybody likes to do that. Some, by virtue of their position, or job, or whatever, don't thrive at doing that. Fine. Maybe they could be ad salesmen or ticket sellers, or planners, or star singers, or judges, or script writers. Every man can contribute something, and every man can be rewarded for that contribution, and you know what? If it's something they enjoy doing then they'll have fun doing it. Jerry Orloff has a marvelous time bringing in new members. I enjoy writing scripts and creating contest packages, and I would go out of my way to do that. So let's start using people where they want to be used, and they'll come back for more. Let's not force them to dance, or sell, or recruit. Let's not give every member ten tickets to the show and expect them to sell them or buy them. Let's give every member a job, surely, but jobs that they excel at and jobs they want to do. And they'll have fun doing it.

I guarantee you this: if a guest walks into a chapter meeting and sees 20, 30, or 40 or more men *having fun* and maximizing their enjoyment, getting rewarded for doing what they like to do, he's going to want to know how he can be a part of it. And you're going to want him to be a part of it. And we'll fix ourselves.

Next issue: Chapter Tools.  
How am I doing?

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# Help spread American Harmony to your town!

The best movie about barbershop harmony ever made is ready to be screened in your community and all it takes is you to make it happen! The Society is 100% behind the effort of an independent distributor to get *American Harmony* shown in as many communities as possible. The momentum on this movie is strictly up to your chapter in your community. You control the outcome.

Your chapter leaders have been sent the information needed to start the process. The key is, we need to commit to pre-sell as many tickets as possible! Many chapters have made commitments to ticket sales, but we still need more help. Go to [www.barber-](http://www.barber-)



The filmmakers

[shop.org/americanharmony](http://shop.org/americanharmony) and take the survey.

When the movie is screened in your area (either showing in your local theater or via other arrangements), your chapter can make this a way to expose barbershop to those who have never heard of our art

form. Before the screening you can:

- Have a chorus mini-performance
- Display chapter and Society material
- Showcase a chapter-sponsored school choir
- Have other choruses perform with your chapter

Good luck with your screening!

— Philip Maxfield, Society Marketing & PR Committee chair, [pmax1@comcast.net](mailto:pmax1@comcast.net)



Moxie Ladies

## New international champs ... no, different ones!

Congratulations to the new women's champions! From Sweet Adelines, **Moxie Ladies**, all from Ohio, won in Honolulu on Nov. 7 with immaculate harmonies and witty asides. **The Melodeers Chorus**, from Northbrook, Ill.,

took gold two days later. Under the direction of Jim Arns, the 145 singers won their fifth gold medal with yet another wildly creative group of performances.

Harmony, Incorporated recently crowned two new champions in Appleton, Wis. Top quartet honors went to **U4X**, with members from New York and Chicago. The quartet is composed entirely of past gold medal winners. **A Cappella Showcase** from Milton, Ont. won its first chorus championship after winning six silvers.



The Melodeers Chorus



U4X



A Cappella Showcase

## Time is short to register for Singing for Life—save lives and promote your chapter

This past May, more than 150 chapters across North America brought in thousands of units of blood. Many chapters have already registered for 2009, including many that didn't participate last year. Register your chapter at [www.barbershop.org/blood](http://www.barbershop.org/blood) before Jan. 31. A member of the Marketing & PR



Committee will personally contact your chapter project chairman within 24 hours to provide whatever help your chapter needs to make this event a live-saving and PR success.

Singing for Life not only helps save lives, it can raise awareness about barbershop harmony and your local chapter. Plan to invite

other performing arts groups to participate, too—like your chapter, they may be looking for worthy causes as well. Blood centers across the continent are eager to get this event on their schedules. Make this event work for your chapter!

— Philip Maxfield, Chairman, Society Marketing & PR Committee, [pmax1@comcast.net](mailto:pmax1@comcast.net)



## Check out *OwningTheStage.com*



This blog by Tom Metzger (bass of 2005 international champion **Realtime**) is a resource for any performer who wants to reach his or her potential on the stage, from barbershop quartets and solo singers to actors and public speakers. Articles on the topic of stage performance are published with high regularity by Tom

and others. We also like the question and answer resource for the performance community. Check out the series on preparing for the stage and another on how to win a contest. *Owning The Stage* will also be a class at Harmony University this summer. [www.owningthestage.com](http://www.owningthestage.com)

## Society briefs

### Female directors: Associate status now required to compete.

Many are excited that women can now enjoy official status in the Barbershop Harmony Society in a new "Associate" category. From the coming contest cycle forward, male directors must be Society members and female directors must be Society Associates. At half the cost of Society dues, Associates receive *The Harmonizer*, member-level pricing for all events, music and merchandise, and many other privileges of vested Society status that members receive. Because Associates are not members, they still do not perform on the risers among the men in chapter performances or in contests (except as directors), nor do they hold elected leadership roles at the chapter, district or Society level.



### Chapter leaders and others can now pay another's dues.

eBiz is the easiest way to keep up to date on dues and your own membership information, and now chapter officers can process dues on eBiz for their members. Chapter leaders recently received instructions on how to do this. Contact your chapter secretary to learn more. Secretaries, please send questions to [membership@barbershop.org](mailto:membership@barbershop.org).

### New video PSAs available for websites or DVDs!

Go to [www.barbershop.org/videopsa.aspx](http://www.barbershop.org/videopsa.aspx) to download five different video Public Service Announcements available free to Society chapters. A tech savvy member can burn these files to DVD—and chapters can make as many copies to distribute as they wish. You can also visit the Society's official channel on [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) "Barbershopharmony38" to grab the code for the 60-second International PSA for your chapter or district website. If burning your own DVDs is not an option, order the PSAs at Harmony Marketplace (item 202423, 800-876-7464) for a nominal fee.

**Get 64 great, free arrangements!** The *Heritage of Harmony Songbook*, a great collection of Public Domain music compiled and arranged by the Society in the late 1980s, is free for download at [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org) under the "Get Music" button. They're free for Society members. (All other rights reserved.) Enjoy classics like "Beautiful Dreamer," Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Moonlight Bay," and many more. The full song book is still available for purchase at the Harmony Marketplace. As always, ask a judge before performing these or any song in a contest setting.



### CONVENTIONS

2009

ANAHEIM

June 28–July 5

2010

PHILADELPHIA

June 28–July 5

2011

KANSAS CITY

July 3–10

2012

PORTLAND

July 1–8

2013

TORONTO

June 30–July 7

2014

MINNEAPOLIS

June 29–July 6

2015

PITTSBURGH

June 29–July 6

2016

NASHVILLE

July 3–10

MIDWINTER

[www.barbershop.org/midwinter](http://www.barbershop.org/midwinter)

2009

PASADENA

Jan. 25–Feb. 1

HARMONY UNIVERSITY 2008

St. Joseph, Mo.

July 27–Aug. 3

## Convention buses only for convention hotel bookings

Our Anaheim block of hotels is unusually cheap (starting at \$89), but busing never is. Our official convention hotels always help pay for our rather pricey transportation tab. If you choose to book outside our convention block, you'll also need to make your own transportation arrangements to our headquarters hotel and performance venue. (While the block hotels are close together in Anaheim, the performance venue is about two miles away.) Only those staying in convention housing will receive a pass that allows them to board Society buses.

This is a Society board action to enforce long-standing policy regarding convention housing and convention registrations. (Competitors especially might choose to review these rules.) This busing rule is also standard procedure for any large convention. Again, convention housing pays many costs besides the cost of a room. Those who book outside our hotel block not only raise the total cost for others but they weaken our reputation and negotiating leverage among hotels in future host cities. Thank you for your understanding. Please direct any questions to [conventions@barbershop.org](mailto:conventions@barbershop.org).





# Apply now for these Harmony University 2009 scholarships

The following scholarships are available for Harmony University. All include full tuition and board, none include travel costs. To those interested in applying, please first read the full rules for each scholarship at [www.barbershop.org/scholarships.aspx](http://www.barbershop.org/scholarships.aspx).

**Director's College.** Harmony Foundation comes through again for front-line directors, assistant directors or aspiring directors who have never attended Director's College on scholarship. Applications must be postmarked no earlier than Feb. 1 and no later than March 1. (Please do not e-mail.) For more info, contact Mike O'Neill at [moneill@barbershop.org](mailto:moneill@barbershop.org) or 615-673-4126.

**Bring your baritone for free.** If you sign up for the quartet track at Harmony U quartet it's four for the price of three. There are 30 quartet coaching spots but only 20 scholarships, courtesy of Harmony Foundation and also the Larry Ajer endowment. Contact [JDebusman@barbershop.org](mailto:JDebusman@barbershop.org) or 615-673-4125.

**Earl Moon.** Sponsored by the Whittier, Calif., Chapter, pays tuition for first-time barbershopper attendees who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend. Download an application at [www.choralaires.org](http://www.choralaires.org). By May 1, 2009, submit your application to Norm Bernier, PO Box 482, La Mirada, CA 90637 or [nbullet@verizon.net](mailto:nbullet@verizon.net).

**Larry Ajer.** For a successful, active competing quartet wanting to reach the next level. Get rules and applications at [www.barbershop.org/scholarships.aspx](http://www.barbershop.org/scholarships.aspx) and apply by April 21. Mail completed applications and DVD/Video to Rich Knight: 709 High Point Drive, Lake St. Louis, Mo. 63367.

**Lou Perry.** Goes to the creator of the best original arrangement. Young arranging talent especially welcome to apply. Deadline: March 15, 2009. Send electronic files by e-mail (Final or PDF) to [RobCampbell@aya.yale.edu](mailto:RobCampbell@aya.yale.edu) or send by regular mail to Dr. Rob Campbell, PO Box 9335, San Diego, CA 92169.

## See the new Harmony U courses and staff

There will be more than 130 classes at Harmony University this year, *plus* quartet or chorus coaching. Check out our all-new classes for 2009:

- Discovery Singing
- Recording Barbershop
- Make it Believable or Don't Bother
- Song Writing I and II
- Owning the Stage Concepts
- Seven Habits of Highly Effective Chapter Leadership
- Powerful Oral Communication Skills for Everyone
- No Business Like Show Business
- Music from the Inside Out
- Two Steps to the Future
- How to be a Vocal Coach
- The Power of Presentation
- Quartet Surgery
- Care and Feeding of the Assistant Director
- Coaching Under Glass
- Director's Relationship with the Chapter Leadership Team
- Designing Your Chorus Repertoire
- Designing Your Quartet Repertoire
- Developing a Voice Training Regimen
- Youth Outreach You Can Take Home
- Advanced Arranging
- Rehearsal Techniques for Directors

**New faculty for 2009:** Tom Metzger, Sean Devine, Paul Olguin, Shane Scott and Denny Shankland join veterans like Joe Liles, Joe Connelly, Tom Gentry, Alan Gordon, Kim Hulbert, David Wright, Kirk Young, Bert Szabo, Mark Hale, Royce Ferguson, Kevin Keller, Tim Brooks, Tim Waurick, Brandon Guyton, and many more.

**Special guest quartet:** OC Times, Saturday night show

**Keynote Address:** Dr. Burt Szabo, Sunday opening session

**Harmony University Extreme Quartetting Brigade:** It's back! We have class recommendations for those who attend the entire week and participate in HUXQB on the weekend.

Get the course Catalogue and all registration materials at [www.barbershop.org/harmonyu](http://www.barbershop.org/harmonyu). Contact [harmonyu@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonyu@barbershop.org) or call 800-876-7464 for more information.

## Great new music available!

Check out the new Music Premiere publications packages by top arrangers, also available individually. Learning CDs are available for all of the below. Contact Harmony Marketplace at 800-876-7464 or [Marketplace@barbershop.org](mailto:Marketplace@barbershop.org) to order. (\* = contestable)

### 2008A - #25

- 200740 Love Me and the World is Mine (Wright)\*
- 200543 A Son of the Sea (Waesche)\*
- 200739 Original Dixieland One Step (Craig)\*
- 200741 Don't Be a Baby, Baby (GHG & BC)
- 200742 There Goes My Heart (Waesche)\*
- 200745 It's a Good Day (Hicks)

### 2008B - #26

- 201314 When I Fall in Love (Huff)
- 201315 Birth of the Blues (Payne)\*
- 201316 Run, Run, Run (Downma)
- 201317 I Didn't Want to Fall (Liles)\*
- 201318 Erie Canal Song, The (Latzko)
- 201319 New Ashmolean, etc. (Briner)

### 2009A - #27

- 202218 Nobody Knows What a Red-headed Mama Can Do (Driscoll)\*
- 202219 When She Loved Me (Kahlke)
- 202220 Mam'selle (Sando)
- 202221 Lullabye in Ragtime (Boston Common)
- 202222 Spiritual Medley (Adaptation)
- 202223 Drivin' Me Crazy (Bob Disney)\*

See the other music Harmony Marketplace has to offer. The Old Songs Library and Harmony Marketplace have added **201 new titles since August!** See the searchable catalog at [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org) and click on "Get Music." ■



## You—yes, *you!*—can lead your chapter warm-up

**W**hen the same person leads warm-ups week after week, the beginning of your chapter meeting can get, well, boring! Even a newer member who has never led “Keep The Whole World Singing” can lead an effective warm-up. In fact, maybe he should! Try these effective tips—you may even discover a talent you never knew you had!

### Looking Proud

Drop the word posture—too boring—and just say, “Look proud, guys!” There’s a good chance most of them will know what this involves. For the newbies:

- Feet on the floor, roughly shoulder-width apart
- Knees ever-so-slightly bent
- Back not hunched-over or leaning back, but straight and tall
- Chest slightly lifted without any tension
- Arms, shoulders, neck and jaw loose and relaxed

Or, just say, “Look proud, guys!” And if they tense up with that, repeat, “Look proud guys ... without any tension!” Use this phrase prior to singing every phrase or exercise, and your guys will stand taller, breathe deeper, and sing better.

### Breathing

In, out, in, out. That simple, right? *Wrong!* Air is free, and yet as singers, we have to constantly remind ourselves and others how to breathe, and how much air to use. Here are a few tips to remind your guys of during the warm-up:

- Inhale silently, even on quick breaths
- Don’t let your shoulders rise when you inhale
- Allow your belly to naturally expand as you inhale
- As you exhale, allow the muscles in your abdominal area to control the airflow, *not* your neck or throat

Now, here are some exercises you can lead your chapter through to get them breathing correctly.

1. Inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts (then 8 counts, then 12, etc.)
2. Inhale for 4 counts, exhale on an “sss” for 4 counts (then 8, then 12, etc.)
3. Inhale for 4 counts, exhale on an “shh” for 4 counts (then 8, then 12, etc.)
4. Using a sustained “sss,” exhale to the rhythm of a Barberpole Cat

### “Wake-up Juice”

It almost never fails that of all the days in the week, it’s “barbershop night” where guys are the least focused mentally. Spending just a minute or two with a couple of mental games can help your guys pay attention better, watch the director more

closely, and even remember how to get home after the meeting! Here’s a few things you can do to wake the guys up.

- Clap a random rhythm, and have the guys clap the same thing back to you. The rhythms don’t even necessarily have to be in any sort of tempo. Start simple, and then have fun with it!
- “The Mirror Game”—do random actions with your entire body and have the guys imitate you as though they were looking in a mirror. Surgeon General’s Warning: Standing on one foot for extended periods of time may lead to broken legs, hips, or risers. Proceed with caution.
- Sing a short, random exercise (4 or 5 notes maximum), and have the guys sing it back to you. Sing on “doo” or “dee.”

### Time to sing!

Now that we’ve prepared the mind and body for singing, let’s actually sing a little, shall we? Before singing, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Vocalize on the syllables “oo” and “ee” for the majority of the warm-up
- Listen for individual voices sticking out ... tell your guys to listen to each other and try to sound like one voice.
- Avoid using a piano if at all possible!
- Remind your guys to “look proud without tension”

Rather than a bunch of boring scales, consider the following to get your chorus ready for a great singing meeting:

- Pick a patriotic song (“America the Beautiful,” “O Canada,” etc.) and have everyone sing the melody in unison on an “mmm,” “nnn” or “nngg”
- Bases and baris sing the same B-flat (unison) on an “oo” and hold it while the tenors and leads sing the melody to “My Wild Irish Rose” on “doo.” Do a different Barberpole Cat every week, and try different keys! Don’t want to wave your arms and direct? Don’t! Have the guys sing without a director and really listen to each other to stay together!
- Have the bases and baritones sing the melody while the leads and tenors sustain the B-flat (or whatever note you want)
- Know a short tag? Teach the notes, and have the guys sing them on “oo” or “ee.” End the warm-up with everyone singing the words!

With the new year, resolve now to incorporate more variety into the beginning of your weekly meetings. You can have fun, get more guys involved, and make warm up a time that nobody wants to miss! ■



**James Estes**  
Society Music  
Specialist,  
Student  
Activities  
Development  
[jestes@barbershop.org](mailto:jestes@barbershop.org)



# It's Your Chapter: Imagine. Inspire. Influence.

The year 2009 is going to be a great year for barbershop harmony because *we are going to use every resource available to bring more fun to your chapter meeting night*. Staff is currently designing chapter-strengthening templates and aids for *The Harmonizer*, the Internet and more that we'll be rolling out in 2009 and far beyond. That's still under construction, but be on the lookout.

How will we bring more fun to your chapter meeting night? First, two definitions to clarify my statement:

- *We*, as in "you and me and others"
- *Fun*, as in "Something you did yesterday that you can't wait to tell someone about today"

Therefore, "We (you and I and another and others) are going to use every resource available to bring more fun (things we do on chapter meeting night that we can't wait to tell someone about the next day) to your chapter." How? Now you need to provide some definitions.

**Step 1: Imagine.** Put on paper what your ideal chapter meeting experience would be like. State ideas in the positive rather than the nega-

tive: "I would like to ...." It's not a gripe list, it's a wish list. Give it some thought and try to develop at least five.

**Step 2: Act.** From that list, pick an item you could personally champion, and volunteer to do it. "I wish the guys would wear their name badges so that I'm not embarrassed when I don't remember their names," and you volunteer to be the name badge guardian. (This helps the "fun" more than you'd think: Some members are avoiding others because they can't remember their names!)

**Step 3: Repeat.** Try Step 2 for another item.

**Step 4: Inspire.** Help other chapter members do the same. Move from a culture of gripes to a culture of wishes fulfilled (often by the wisher!)

**Step 5: Influence.** Be open with your chapter leadership, let them know the things that are fun for you, and just as important, what you would like to do for them.

It's your chapter. Don't leave it up to someone else to make it fun. Get involved, imagine what it would be like, inspire others with your visions, and work together to influence the enjoyment of Barbershop. It's Your Chapter! ■

— Charlie Davenport, Director of Membership



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# Build better chapters, build the whole Society

Bill Biffle is no status quo leader. His vision: chapters with the tools and permission to have more fun while doing whatever they do best

Bill Biffle may be the biggest maverick elected Society president in at least the last quarter century. He certainly qualifies as having taken a non-traditional route to the demanding job. But his friends, family and even those who may wonder about some of his approaches agree on one thing: He has a passion for life and a particular passion for barbershopping.

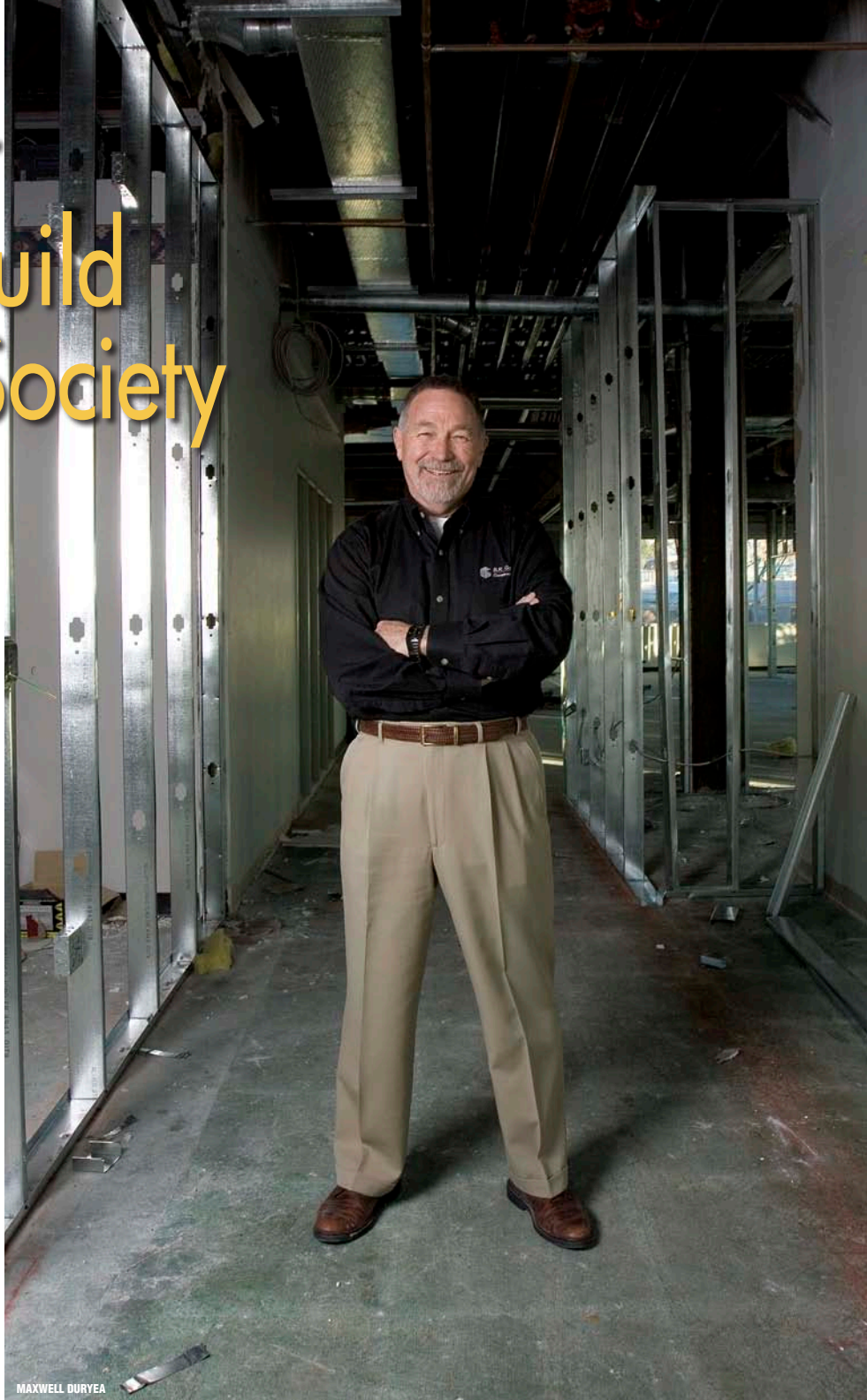
If you follow the administrative life of the Society, you might have been surprised when you saw Bill's name come up two years ago as executive vice president. No one was more surprised than the 65-year-old Albuquerque resident. If you're among those saying, "who the devil *is* Bill Biffle?" here's one simple answer: he's the man as responsible as anyone that Society headquarters are in Nashville. More than that, he led the way in choosing the new headquarters building on 7th Avenue and used his background in the construction business to help guide the major remodeling project.

Take a look at the sidebar on the opposite page. None of that would have happened without Jack Smith, who answered when Bill called the number for SPEBSQSA in the Albuquerque phone directory

in 1975. Bill had quit singing in the local symphony chorus, and on the recommendation of his choral director brother, he guessed he'd "see what the barbershoppers were up to."

"The phone rang on Jack Smith's desk. I asked what night the chorus met. He said Tuesday. I asked where. He asked me where I lived and said he'd be by to pick me up. I don't think I'd have gone otherwise—it's easy to find excuses to 'go next week.' Who knows?"

Bill was in a quartet before the end of the night.



**Jim Bagby**  
Director  
Emeritus,  
Heart of  
America  
Chorus





As president, Bill's motto reflects his deep belief in the value of musical harmony, which brings us together, and social harmony that keeps us there

Within a few months, the chapter discovered he could "direct a little bit," as he puts it, and he became arm-waver. With Smith, a judge in the Interpretation Category and a dynamic Rocky Mountain District leader as his mentor, Bill also was soon in the judging program.

"Jack coached all my quartets and helped me with the hundreds of decisions any chorus director has to make. He was like a father or older brother to me. Together with several other dedicated men, we helped the NewMexichords grow from 23 guys who finished last in the first contest I sang in to more than 100 on the rolls and four Rocky Mountain District championships. Those were great, halcyon, days!

"Jack was district president and wanted very much to be on the Society board. But he never made it; he died in 1990. When I got the opportunity, I took it in some measure because Jack never got that chance. He would have been proud of my being on the board; he would have been *amazed* to see me as president."

Bill began coaching early, trying out stuff he'd learned from watching Greg Lyne coach **The Classic Collection** (eventually the 1982 international champion), and later moved onto the Harmony College faculty after being a student for a half-dozen years. He attended his first international convention in 1976, had to skip the next one, and hasn't missed one since (that's 32 years in a row if you're counting). Bill started judging in the Sound category in 1981 and later was on the team that wrote the Singing category. He's been to Germany, the Netherlands, England, Wales, and Sweden to coach, judge and teach.

He joined the Chorus Director Development Committee in the early 2000s and produced the "Building a BBS Chorus" video and "Directing a BBS Chorus" manual. He chaired the committee for two years. It was his idea that Harmony Foundation would fund scholarships to Director's College, a practice that continues today. That led to his being elected to the Board for a 2006-08 term to represent the Rocky Mountain and Southwestern districts. Nominated from the floor, he became Society Executive VP in 2007. In the past few decades, Rob Hopkins and Ed Waesche are the only others to ascend to Society president without first serving as a district president.

Hopkins predicts: "Bill will be a very effective Society President, in part because he is prone to cut through discussion and get to the bottom line. He cares deeply about what the Society can do to benefit its members."

Society Executive Director/CEO Ed Watson describes Bill's approach as "down to earth." But in the next breath, Ed says of our incoming president, his "manner and love of music hide a talent for strategic vision and a determination to get things done for the good of the Society."

### **Job one: grow each chapter by improving the chapter product**

Getting things done is foremost on Bill's mind as he views one giant task ahead of him. "Membership growth is Job One. If we're growing, we're doing it right. If we ain't, we ain't—no need to discuss the alternative. It's obvious: We're in a contest for men's free time—and we're losing. Our market share is shrinking. To increase our market share, we have to improve our product: What happens in every chapter, every meeting night."

Bill wants to re-examine the product with you and me, so you'll be

### **Bill Biffle: just the facts**

- Joins Albuquerque, N.M. chapter in 1976; within a year is program VP and chapter's barbershopper of the year
- Early on, learns finer points of barbershop by sitting in on The Classic Collection quartet coaching sessions with Dr. Greg Lyne, then a professor at Eastern New Mexico University
- Director of New MexiChords, 1978-91, 2000-04. Leads them to four district championships and leads them three times on the international stage
- Certified Sound judge in 1981, later on team that creates the new Singing category
- Wins Rocky Mountain quartet championships with Duke City Quartet (1983) and Reunion Square (1985)
- Appears on international stage with Duke City Quartet in 1981 and 1984
- Rocky Mountain District Barbershopper of the year, 1986
- Serves on faculty at Harmony College 1988-2002
- Inducted into Albuquerque Chapter Hall of Fame in 1992
- Certified master director; 1999-2002 chair of Society Chorus Director Development Committee
- Elected to Society board in 2006
- Elected Society Executive VP in 2007
- Taught and coached at several district schools and in England, Wales, Germany, Holland and Sweden
- Married for more than 40 years to Lillian and has two grown daughters, Anne and Rebecca, and four lively grandchildren.
- English degree from Texas Tech, then Bill went into construction like his grandfather and father (who died two years ago at age 98). Bill and Lillian run a mid-sized construction company in Albuquerque, which Bill is downsizing from a peak of 50 employees and annual revenues of \$7 million to allow more free time for his family and his other interests, including the Society presidency
- Other interests include golf (he plays to a 10 handicap) and playing trumpet in two bands



reading more about that in these pages every issue. A hint: one size doesn't fit all. We could have a half-dozen or more kinds of successful chapters, ranging in size from handful to huge.

Bill says, "We've spent the last several years searching for ways to make barbershop viable in a new century without changing the es-

Former Society board member Bob Morrissey, who served with Bill and Alan Lamson on the HQ relocation committee, says: "The value of Bill's knowledge of the construction business, and his willingness to freely loan that knowledge to the Society, no doubt saved the project hundreds of thousands of dollars ... It came into play during building search and site selection, evaluating whether to buy or build, managing the competitive bidding project and selecting a rehab contractor."

Morrissey notes that Bill's background also was invaluable in evaluating the costs of various designs presented to get the McQuiddy Printing Building up to code and "ready to function for decades as the new world headquarters of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

"It's difficult to believe that it could have happened so smoothly without the involvement of an unyielding taskmaster who is always willing to take a break to sing a song."



MAXWELL DURYEA

sence of what we do—ringing four-part chords with men of good will. We're not there yet, but we'll get there—to-

gether. Why? Because the alternative is unthinkable: a world without this music we all love so much." ■

## New Society Board appointments for 2009



**Alan Lamson, Executive Vice-President.** Alan Lamson has been a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society since 1980 and is a member of the **Manchester, Conn.** and **Lyndon, Vt.** chapters. Long an active quartetter, he sings baritone with the chorus and also with Senior Momentum quartet. He is a past president of the Manchester Chapter

and the Northeastern District and is currently a certified Contest Administrator. Alan is president and CEO of FLB Architecture & Planning, Inc. a full-service architectural and land planning professional office in East Hartford, Conn. He was previously Director of Planning for a mid-sized community in central Connecticut. Alan serves on the Board of Trustees of Second Congregational Church in Manchester and is a corporator of Manchester Memorial Hospital.



**Ted Devonshire, NED/ONT.** As a 40-year Society member, Ted has served in almost every administrative capacity at chapter and district level. Ted currently sings bass with the **Peterborough Chapter** and belonged to the **Scarborough Chapter** for 30 years, where he was twice president earned two chorus gold medals with the Dukes plus "Hall of Fame"

and "Special Merit" awards. With over 25 years of involvement at District level, he has served as Area Counselor, Convention Coordinator, Division VP, VP-Events, VP-Program, Exec-VP and President. The 1986 Ontario District "Barbershopper of Renown" and "Builder of the Half Century," he is now VP-Events and District Convention Chair. He currently serves on the Society's COTS committee for Presidents. Following a career in marketing, publishing, graphic arts, printing and communications, Ted has been semi-retired in real estate since 1997.



**Shannon Elswick, DIX/SUN.** Shannon joined the Society in 1984 and is a member of the **Clermont, Fla.** and **Asheville, N.C.** chapters. A past Sunshine District president, Shannon has sung all four parts in choruses and eight different competitive quartets. He served for three years on the Society's Membership Committee,



**Gary Parker, Member-at-Large.** Gary Parker joined the Society in 1971 after being invited to sing bass in 1973 international champion **Dealer's Choice**. He served in a variety of major roles as a charter member of **The Vocal Majority** and has competed internationally with five quartets. A past AIC president, he directed **The Virginians** for eight years and composed one of the grand finalists in the Virginia state song competition. He served as AIC president 1995-97. Gary is executive vice president and chief product officer for the American General domestic life companies. He is a fellow of the Society of Actuaries and a senior fellow of the American Leadership Forum. He served for several years as director of the Greater Hartford Arts Council and of Lincoln Life and Annuity Company of New York.



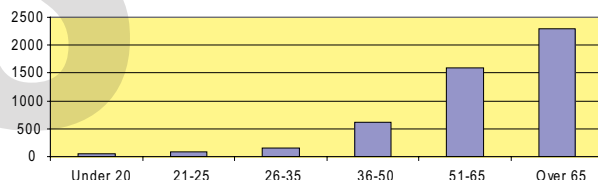
**Jim Sams, Member-At-Large.** Jim joined the Society in 1980 and is a member of the **Memphis, Tenn.** and **Rocky Mount, N.C.** chapters, the Time And Again quartet and the **Memphis Cotton Boll Chorus**. A 20-year District and Memphis chapter board member, he is a four-time chapter president and district treasurer, VP of Contest & Judging, and president. He is currently serving as Commanding General of the **Confederate Harmony Brigade** and president of the Memphis Chapter. He was the 1994 District Barbershopper of the Year and is a member of the Dixie District Hall of Fame. He has been a Contest Administrator since 1994. Jim is a staff pharmacist at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis.



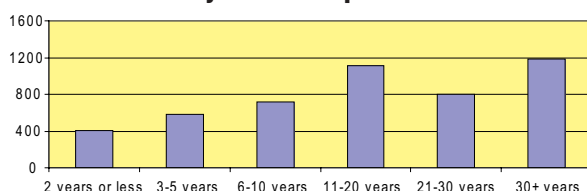
# Summary of member survey feedback

Some 4,700 Society members completed an electronic/e-mail survey in the last quarter of 2008 that covered many aspects of chapter, district and Society participation.

## Age of members responding



## Years of Society membership:

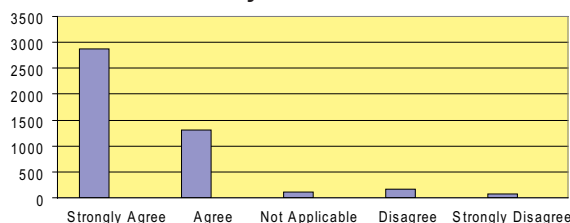


In general, 66% of the respondents indicate frequent attendance at district and division events and more than 70% indicated satisfaction with those events.

The key, then, appears to be to continue encouraging more members to attend and participate at conventions, training and other chapter/district/Society events.

## "I would recommend my chorus to others"

**Bill Colosimo**  
Society  
Music and  
Performance  
Committee  
Chair  
**Don Fuson**  
Central States  
District past  
president

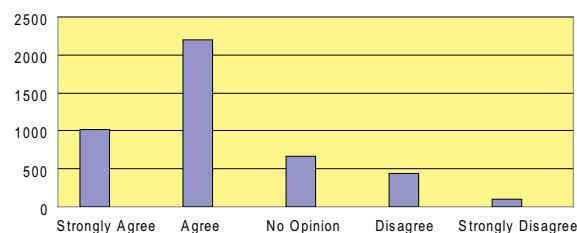


In the spirit of "sharing" harmonies, more than

91% of responders would recommend their chorus to others. We need to build on this and recruit additional members to share in our harmonies! Invite that guest!

Chapter support and training on operational areas is evidently an area where the district and chapters can do more partnering to improve.

## "The Society understands the specific training needs of the average chapter"



Two specific questions in a follow-up survey specifically targeted at 2008-2009 Society AIMS:

**"I feel a sense of identity and belonging with the Barbershop Harmony Society" = 88.2%**

**"I enjoy and am actively participating in Barbershop Harmony Society activities (at any level, Chapter, District and/or International)." = 88.2%**

The overall survey data indicates a positive trend in satisfaction of experiences within the Society, even at a time when chapter membership is declining.

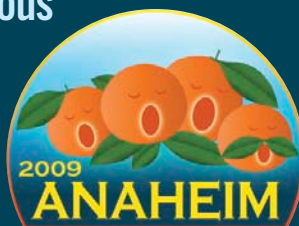
The survey results will be used to drive Society and district planning for 2009. Chapters are encouraged to canvass their local members when drawing up 2009 plans.

The survey was completed via e-mail for speed, cost-effectiveness and the ability to quickly reach more than 17,000 members with known e-mails quickly.

Look for an additional survey in Spring 2009 to continue gathering your opinions. ■

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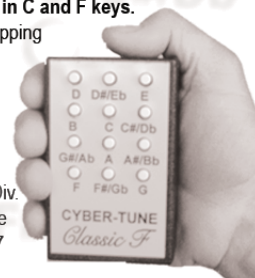


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# 40 performances in one day ...

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Be sure your chapter is ready for Singing Valentines!

How often do you get a chance to say you truly made someone's day much better? Not too often. How often do you get a chance to say you brightened the mood of countless people on more than 40 occasions during one single day? Probably close to never ... unless you've helped deliver Singing Valentines!

The CHIPS quartet in Wisconsin made the most of their opportunity—and with no chapter nearby, they're doing it all themselves! Tom Arneberg (Br), Rod Bailey (Bs), Randy Knaack (L), and Jerry O'Brien (L), delivered Singing Valentines for more than 40 people on Valentine's Day last year and had some pretty decent pictures to show for it. CHIPS has performed Singing Valentines for 10 years in the Chippewa Valley area.

Having delivered Singing Valentines since 1989, Arneberg relishes in unforgettable moments—singing live, on-air at a radio station for 10 years in a row, feeling like “rock stars” upon receiving standing ovations from groups of teenagers, and ending every Valentine's Day with the typical celebration shared with his quartet



All photos: Beth Arneberg

members and their wives at a nice restaurant. Oh, and we can't forget the quartet's biggest fan, Marge O'Brien (mother of tenor, Jerry O'Brien), aka “The Quartet Mom.” Every time CHIPS performed for her, she made

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to make a good impression  
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## ... hundreds of smiles!

them sing "Shenandoah." Shortly after February 14, Marge passed on. Thankfully, this quartet was given a chance to make her last Valentine's Day her best yet.

Because of their high exposure, CHIPS no longer has to advertise, as they did in 1995 (their first year). The repeat business and referrals take care of the majority, on top of posting a few flyers in local businesses—and voila!—a whole day (usually from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.!) scheduled full of Singing Valentines deliveries is achieved almost effortlessly.

After word-of-mouth has run its course, CHIPS members find themselves singing in a variety of destinations: classrooms, offices, retirement homes, banks, factories, retail stores, schools, medical clinics, and their favorite, in front of a high school choir. There isn't a chapter fundraiser so the cost per Valentine is low, although they still make a profit, even after accounting for candy, flowers, film for cameras and gas.

"My quartet has performed over the years in beautiful auditoriums for many audiences across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois, says Arneberg. "But there is nothing more fulfilling than singing right in your own town for an audience of a dozen, when you know that there is real heartfelt meaning behind the words you're singing."

Delivering Singing Valentines allows barbershoppers to not only get friends and family members involved in this wonderful world of a cappella and harmony, but it also provides an easy way to make a profit. Year after year, participating barbershoppers are welcomed with open arms as they visit people around

their city, helping create special memories they'll forever cherish.

To register your quartet for Singing Valentines or to get more information, please visit [www.singingvalentines.com](http://www.singingvalentines.com).

— Danielle Cole, Marketing & PR Coordinator







# Fred, this is all becaus

Mike Rowe was a stuttering 9th-grader when he met the most outrageous and inspirational choral teacher ever to wear fake teeth. Mike's life changed for good the day he stole an "Oriole Four" record from the teacher's office. Here is one of the best Fred King stories of them all.

When strangers would ask me how I wound up with my name in the title of a hit show, I would never tell them the whole truth. That level of disclosure would require a mention of SPEBSQSA, and I've learned that long and unpronounceable acronyms make people anxious. So for the purpose of expediency, I would usually limit my reply to a quick anecdote about Jay Leno or Dick Clark, or some other Hollywood big shot that helped me along the path of B-list celebrity.

Of course, the truth is never found in Hollywood, and though I've done well in that town and made the acquaintance of a few famous people, I can assure you that none of them are responsible for my present good fortune. I found my success in bits and pieces, along the crooked parts of an unexpected path paved with good friends and close harmony. It was a road I had never

considered or even imagined—a road that began in Baltimore nearly 30 years ago, and meandered through 50 states and six continents. It's a road I continue to travel with great satisfaction, but were it not for Fred King, it would have most certainly been a road not taken.

At Fred's funeral, I sat quietly in the balcony, and tried to imagine a world where he had never lived. I thought of friends never made and songs never sung. Like one of those townspeople in Bedford Falls, I saw myself stumbling around in some dismal, alternative universe, my "wonderful life" hopelessly altered by the



MIKE ROWE PHOTO: THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL  
FRED KING PHOTOS THIS PAGE: BRIAN LYNCH





e of you

Mike Rowe has worked in the entertainment business for more than 20 years. He is best known as the creator and host of the Emmy-nominated "Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe." In that capacity, he has appeared around the world in sewers, garbage trucks, crab boats, and dairy farms while artificially inseminating more barnyard animals than any other host in television history. Recently, he completed his 200th dirty job and launched a website called [mikeroweWORKS.com](http://mikeroweWORKS.com), a PR initiative to reinvigorate the construction and technical trades.

absence of one high school music teacher.

Robert Frost wrote that "way leads on to way..." and I suppose that's true. But looking down at the crowd that filled the church, at the hundreds of people who had traveled far and braved a hurricane to pay their respects, it was clear that my old friend and mentor had been more than a director of music; He had been a director of lives, and without even trying he had changed the direction of mine. So even though you haven't asked the question, I'm going to pretend you did. And this time, my answer will include a 70-year-old acronym, a newer name that they can remember, and the part I usually leave out.

#### **Mr. Holland? Please report to the main office**

When we first met in September of 1977, Fred King and I were each beginning our first day at Overlea Sr. High School in Baltimore County, Md. I was a skinny freshman with a deep voice and a weird stutter and he was Mr. King, a new teacher assigned to an anemic music department that consisted of one bloated choir filled with students who thought they had signed up for a "free period."

There is simply no way to overstate the impact of our first encounter. Remember George C. Scott's opening speech in "Patton"? Well, Patton was a sissy. Mr. King walked into the





THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

**Mike (second from left) in 1981, at the time about 18 years old "and as skinny as my tie." Singing with him are Mike Price, Chuck Klausmeyer (by this time "in full control of his lower GI tract") and their choral teacher, barbershop mentor, chapter chorus director and inspiration Fred King.**



crowded classroom and greeted us with two words. "Shut Up!" His voice was stunningly loud. In the silence, he passed out a piece of sheet music far beyond anyone's ability to sight-read. It was a six-part cappella arrangement that appeared to be in Latin.

Walking quickly to the piano, Mr. King gave us the pitch and started to conduct. I don't know what he was expecting, but when no sound emerged from our baffled windpipes he looked curiously around the room and then at his own hands, as if the problem might have originated there. Frowning, he gave us the pitch a second time, and began to conduct again.

Silence.

"This is the Overlea Senior High School Concert Choir, is it not?" When no one replied, Mr. King closed his eyes and took several deep breaths, as though he were trying to calm himself. Then, he came unhinged.

Slapping his hand on the piano with a mighty wallop, Mr. King launched into a tirade that featured expressions most often heard in pool halls and saloons. He foamed. He raved. He swore. Veins appeared in his neck and forehead. He tore the sheet music into shreds, and threw them directly into our stunned faces. He cursed our incompetence and wondered aloud what cruel twist of fate had brought him in contact with such "a pathetic group of clueless mutes." Then, he kicked the music stand across the classroom in disgust, and pointed to the open door. "If you're not ready to sing," he bellowed, "GET THE HELL OUT!"

It was a phenomenal exodus. Half of the class gath-

ered their books and never looked back. Some actually ran. When they were gone, Mr. King slammed the door behind them, stomped back to the piano, and glared at those who dared remain. For at least 10 seconds he just stood there, breathing deeply, and trying to get himself under control. Then, his face cracked in half.

Technically, one might describe the phenomena as a "smile," but if the intended consequence was mirth we'll need to settle on another term. The cruel gash that slowly opened between his nose and chin revealed a stunning rictus of rotten enamel. Baby teeth were crowded up against giant incisors. Molars sprouted from the spot normally reserved for canines. And the two front teeth, though properly placed, were the size of small thumbs and jutted desperately past his ever-widening lips, as if trying to escape the diseased gums from which they hung.

Beth Miller gasped. Cindy Schultz screamed. And the rest of us lurched backward as the magnitude of this dental disaster was slowly revealed. When he had our attention—completely and totally—he spoke.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the cowards have departed. Let's have some fun."

For the next three years, that's exactly what we did. We talked. We laughed. We learned. We beheld a treasure trove of fake teeth. And of course, we sang. With no regard for standard curriculums and not one shred of political correctness, Mr. King went about the business of challenging us like no other teacher would ever dare. Musically, there were pieces like Vaughn Williams's "Hodie," and Bach's "Mass in B-Minor," ambitious works so far beyond our ability that we didn't know any better and learned and performed them anyway.

But the personal challenges were even greater. When Mr. King found out I had never sung before, he assigned me a solo in our first concert that was several notes out of my range. When he saw the fear on my face he kept me after class for private voice lessons. When he learned that I stuttered, he suggested I audition for the school play. (By "suggested" I mean "demanded.") After stammering my way through a monologue, he stopped me.

"Mikey," he said, "This character doesn't stutter. Understand? Get into the character. You can stutter on your own time." Without questioning the glibness of his direction, I simply followed it, and read the passage again—flawlessly. A light bulb flashed. New possibilities opened before me.



There is simply no way to overstate the impact of our first encounter.  
**REMEMBER GEORGE C. SCOTT'S OPENING SPEECH IN "PATTON"?**  
 Well, Patton was a sissy.

He was a teacher who made things happen. Just a month into that first year, outraged by a lack of school spirit around the big homecoming game, Mr. King appropriated a snare drum from the orchestra department and began rapping out a cadence that might inspire a soldier to charge into battle. "Mike, walk with me. Everybody else, fall in!"

Leaping from our chairs, we followed Mr. King out of the music room and down the solemn hallways of Overlea, shattering the quiet and bursting into seventh period classes uninvited and unannounced. "Study later!" he bellowed. "A battle is at hand. Rise up and follow me!"

Teachers were dumbfounded and students were unable to resist. Like a piper, Mr. King marched us up and down the hallways, out the back doors and out onto the football field where the Overlea Falcons were preparing to get their butts kicked by a much better team. There, on the far end of the gridiron, he taught us the school song. (The juniors and seniors were particularly amazed, having no idea that a school song even existed.) He addressed us as an army general might, demanding our loyalty, challenging our spirit, calling the players on our team "heroes" and praising their courage for carrying our collective honor. He was a one-man pep rally and had the entire school in the palm of his hand.

After that day, singing seemed cool to a lot of kids who had never given it a second thought. Even the jocks wanted to be in Mr. King's class and he made room for them. Overnight, the concert choir swelled from 25 to 70. A boys chorus was formed. Then a mixed chorus. A madrigal group. A concert chorale.

I joined them all.

### Birds of a feather

One day during my junior year, I came across an old record album in Fred's office. (By this point, I was welcome in his office and allowed to call him Fred.) It was a funny-looking album with four black and orange birds on the cover. The birds had been drawn to resemble stick figures and they appeared to be singing. One was holding a top hat. Another had a cane. I couldn't imagine the sound made by four singing birds, so I put the album on the stereo and turned up the volume.

When the opening chords of "Hi Neighbor" came crashing through the speakers, my jaw dropped. How could four men make that much sound? By the second verse of "Danny Boy," I was spellbound. "Old Folks" left me transfixed. And during the tag of "Somewhere," I very nearly crapped my pants.

My intent was not to steal the album, but that is precisely what I did. I took it home without permission and listened to it over and over and over again. I learned the bass part to every song as well as the lead. The tenor was easy enough to hear but too high to sing along with. (The baritone was a mystery.) I played the album for my best friend, a guy named Chuck Klausmeyer, who also sang in the boy's chorus. He reacted the same way, except during the tag of "Somewhere" he really did crap his pants.

We were fascinated. They were a barbershop quartet and they called themselves **The Oriole Four**. According to the back of the album, they had won some sort of gold medal. What was that about? Were they Olympians? And why were they wearing tuxedos?

By Sunday, Chuck and I had memorized most of the songs. We were singing duets from the album, lead and bass respectively. I thought we sounded pretty good together and started wondering how we might sound with two more parts. That Monday at school, I went looking for answers.

"Fred, what is S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A.?"

"Fred, why can't I hear the baritone part?"

"Fred, look how skinny you are in this picture!"

"Fred, can you make me sound like Don Stratton?"

Fred looked at me for a moment with no expression, "Mike, don't ever take anything from my office again."

"Yes, sir."

I held his gaze for about ten sec-



**The Chorus of the Chesapeake at the 1983 MAD district fall contest. Fred is bottom left, Mike is in the featured quartet, behind the singer in the cape.**







Mike (third from left) in high school in his first quartet. "We called ourselves Semi-Fourmal, because we dressed in tuxedos and tennis shoes. Naturally, we misspelled 'formal' on purpose because there were four of us and we were terribly clever."



"Thank you. I won't."  
 "And one more thing."  
 "Yes, sir?"  
 "Nobody sounds like Don Stratton."

### Pardon me, do you know what century this is?

The next night, at approximately 7:45 p.m., Chuck and I pulled through the gates of City Hospital in East Baltimore. We followed the directions to the former nurses dormitory and climbed up the stairs toward a large banner that read, "Chorus of the Chesapeake, International Champions, 1971 S.B.E.B.S.Q.S.A. Dundalk, Md." With no clear idea of what awaited us on the other side, Chuck and I walked through the glass doors, and into a time warp.

One hundred and fifty men were spread throughout a large room, most of whom we assumed had come directly from work. There were cops and postmen and firemen, all in uniform. There was a milkman and a clown tapping a keg of beer in the corner. I saw a train conductor and priest. A cowboy and an Indian. I saw baseball players wearing old-time uniforms. Several men were dressed like professional card dealers, with shiny vests and armbands. And some appeared to be hobos,

onds. Then, he wrote something on a piece of paper.

"Be at this address tomorrow at 8 p.m."

"Yes, sir."

"Bring Chuck, too."

"Yes, sir."

As I walked out, he handed me the album and said, "Here, keep it. Learn it. And don't lose it."

tattered and unshaven with soot on their faces.

It was a bizarre scene, made stranger by the fact that most of these men were clustered in groups of four, singing face to face, nose to nose. The cacophony was all around us, dozens of beehives each buzzing a different tune, oblivious to the others.

"It's called woodshedding, boys. And it's not always pretty." Fred had come out of the throng with another guy that looked vaguely familiar. This is Bob Welzenbach," he said, "a friend from the old neighborhood." I didn't recognize Bob from the album jacket because he had shaved his beard. But I did recognize Jim Grant and Don Stratton, who had come up from the other direction and taken a position next to Chuck. Before I could digest what was happening, Fred put a shiny disk to his lips and blew a pitch. A moment later, the air around me exploded.

*Yes, we're sweethearts,  
 Suzie and me!*

*Away back home in Yonkers,  
 All the fellas envy me cause I have got a Sweetie  
 known as Suzie ...*

The album I had just memorized had come alive, and the sound was almost too much to process. It seemed to come from above them and filled the entire room with overtones that crackled and hummed. Chuck and I stood there grinning like idiots. The other foursomes immediately disbanded and ran over to listen. (When the Orioles sang, everyone listened.) I won't say that I wept, but when they hit the tag—Suzie's my favorite gal ... Oh what a GAL!—the sound knocked the moisture from my eyes.

When the applause finally ended, Fred told the crowd to grab a beer and take a seat. **The Chorus of the Chesapeake** was sponsoring a "Quartet Send-off," and dozens of quartets from around the region were apparently headed off to compete against other quartets from around the country. The whole idea was overwhelming. Somehow, I had formed the impression that The Oriole Four was the only source of barbershop harmony in existence. But now I was learning that there was an entire society, with thousands of members, and hundreds of chapters and thousands of registered quartets. Some of them were right in front of me. There was **The Reign-Bows End**, **The Friends of Yesterday**, **The Preservation Quartet**, and **Fascinatin' Rhythm**. The **B&O Connection** was there, along with **The Captain's Chorders**, and half a dozen others. I sat there next to Fred listening to grown men sing about mothers and sweethearts and old friends that would never forsake you. These men—some veterans of the Second World War—sang with unapologetic joy and sentimentality. They sang about patriotism and good old-fashioned girls and home sweet home. They sang



When the opening chords came  
**CRASHING THROUGH THE SPEAKERS, MY JAW DROPPED.**  
 During the tag of "Somewhere," I very nearly crapped my pants.

songs I'd never heard but somehow recognized.

The applause and support for each quartet was long and loud, and when the last one finished Fred told The Chorus of the Chesapeake to take their positions on the risers. Because we had no positions of our own, Fred instructed Chuck and me to stand directly behind him. He then asked the various quartets to join the chorus and once again pulled out the shiny disk and blew another pitch.

The song was "That's What I Call a Pal," and if I failed to accurately capture the effect of four men singing as one, I'll have no hope of describing the sensation of 150. The sound was huge beyond comprehension, a wall of perfectly tuned testosterone controlled entirely by Fred's fingers and targeted to that small spot directly between my eyes. I could do nothing but stand and gape in stupefied wonder as tears ran down my cheeks, and Chuck once again quietly crapped his pants.

The chorus rehearsed for at least an hour, but I couldn't tell you what else they sang because I had gone temporarily deaf. When Fred dismissed them, another keg was tapped and the men of Dundalk got down to business. Chuck and I were separated, shanghaied by various foursomes, and introduced to the mysteries of woodshedding. A nice old fella named Bob Seay, who

I later learned was the founder of the chorus, taught me a few tags, and told me "Son, you got the pipes."

Out in the parking lot, long after midnight, The Oriole Four sang half a dozen songs straight into my face. It was a private concert that will never be trumped. Then, in a gesture whose significance I could not yet know, Fred asked Don Stratton to step aside and let me sing the bass part to "Old Folks." I can't say I remembered every word or nailed every note, but I got my share. More importantly, I got to say that my first complete song ever sung in a barbershop quartet was in the company of The Oriole Four.

That night, Fred King changed the trajectory of my life. I joined the Chorus of the Chesapeake the following week, and with Fred's help formed my own quartet. (Chuck sang lead and eventually got control of his lower GI tract.) We called ourselves **Semi-Fourmal**, because we dressed in tuxedos and tennis shoes. (Naturally, we misspelled "formal" on purpose because there were four of us and we were terribly clever.) Fred coached us after school, and in no time we were singing for anyone who'd care to listen and a few that probably didn't. From street corners to nursing homes to Carnegie Hall, I got hooked on an audience and never got over it.

I learned enough about music to fake my way into



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With his pitch pipe he was an aging king holding his scepter.  
**I WONDERED IF I MIGHT EVER BE LUCKY ENOUGH**  
to change the course of a single life as he had changed mine.

The Baltimore Opera, which somehow led to a gig at The QVC Shopping Channel, where I sold karaoke machines in the middle of the night. Barbershop harmony got me through the stage door of the entertainment industry, and eventually I wound up in New York and Hollywood hosting game shows, talk shows and travel shows. Today, I have a job that I love, friends that I cherish, and opportunities that all began with an unforgettable music teacher, a barbershop quartet and a pile of old songs that continue to play in my memory.

#### **Just the echo of a sigh**

The last time I saw Fred alive was a day or two after Christmas, 2007. I was on my way to Alaska for work and decided to stop by Baltimore for a quick visit with friends and family. I'm glad I did. Turns out The Chorus of the Chesapeake had organized a holiday "Beer Blast." (The boys at Dundalk still prefer to name their gatherings in a way that captures the event's true purpose and draws the biggest possible crowd.)

I arrived late to a banquet hall jammed with

several hundred singers but found Fred right away, comfortably situated in a corner holding court, from his wheelchair. He was surrounded by a few dozen people and teaching a tag to four kids in their early twenties. I watched him conduct with his pitch pipe—an aging king holding his scepter.

Like his old pal Jim Grant, Fred was down to one leg and fighting the diabetes every day. The most recent stroke had taken a terrible toll, and I was struck by how frail he looked—and pale. But as I watched from the edge of the crowd, I saw that he still commanded the same attention. The same magnetism. People still needed to be near him and they clung to his every word.

When I caught his eye, he smiled big, and greeted me with a predictable salutation. "Fwaciss!" he exclaimed in a surprisingly hearty baritone. (Fwaciss isn't really a word—it's how you pronounce a truly inappropriate acronym too tasteless to spell out here. He's been greeting me that way since high school.)

I walked over, knelt down, and kissed him on the forehead. "That's a hell of a way to lose weight," I said,

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looking at the space where his leg used to be.

"Don't worry, Hollywood—my other one will still fit up your butt."

We laughed and talked and caught up fast. Me, kneeling on the floor, Fred, leaning forward in his chair. It had been nearly a year since I saw him last, and I had a thousand questions but so did Fred: When Fred has questions, he goes first.

"How many of those dirty jobs have you done now?" "200."

"Damn! How many states have you been to?"

"All of them."

"Holy Crap, Mikey! That's great! Do you still love it?"

"Well," I said, "it's a lot like woodshedding. Fun to do but hard to watch."

He laughed again, and asked about my latest adventure. He wanted to hear about my life and my career. He told me again that he was so proud, and I told him again that I was so grateful. As we continued to catch up, others came by to say hello and pay their respects.

"These days, when people see me they figure it might be for the last time," he said. "So they keep saying goodbye. Makes it awkward when I keep showing up."

At some point, the random woodshedding evolved into the inevitable "pickup" quartet competition. I can't say the beer enhanced the singing, but it certainly improved the listening. However, after a particularly brutal rendition of "Lida Rose," Fred turned to me and said, "Mike, I think we can take this thing."

"Really?" I replied, "the gold?"

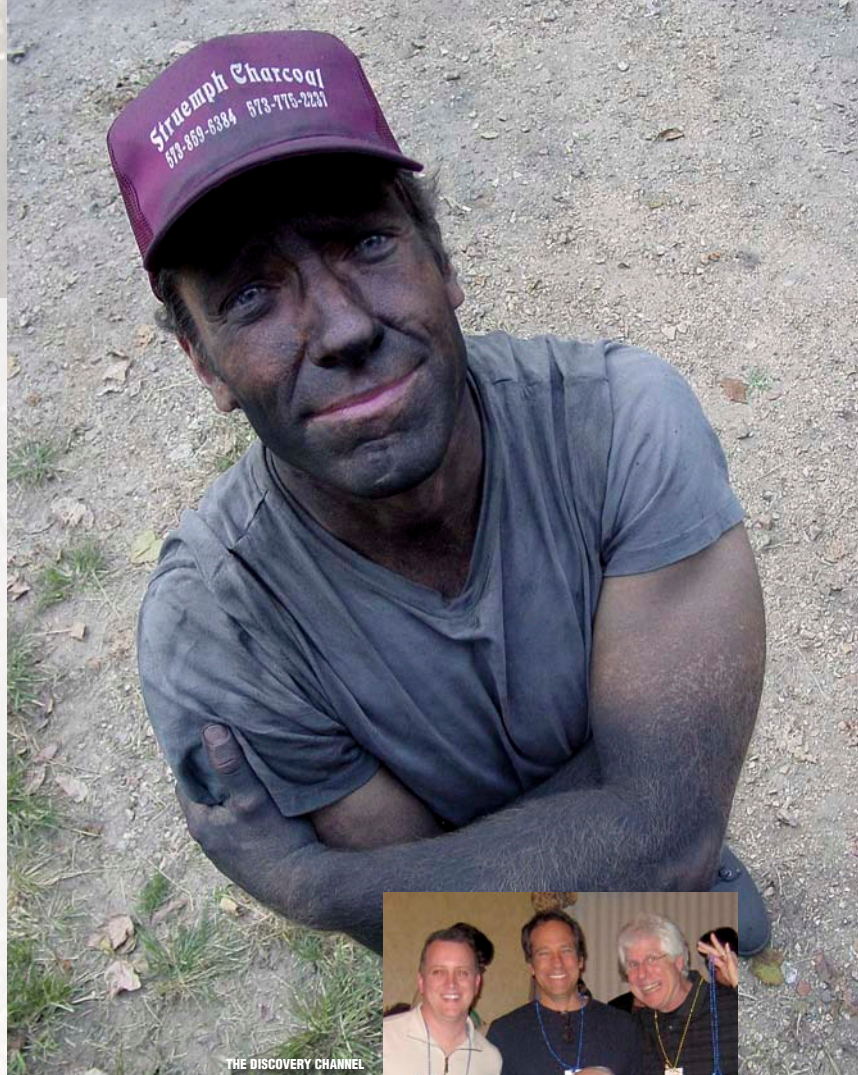
"Is there any other color?" he said. "Go grab us a tenor and a baritone."

Ten minutes later, I was wheeling Fred to the front of the room. With me were Rick Taylor, director of the chorus, and Bob Seay, a tenor with a medal and the grandson of the guy that taught me my first tag. (When in doubt, stack the deck.) The song was "Ebb Tide," arranged by none other than Fred King and taught to my old quartet by the man himself almost 30 years ago in the classroom where we'd first met.

*First the tide rushes in  
Plants a kiss on the shore  
Then rolls out to sea,  
And the sea, is very still once more ...*

As we sang, I couldn't help but think back to those early years at Overlea, and it occurred to me that Fred was the same age then as I am today. I don't know why that struck me as relevant, but it did. I thought about the many students he had touched over the years and the many viewers who watch my show every week. And I wondered if I might ever be lucky enough to change the course of a single life as he had changed mine.

When the song ended, the crowd rose and clapped



**The victorious quartet at the December 2007 "Beer Bash": Bob Seay, Mike Rowe, Rick Taylor and Freddie King.**



for what seemed like 15 minutes. I can't say I remembered every word, or nailed every note, but I got enough of them. Not that it mattered; with Fred singing lead, we were pretty much a shoo-in.

Sure enough, when the final "scores" were tabulated, we won first prize that night, and though the "medal" wasn't really gold, I kept it anyway. In fact, I still have it.

I suspect I always will. ■

### **Bonus audio at *barbershop.org***

In the late spring of 2008, Rick Taylor (tenor of Old School and director of The Chorus of the Chesapeake) interviewed Mike Rowe for a planned story in *The Harmonizer*. This story was to have been about Mike and his early barbershop career, so Fred King came up often in the conversations. Mike, Rick and Fred all go way back, and the interview was originally intended only for Rick's notes. With Mike and Rick's permission, a shortened and "bleeped" download of these two conversations is available at [www.barbershop.org/Roweinterview.aspx](http://www.barbershop.org/Roweinterview.aspx)



# Welcome new members! Thank you recruiters!

New members who joined between August 1 and December 1, 2008. Each recruiter's name follows in italics.

## Cardinal

Kenneth Bundy  
Daniel Alienau  
Robert Clawson  
Billy Doyel  
Mark Davidson  
James Smith  
Joseph Fox  
Le Baron Follett  
James Hinkle  
Stephen Cline  
William Landrigan  
David Haines  
James Lyon  
Alan Traut  
James McCarty  
Mike Cannon  
Paul Melton  
Michael Foster  
Kevin Pierson  
James Smith  
Tommy Pulley  
Billy Doyel  
James Roth  
Walter Anderson  
David Schroeder  
James Smith  
Craig Sherman  
Keith Yoder  
Martin Stightz  
Daniel Zdrojeski  
Gerald Tackett  
Robert Haggard  
Tim Thompson  
Barry Ryser  
Bob Thrasher  
Barry Ryser  
Jim Topp  
Barry Ryser  
John Ward  
Charlie Nicholson

## Central States

Mark Andrew  
Drew Sieben  
Gordon Bakken  
Barry Barlow  
Cameron Beatty  
William Bunyan  
Brian Berry  
James Whitehurst  
Baker Blanc  
Dank Denker  
John Bledsoe  
Joe DuBus  
Jordon Brewer II  
Dean Sellers  
Rodney Bryan  
William Graves  
Jeffrey Campbell  
Benedict Swertzic  
Dale Fjell  
Jim Lindquist  
Leon Hansen  
Kevin Rasmussen  
Scott Hoover  
Tom Elefson  
Robert Huseby  
Tom Elefson  
Scott Keely

Byron Myers Sr.  
Albert Kirchhoff  
Jim Griffith  
Glenn Krebs  
Dick Woodall  
Ken Kuhl  
Harold Wright  
Kennard Larson  
Gary Helms  
Roger MacNeill  
Jim Griffith  
David McVey  
John Paul McVey  
Jake Meyer  
James Berry  
Tom Michalek  
Fred Teller  
Art Moore  
Bill Leslie  
Richard Moore  
Jacob Pirner  
Blake Moroni  
Jonny Moroni  
William Moss  
Gary Owens  
Kenneth Munch  
Tom Gannon  
Ryan Muzzey  
Jon Pilla  
Fred Olney  
Mark Butler  
Michael Peterson  
Brad Sellin  
Travis Reece  
Lester Seuser  
Zac Roberts  
Dick Roberts  
Gary Rohner  
Gary Drown  
Ken Schroeder  
Ben Nelson  
Steven Slykhuis  
Eric Grimes  
Trenton Stringer  
Lee Richards  
James Stull  
David Gans  
Benedict Swertzic  
Marty Nelson  
Craig Wilcox  
Robert Murphy  
Gary Witt  
James McFerren

## Dixie

Harry Arnold  
James Snodgrass  
Joe Bullock  
Drew Ellis  
Tony Counts  
Clyde Jackson  
John Crosby  
Alfred Pipkins  
Randy Driggers  
Jack Thornton  
Gilbert Evett  
Robert Paciocco  
Warren Fieffer  
Retired Abbott  
Kennon Gordon  
David Zimmerman

Carroll Hearing  
Robert Paciocco  
Jess Helton  
James Snodgrass  
Thomas Hodges  
Robert Paciocco  
Paul Hoover  
Greg Detty  
Ken Hoover

Greg Detty  
Matt Hoover  
Greg Detty  
Stephen Irvine  
Charles Stanbery  
L. Lyndon Key  
Richard Daehler-  
Wilking  
Jeff Lowe

Robert  
Kaltenbach  
Ron Mackert  
Leo Smith  
Douglas Naas  
Richard Percy  
Garren  
Plemmons  
Clay Plemmons

Austin Powell  
Dwain Chambers  
Clyde Satterwhite  
Frank Fonteyn  
Vernon Shepard  
Dave Luck  
Bob Sparrow  
Jim DeBusman  
Daniel Sprau

Robert Hanrahan  
Donald Thomas  
Shane Scott  
Thomas Trimm  
Rev Robt Peebles  
Chris Yount  
Steven Tarantino

## Evergreen

Corey Anderson  
Josh Homrud  
Keith Banfield  
Robert Hudson  
James Buller  
Donald Cain  
Andrew Dahl  
David Dahl  
Kurtis Davis  
Dale La Fon  
Warren Deacon  
George Serviss  
Ken Downes  
David Lewis  
Daniel Drath  
Merle Turman  
Richard Frisbie  
Arthur Graham  
Alan Gustafson  
Jerry Hiatt  
Dave Heffner  
William Bush  
James Hicks  
Donald Cain  
Tegan Lacaille  
Christopher Mueller  
Tim Malone  
Charles Olson  
Alan Malone  
Jackson Newell  
Mark McCallister  
Mike Walsh  
Jacob Mishler  
Dale La Fon  
Zachary Parrott  
Evan Ackley  
John Robbins  
Donald La Venture  
Troy Robinson  
Robert Steen  
Steven Senderling  
James Ferguson  
Steve Smith  
Jay Krumholz  
Gordon Steeves  
Keith Sveinson  
Glen Stocking  
Tom Lucke  
Harold Stormfeltz  
Kenneth Duncan  
George Wilkinson  
Rob Macdonald

## Far Western

John Airle  
Jose Ochoa  
Steve Allison  
Al Treadway  
Royce Brunette  
Mac Gardner  
Zach Bunte  
Howard Duhan  
Robert Burrell  
Bill Joer  
Robert Cartelli  
Michael French  
Vince Carter  
Terry Starr

## Off-stage champions

### Men who make a difference

#### Robert Gall

#### Racine, Wisconsin chapter

**Summary:** It's hard to imagine the state of barbershop harmony in southeastern Wisconsin without talking about Bob Gall. The chapter recently honored him with a Lifetime Achievement Award—the first and only chapter member to receive such an award. In more than 40 years with the chapter, Bob has been one of the steady, driving forces that have kept the chapter prominent and involved in the community and in the larger barbershop world.

**Chapter highlights:** Has held and excelled in nearly every chapter office. Currently choral director for the chapter's Dairy Statesmen chorus (a role he has returned to many times). Chairs the Youth Outreach Program that includes the very successful annual "Real Men Do Sing" Youth In Harmony festival, which he started. Helped form the annual "Holly Days" performances that have raised for than \$75,000 for the Racine School District.



**Other:** Big name in the community. His other choral directing activities included a 33 year love affair with the very popular Church Singers; 14 years with the YMCA Boys Choir; 8 years with the Racine Chorale and numerous other years of school choirs at Knapp, Steven Bull, and Roosevelt Elementary.

**Testimonial:** "If every chapter had a Bob Gall, our Society would be so much the healthier for it. Bob is a human being beyond reproach. His Church Singers probably sang in every church in the Southeastern part of Wisconsin. Their retirement concert was declared "Bob Gall Day" by Racine's mayor. I don't know of a place where we were together that someone did not come up to Bob and say hello in the friendliest of terms. You can't help loving the man for all that he has given to the thousands of lives he has touched over the years."

— Jim DeBusman, Society Music Specialist, former director

Do you know any men who have made a big local impact but may not be as well known Society-wide? Send your Off-stage Champion nominations to [harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonizer@barbershop.org).



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**"New director" ads free in The Harmonizer.** Director search ads now cost nothing in *The Harmonizer* for chapters of the Barbershop Harmony Society. If your chapter needs to get the word out about a search for a new musical director, the first 60 words are free. Longer, paid announcements are also available for a low cost. Send text or inquiries to [harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonizer@barbershop.org).

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# Youth in Harmony challenge 2

Easy but meaningful tasks to help youth start singing barbershop harmony

We've received some great responses to the September/October "Youth In Harmony Challenge." Thank you for all your work! Next issue, we'll start listing names—don't let your chapter be left out! E-mail [youthchallenge@barbershop.org](mailto:youthchallenge@barbershop.org) once you've completed the Challenge to let us know!

For this challenge we will focus on extra-curricular activities in which many school choral departments actively participate. During this time of the year, many schools are preparing for musical theatre performances, as well as state music festivals for solos and ensembles. Complete any single task below by March 31, and you'll not only be completing this issue's Challenge, but you'll be helping a school out in a way that's sure to be very appreciated.

**James Estes**  
Society Music  
Specialist,  
Student  
Activities  
Development  
[jestes@barbershop.org](mailto:jestes@barbershop.org)

- Assist in the design, construction, and/or finishing of a set for a musical theatre (or drama) production.
- Volunteer your chapter to assist a school in hosting a district or state music festival. These large events can require anywhere from 50 to more than 100 volunteers and sometimes there are just not enough parents to do the job! Even sending 5 or 10 guys from



your chapter will be a huge help!

- Donate sheet music (or funds for sheet music) that can be used for state music festivals, or for the choral department's library. Check with the local music educator, as the music that is performed at festivals can be very specific.

Remember, it doesn't take a large chapter to be active in your community and support music education. What you do for these programs now changes young lives forever.

Don't forget to send an e-mail to [youthchallenge@barbershop.org](mailto:youthchallenge@barbershop.org) telling us how your chapter has helped to change lives. ■

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## Harmony thriving in Gov. Sarah's backyard

The U.S. media has returned to the usual practice of forgetting about Alaska, but the all-seeing gaze of *The Harmonizer* is still focused on the Land of the Midnight Sun. The word that came to tourists' lips this summer was "impressive." They weren't talking about Alaska's pictorial majesty but **Vocal Spectrum's** ability to eat—a lot—as some of the rare patrons who actually refill at the Alyeska Bake Shop's bottomless bowl of soup. Their singing was pretty impressive, too, as members of the **Midnight Sons Chorus** will tell you.

Far away from the rest of the barbershop world, the chorus has a reputation for high hospitality—but this was ridiculous. During the 2006 champions' short stay they still visited Seward, Wasilla, Talkeetna, Denali National Park, caught halibut and salmon, saw glaciers and cascading waterfalls, sea otters, puffins, sea lions, bears, eagles, whales and even took a 20,000-foot-high flight over Mt. McKinley (Denali).

Although remote, Alaska barbershop is alive, active and growing. The **Anchorage Chapter** has revitalized its program by acquiring a talented and experienced director, Dave Brown, and combining high



quality controls with fun. The highly active group is performing in many singouts and getting more gigs—Singing for Life was a big profile booster—and even made time for November's Pan Pacific Convention in Hawaii. (More on that convention in the next issue.)

A Midnight Sons tradition is to produce a one-act mini-musical that provides the warm up for the headliner and a cameo part for the guest quartet. Before wowing the Alaskan audiences, Vocal Spectrum were cast as poker players in an 1890s Alaska Gold Rush spoof called "The Great Big Alaska Show."

Alaska is known for its rich natural resources. Just ask Vocal Spectrum. They left Alaska with riches to last a life time ... and well-fed!

## Two quartets appear in upcoming feature film

Two active quartets appear in the upcoming independent feature film *Handsome Harry*, starring Jamey Sheridan (*Ice Storm*, *Law & Order*). **Highline** quartet (**Manhattan** and **Hell's Kitchen** chapters) features Jamey singing lead in an a cappella contest with **AfterGloWorms** (Nassau Mid-Island

Chapter) playing their main competition. Highline was tasked to arrange and record a public domain song for the film that novice singer Sheridan could handle for both filming and the

soundtrack. They ended up rehearsing over the course of a month with the actor so he would appear to be a long-time singer.

After filming was completed, Highline immediately rushed off to Wildwood, New Jersey, where they competed in Mid-Atlantic District Contest, finishing in 8th place.

*Handsome Harry* is a character-driven story about a man confronting his past secrets and finding his true identity through the investigations of a crime committed 30 years prior. *Handsome Harry* is a love story intertwined with past reflections, dying friends and painful memories. It is set for release in early 2009.



Highline played Jamie's quartet while AfterGlo-

Worms played their main competitors.

**HIGHLINE:** Jordan Cooper, Doug Goodenough, Brian Lindvall, Phil Wilcox  
**AFTERGLOWORMS:** Hal Verity, Steve Stojowski, Rob Miraglia, Maurice Debar



## The 2008 Youth in Harmony festivals were “awesomely sick-monkey”

That's what one teen called discovering barbershop harmony at one of the many Youth in Harmony festivals held this year, of which we'll talk about only two here. (“Sick monkey” is a good thing, for those not hip to today's lingo.)

This particular high school student was describing “Acappellooza,” the sixth annual music education program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL). The two-day event this September, organized and underwritten by **The Ambassadors of Harmony**, drew more than 1,100 (!) male and female students from 25 high schools in the St. Louis area. The event has led to the formation of many music ensembles and quartets at area schools.

The event is now so popular with high school music educators that it is only publicized by emails to St. Louis area music educators. The event has filled to capacity within 24 hours with a waiting list of more than 200 students.

Most Youth in Harmony events import their experienced talent, but the Ambassadors are lucky enough to have plenty on hand. The chapter is still following the basic template for success:

- A proven youth clinician (Dr. Jim Henry)
  - Extensive chapter assistance in all aspects, including the risers (The Ambassadors for the boys, **St. Louis Harmony Chorus** of Sweet Adelines for the girls)
  - Skilled section leaders helping in the sectionals (Rick Knight of **The Gas House Gang**, Jonny Moroni, Eric Dalbey, and Tim Waurick of **Vocal Spectrum**, Dr. David Wright, and Brandon Guyton of **Four Voices** and **Crossroads**.)
  - High-end performances to thrill the students (The Ambassadors, Vocal Spectrum, several university groups, St. Louis Harmony Chorus)
- Dr. Henry said the event also promotes music



programs at UMSL—about 25 percent of his choral music students had attended “Acappellooza” before enrolling

### Big success from following the book

Attracting 265 enthusiastic students was no small feat for men and women barbershoppers in Tucson, who pulled students from as far as 275 miles away in their third festival this September. This came only five years after starting their Youth in Harmony programs from scratch.

The students and their teachers represented 15 local and regional schools. Clinicians Connie Keil and Charla Esser of Sweet Adelines helped the young men and young women learn two songs each, plus an additional 8-part song. Teaching (and entertaining) quartets **Sonoran Sound**, the **Eastsidiers**, and **Havin' a Blast** assisted the teaching, along with Society and Sweet Adelines directors Jeff Dolan and Dayle Ann Cook.





The festival's quick formation and early success started with a visit by Society music specialist Jim DeBusman, who conducted workshops at three local schools in 2003, helping lay the foundation for boys' and girls' Youth in Harmony programs. Husband and wife team Ron and Annie Hayes (both barbershoppers) helped their respective **Tucson Sunshine** and **Tucson Desert Harmony** chapters continue these male/female combined school workshops.

Mutual and trusting relationships with the local music educators meant exposing students only to high quality barbershop singing and to proven clinicians and coaches. Relationships with local school district leaders and the state Music Educator Association were also key, as were exhibits at local community events that featured young quartets. They



also provided exhibits at the State Music Educator Conference (with entertainment) and invited Soci-



ety music specialists conduct sessions. (James Estes will present on "Using Barbershop Harmony to Attract More Males into Your Program" at an upcoming conference.)

Observation: The first festival three years ago was advertised for young men only ... and only 28 attended. The second year, at teacher request, the festival included young women and featured 193 total students. The only problem for next year is where are they going to find enough risers for everyone who wants to attend?



**EXPOSING THEIR QUARTET TO THE PUBLIC, AND VICE-VERSA.** You'll have to guess which was the more entertaining spectacle, the comedy four-some Ricochet or their clothing optional audience of 200. The quartet won't soon forget their performance this August at the Annual Family Music Festival at The Avalon Resort in Paw Paw, W. Va. Reportedly the guys remembered the lyrics and shtick for all 19 of their comedy numbers. That's a lot of songs, but the quartet had to keep going after receiving much-appreciated standing ovations for numbers like "The Interstate is Comin' Through My Outhouse" and "Trailer Park Queen." After the performance, the boys were dinner guests and gave additional table-side performances before singing their way to the parking lot for a close-harmony exit. The quartet, affiliated with the Inwood, W. Va. Blue & Gray Chorus, were grateful for the, um, exposure that came with this gig, and all parties were enthusiastic about their return engagement already scheduled for next year. No, they didn't provide any crowd shots, so stop asking. ■

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#### Mission

- The Barbershop Harmony Society brings men together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

#### Vision

- To be the premier membership organization for men who love to sing.



## THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster!!



# Late starter Joe becoming an elite talent

## Hear what eight years can do: Great chords for a British barbershopper's tune

**O**n a Tuesday night in February of 2001, Joe Johnson walked into his first barbershop chorus meeting. Instantly, he knew that he had found his place in the music world. He has since been steadily earning a name for himself as a brilliant and creative arranger. Though far removed geographically from the mainstream of barbershop activity, his progress in only eight years has been phenomenal. Already he has written commissioned works for many high-level quartets and choruses. His music has been performed by **Realtime**, the **Masters of Harmony**, **Max Q**, **12th Street Rag**, **Saturday Evening Post**, **State Line Grocery**, **NeXus**, **The Saltaires**, and the **Minneapolis Commo-dores**, to name but a few.

Joe has been involved in music for nearly all his life, having served as a trombonist and arranger in a major Air Force Band, a choral singer, a pianist and choir director in his church, and a bass player

in more bands than he can count on all his fingers and toes. With his consuming passion for arranging, he has written music for most of the groups with which he has performed.

He is now retired from his career with Honeywell International. He happily spends his time pursuing his new arranging career, singing with his quartet and chorus, remodeling his house, doing volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, and serving in the Baton Rouge Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He and his lovely wife Dallas live in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. See his library at [www.bbsmusic.com](http://www.bbsmusic.com).

The tag you see here is adapted from Joe's arrangement of a song written by Dave Whittle. Dave is quite a prolific songwriter and solo singer in Great Britain. Here's the link to his website

([www.davewhittle.co.uk](http://www.davewhittle.co.uk)) where you can enjoy a sampling of some of his songs, including "Luv Ya So." Dave is also a barbershopper, member of BABS and sings in the quartet **Qube**. ■



## I LOVE YOU SO

*adapted from the song "Luv Ya So" by David J. Whittle*

Original Tag by  
JOE JOHNSON

Arrangement by JOE JOHNSON  
<http://www.bbsmusic.com>

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

You know I love you so.

I love you so.

You know I love you so.





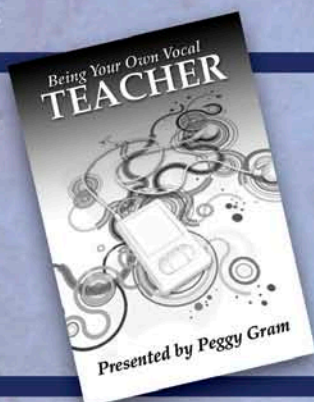
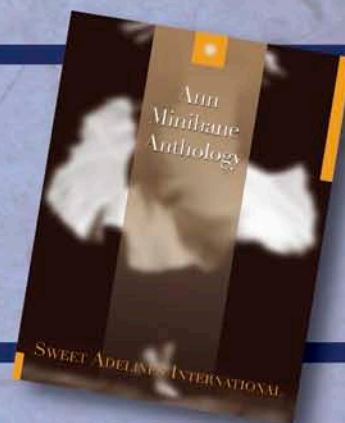
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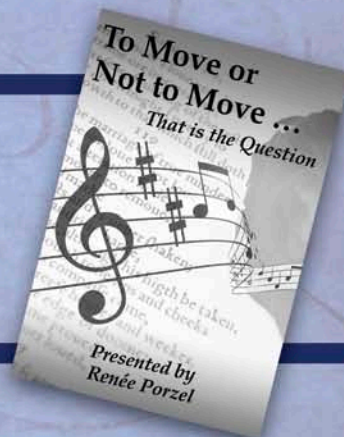
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