

INSIDE: Storm Front Exposed • Farewell Ed Watson • Benchmark Wows Australia • Harmony Foundation

July/August 2011

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY



Balance

10 chapters that are doing a lot of things well



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July/August
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TWO DEPARTURES OF NOTE. Ed Watson expressed regret at slowing but not reversing the Society's membership decline, but in so many ways, he left the Society in much better shape than the tumultuous conditions he inherited. Storm Front has ended its reign as International Champion, so there's no better time than now to "expose" the secret of their success: They owe it all to their fathers.



Features

12 Job requirements for new CEO

With the retirement of Ed Watson, the Society is looking for a new CEO/Executive Director. See if you or someone you know has what it takes.

14 Chapter Achievement winners

Some sing better than others, but these 10 chapters show that a winning chapter experience comes from doing a lot of things well in their communities

VARIOUS

20 News from Harmony Foundation

Major donors to the Youth Chorus Festival are joined by a record-setting growth to Ambassadors of Song. The youth couldn't be more grateful

STAFF

25 Benchmark wows Australia

Cancer almost prevented this seniors quartet from helping barbershop take the nation by storm as one of the finalists on "Australia's Got Talent"

MELANIE CHAPMAN

Departments

2

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Harold Hill is returning—now make it happen

3

STRAIGHT TALK

A rare opportunity to serve the Society

4

LETTERS

Northland Chorus, Encouragement and Da Capo

5

TEMPO

Kansas City crowns new champions, makes history
Youth: Add Carnegie Hall to your bucket list

10

HARMONY HOW-TO

Why you over-sing and what you can do about it

31

STAY TUNED

¡Bienvenido Spanish Barbershop Singers!
Listen to the preacher in four-part harmony

30

MEMBER SERVICE DIRECTORY

Where to find answers

32

THE TAG

"Friendship and Love"

On the Cover
Winners of the 2010 Chapter
Achievement Program

Harold Hill is returning—now make it happen!

We usually create our own luck

A few weeks ago, a friend told me about a “marvelous” experience in which “the planets came together.” He went on and on about the impact this experience had on him. The actual event and the people involved are less important than the fact that he truly believed this event occurred by happenstance. He could not see what was obvious to me—that by his actions and choices, *he* had caused this to happen.

Many of us can quote a line used by the **Bluegrass Student Union** (1978 champs) in their great stage shows: “*There are three kinds of people in the world: Those who make things happen, those who watch what happens, and those who wonder, ‘What happened?’*” How many of us wonder at events in which everything just seemed to come together perfectly, and we fail to realize that we created much of our own luck ... and that we could do it again? (Or, when an endeavor fails, throw up our hands in defeat as if we lacked the power to take corrective action and succeed the next time?)



We need leaders at all levels

I wonder how we could make our Society a larger group of the kind of men who *make* good things happen. Many of our members are already in that group, and many of our longer-term members have

been in that group and are now content to reap the benefits of many years of making things happen. To all of them we give our thanks.

As *leaders*—and by that term I include every member who takes on a duty or responsibility for his chapter, his district, or the Society—we need to create a spirit of community within our chapters and within the Society that seeks to nurture and amass our individual spirits to the greater good.

I am fascinated by the Civil War, and am continually impressed by how the winning officers were not necessarily the most experienced or most highly decorated. The victor was usually the one who had better planned and coordinated efforts, who persevered, and who used the spirit of his army with prudence and discretion.

Christian Hunter, VP for membership in the Mid-Atlantic District, recently shared a story about Norman, who visited Christian’s chapter several times some 20 years ago but never joined. Norman was starting his own business, had a young family and he had

no time. Sound familiar? Christian kept him on the chapter mailing list, but after years of sending Norman notices of shows, Christian was ready to remove him from the list. Well, Norman’s time has freed up and he is back singing on the risers. Christian’s charge to us: “Never give up and never surrender!”

Operation Harold Hill is coming back in 2012

For those who remember back to 1996, we will be rolling out a new and upgraded version of Operation Harold Hill starting on Jan. 1, 2012. This campaign is devoted to making your chapter successful in its membership growth plans. Resources of the Society will be directed toward those chapters who want to succeed and agree to work hard to succeed. Success will come to those chapters that create a community of success within their chapter, that plan for this and coordinate their efforts, that persevere throughout the year, and that use this *esprit de corps* with prudence and discretion to achieve their goal for membership growth. Operation Harold Hill grew the Society in 1996, and we can do it again.

This is not a contest. This is not a program that pits chapter against chapter. This is a campaign that provides the support you and your chapter will need to reach *your* goals and that provides the reward of growing your chapter for the first time in ___ years (you fill in the number) or of growing your chapter more than you have in the past year or two. Capitalize on the spirit that your involvement in a Society-wide program will create in your chapter and other neighboring chapters.

Start planning now and be ready to enroll in Operation Harold Hill as a chapter. Enroll as a member who is willing to commit a year or more to seeing that your chapter grows with new members who will provide more singers and more involved doers for your chapter. Their involvement will add more fuel to the fires of enthusiasm that you have created by getting involved in a Society-wide campaign to finally grow our Society.

Your Society and your districts can provide the support and help supply the resources. But each of you, each member of the Barbershop Harmony Society, must step up to accept the challenge to grow your chapter. Can we count on each of you to make it happen? I think we can. No, I *know* we can.



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janlam314@cox.net

***This is not a contest.
This is a campaign
that provides the
support you and
your chapter will
need to reach your
goals, with the re-
ward of growing
your chapter.***



A rare opportunity to serve the Society

First, let me say how humbled I am to have been selected to fill the Acting Executive Director position until a full-time replacement is chosen. As a 41-year member of the Society, this is a rare opportunity to serve our beloved organization, and I look forward to doing my best for the time I'm here. My charge is to keep the ship moving forward on an even keel until a permanent CEO is identified and on board.



My charge is to keep the ship moving forward on an even keel until a permanent CEO is identified and on board.

I greatly enjoyed meeting so many of you at International. Thanks for your good wishes. We scarcely had time to get home and then we were preparing for Harmony University, so headquarters is and has been a flurry of activity during my few weeks here.

Here are some initial observations: Your staff is extremely dedicated and works well together to provide the services you've come to expect. Each week we receive hundreds of e-mails, letters and phone calls. For the most part these inquiries are answered on the spot or that very day. Although we have many employees who have highly specialized assignments, I have noted that they will all stop to assist anyone who happens to reach them and get the answer themselves or refer them to the right person. We are also assisted by a number of local barbershop

volunteers and their wives who donate many hours each week to do special projects. Our barbershop culture of friendliness and caring is evident in all of our

contacts with members and the community. The city of Nashville is glad we're here and considers us to be a valuable part of "Music City, USA".

The main focus here is on serving and growing our membership. We realize that you are the key element in the growth part, and we will do all we can to assist you in that endeavor. A program that worked well several years ago is coming again: "Operation Harold Hill." You will begin seeing information about this program shortly, and I hope your chapter will choose to participate in one or more of the growth opportunities it will offer.

As you develop your chapter and district planning for the coming year, I encourage you to look for more opportunities for outreach within your communities. We need to increase the awareness of the Barbershop Harmony Society by becoming more involved in local Youth in Harmony projects, Singing Valentines, unpaid performances and civic celebrations. Making folks more aware of our presence will not only improve our image but could also provide opportunities to attract additional members.

I am honored to be able to serve our organization and look forward to assisting when you need our help.

ldeters@barbershop.org

Larry Deters announced as Acting Executive Director of the Barbershop Harmony Society

On June 17, Society President Alan Lamson announced the appointment of Larry Deters as the Society's Acting Executive Director. Larry worked in tandem with Ed Watson from June 20 through July 15, Ed's final day as Society Executive Director/CEO. As Acting Executive Director, Larry is directing all the day-to-day activities of Society staff and will assist in the transition to a permanent CEO/Executive Director, who will likely begin work before the end of 2011.

Larry is a resident of Brentwood, Tenn. and is currently Executive VP of the Dixie District. He provides a wealth of experience as a barbershopper and as a professional executive. A 41-year Society member, Larry has been a member of four districts and has held many chapter offices, including music director,



Larry Deters in Nashville on June 17 with Society President Alan Lamson and former Society CEO Ed Watson. See page 12 for info on the CEO search.

Music VP and Chapter Development VP. He has also been district VP-Chorus Director Development and VP-Contest and Judging.

A 30-year member of the contest and judging community in Singing and the former Sound category, Larry has judged more than 100 contests. He was a category specialist and a member of the Society Contest & Judging Committee. He has also performed on

the International stage in both the quartet and chorus contests and holds a chorus gold medal. Larry has been on the faculty of Harmony University, is a certified Standing Ovation evaluator, and is a certified CDWI instructor.

Prior to his retirement, Larry worked for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, concluding his career with 15 years service as Medical Center Director in Nashville, with oversight of 1,200 employees and an annual budget of \$380 million.

"We are extremely fortunate to have a person with such outstanding barbershop and professional credentials for the interim position," said Lamson. "Larry's service will allow the Society Board and the search committee to focus on recruiting our new CEO, knowing the staff functions of our Society are in very capable hands during this transition period."

Northland Chorus, encouragement and Da Capo

Community involvement is key

Having worked on two Society committees seeking answers to our recruiting and retention problems, we always were seeking that “magic bullet,” the right mixture of ideas that would turn things around and keep members from leaving. **The Northland Chorus** seems to have found one of the most basic and important ingredients: community involvement and service. I wonder how things might be if every chapter could have earned similar respect in their own community. This story should be required reading for each member of every chapter. If every barbershopper committed himself to making a similar impact in his own community, we could be repeating this story 800 times.

“MONTANA JACK” FITZPATRICK
Chairman, All Ages Task Force

The age of champs, correction and gaps

I appreciate Dennis Driscoll's efforts to chart the ages of our champions. Please note, however, that the **Flat Foot Four** (1940 champs) were not quite as old as indicated. Courtesy of the Oklahoma City Police Department, I've learned that bass Sam Barnes was considerably younger than had been recorded for years, so the average age of the quartet was 43, not 47 or 48. We are still missing birth dates for Herman Struble (**Elastic Four**, 1942), Charles Schwab (**Four Harmonizers**, 1943), Ray Hall (**Harmony Halls**, 1944), Jack Briody and Joe Marrese (**Garden State Quartet**, 1946) and O.H. “Bud” Bigham (**Orphans**, 1954). Anyone with details can contact me at bsutton@alum.mit.edu.

BOB SUTTON
Society Archive Committee

Holding applause = withholding encouragement

I am dumbfounded by Ed Watson's final CEO column. He resigned because he “did not complete his primary mission to reverse the Society's membership decline,” yet encourages fellow barbershoppers, “don't applaud if you're not impressed” with an arrangement that doesn't meet your barbershop standards. And he wonders why in the world he has failed in his efforts to grow our Society? If we want to become larger, we need to open our arms, extend the warm hand of friendship and encourage each other by attending shows, contests, and cheering the efforts of everyone so we all feel like we belong. The harsher we act, the more exclusive we become, the closer we are to closing the doors in Nashville ... forever.

JEFF DOLAN
Director, Tucson Barbershop eXperience

Explosive growth: the rest of the story

Last issue's splendid story about the **Hot Springs, Ark. Chapter** doubling membership because of an idea (p. 26) addressed only part of the concept I shared. We also discussed their “self boxed-in” problems, making chapter meetings more enjoyable, and getting more visible within their community, including getting involved with other local units. Most chapters, and especially smaller chapters, simply feel they are doomed to bad attendance, poor recruitment, and limited performing opportunities, and they need help solving their challenges.

Performing before local groups, supporting local groups, sponsoring entertaining talent to chapter meetings, causing pride and fun within the chapter ... none of this has restriction, only open opportunities, as the Hot Springs story proves. Look beyond today and aim for a different tomorrow. Notes from that session are available upon request. (Greg@GregElam.com)

GREG ELAM
Dallas, Texas

Da Capo correction and trivia

Congrats to **Da Capo** for their win! One small correction: They never competed against groups of 15 in the Harmony Sweeps, as the upper limit is eight. A side note: The group that came in second to De Capo in the finals (**Vybration**) previously beat **The Crush**, who finished third in our L.A. Regional. Of course, The Crush went on to place higher than De Capo in Kansas City (13th to De Capo's 14th). Go figger! ■

WILL HAMBLET
Los Angeles Regional, Harmony Sweepstakes
South Bay Coastliners Chapter



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Among KC winners, Awesome Joe stands alone

The buzz leading up to Kansas City said that nobody could stop **Old School** from making lead Joe Connelly the Society's first four-time quartet champ, and the quartet did not disappoint. Maintaining a solid lead in all three rounds among the judges and audience alike, there was little question who the champs would be as Old School finished the finals with a long standing O for yet another arrangement popularized in previous decades. Tenor Kipp Buckner also joined the elite class of three-gold singers, while Jack Pinto (Br) and Joe Krones (Bs) won for the first time.



Masters remain the only unbeaten chorus champ within the past 20 years. **Great Northern Union** finished within .2 percentage of gold, with an amazing performance that showed the Society's "super-elite" choruses (**Masters, Vocal Majority, Ambassadors of Harmony** and **Westminster Chorus**) that their rarefied league may have a new member.

In the Harmony Foundation Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest, **Prestige** from Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, OH, JAD) took first place after narrowly missing out on the prize in 2010. For Gordie Howe, (T), Drew Ochoa (L), Nick Gordon (Br) and Dave Parrett (Bs), this proves that good things are worth waiting and working for!



It was a closer call for the **Masters of Harmony**, which lived up to its name while earning its eighth straight gold medal dating back to 1990 and their fourth under director Mark Hale. The



Contests photos and convention and contest details will follow in the Sept./Oct. 2011 issue of *The Harmonizer*.

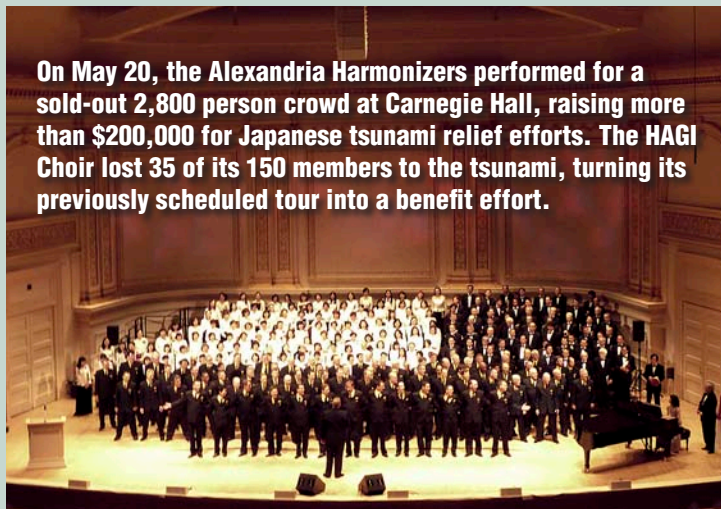
Get your wit and wisdom published in the upcoming K.C. Convention issue

Harmonizer readers helped write a lot of last year's convention issue, and we need your help again! For the second year in a row, the *barbershopHQ.com* Photo Caption Contest gives you the chance to shine while helping cover the great events of the 2011 international convention in Kansas City. Here are the details:

- Go to *barbershopHQ.com* every business day beginning Monday, Sept. 6, to find a photo that will be used in the upcoming issue of the magazine. The best entries will be included in the Sept./Oct. issue of *The Harmonizer*.
- A caption that's lighter on wit but heavier on insight or cool facts can also be the winner. (And not every photo will be funny.)
- Include your full name and city, state/province with your submission. That's what will be printed in the magazine.



On May 20, the Alexandria Harmonizers performed for a sold-out 2,800 person crowd at Carnegie Hall, raising more than \$200,000 for Japanese tsunami relief efforts. The HAGI Choir lost 35 of its 150 members to the tsunami, turning its previously scheduled tour into a benefit effort.



Calling all youth: Perform at Carnegie Hall!

Barbershoppers under age 30 can check off a major item on their bucket lists by performing in the world-famous concert hall during a USA-Japan Goodwill Concert on Dec. 26. Join a Youth Barbershop Chorus comprised of singers from all over the U.S. and Canada, under the direction of Joe Cerutti (**Alexandria Harmonizers**) with **Prestige** (2011 collegiate champs), Tim Waurick (2006 champ **Vocal Spectrum**) and many other special guests.

The concert will also feature a joint performance with the youth chorus and a three-time gold medal 100-piece youth orchestra from Japan. All donations during the free concert will go to Japanese tsunami relief. Participants will learn in advance 5-6 songs (tracks by Tim Waurick, choreo by Cindy Hansen Ellis.) Arrive in NYC the morning of the 26th, rehearse all day, and perform at 7:30 that night. Hotel, food, and busing will be arranged for a nominal fee.

Contact Joe Cerutti at joe.cerutti@gmail.com or 703-401-7114.



BRIAN LYNCH

Hear Mike Rowe audio on Freddie King. The world-famous host of *The Discovery Channel's* "Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe" wrote one of the best-loved *Harmonizer* articles of all time, honoring his dear friend and mentor, Freddie King (Nov./Dec. 2008 issue). Mike, also television's most popular narrator, just finished putting time in the studio to record it!

"The result is something I'm too biased to comment on," said Mike of the finished product, "but I'll tell you this—when I played it back, I cried like a 10-pound baby girl."

On Labor Day, Sept. 5, 2011, he will be posting it on his website, mikeroweWORKS.com. (Incidentally, Mike launched [mikeroweWORKS](http://mikeroweWORKS.com), which promotes the trades and hard work, on Labor Day 2008, which turned out to be the day Freddie died.)



COMCAST SUBSCRIBERS: WATCH BARBERSHOP ON DEMAND!

Tell all your friends they can now see and hear what's so great about barbershop harmony from the comfort of their living room recliner. Through the generosity and hard work of Society Board member John Miller (chief marketing officer with NBC, which recently merged with Comcast), Comcast On-Demand now has a free barbershop channel. To view it through the Comcast menu, go to *On Demand Music > Music Picks > Barbershop Harmony*. Content changes every month.



CONVENTIONS 2012

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2015

PITTSBURGH

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2016

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2017

MINNEAPOLIS

July 2-9

2018

ORLANDO

July 1-8

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Sweet Adelines Harborlites Chorus wins "America Sings" while VM places sixth

The Sweet Adelines **Harborlites Chorus** from Anaheim, Calif. won the grand prize of \$10,000 in this summer's "America Sings!," a weekly televised contest in which viewers voted on pre-recorded performances. **The Vocal Majority** (SWD) came in sixth and the **Scottsdale Chorus**



(Scottsdale, Ariz.) placed ninth. Winners were revealed in the final episode on Aug. 17. The show, produced by GMC (formerly known as the Gospel Music Channel, www.watchgmctv.com), was a great vehicle for promoting barbershop, as many other of our groups were invited to participate as well. Competing Society groups included **Storm Front**, **OC Times**, **Westminster Chorus**, **Max Q**, **Wheel-**

house, **'Round Midnight**, **3 Men & A Melody**, the **SenateAires**, the **Alexandria Harmonizers**, **S.E.P. Quartet**, **Acoustix**, the **Texas Millionaires**, **Rounders**, **The Big Apple Chorus**, **The Allies**, **Realtime**, **Heralds of Harmony**, **Four Aces**, **Ambassadors of Harmony**, **Chorus**



of the Chesapeake, **Southern Gateway Chorus**, and **Crossroads**. Hosted by Drew Lachey, it ran June 22 to August 3. Most barbershop videos came from international competition. With 27 entries and three barbershop choruses in the top nine, the barbershop genre definitely made a great showing. Congratulations to all those who were chosen to participate and especially to the winner! www.harborliteschorus.org; www.vocalmajority.com.



Society Briefs

Update your media lists for this year's shows. If your media list is more than a year old, it's time to update it! Contact pr@barbershop.org with your zip code and the distance radius you wish to cover. Canadian barbershoppers, list the cities you want to cover. Also check out the new "Press Release Basics" in the Marketing and PR section of the Document Center at barbershop.org.



Recent Seniors champ passes away. Phil Haines, bass of 2010 Senior Champ **Resisting-A-Rest**, lost his battle to cancer on July 13, 2011. Shortly after winning in Tampa, Phil left the quartet to undergo treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

Learn how to stay legal. Library/Licensing Manager Erin Elkins has compiled a FAQ that answers most questions about copyright, legal affairs and licensing of music. Download the PDF at <http://tinyurl.com/3rg52ss>.

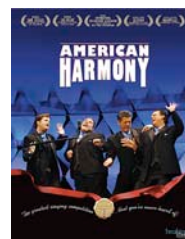
Last chance for Pan Pacific Convention. Barbershoppers from all over the Pacific Rim (Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada and the U.S.) will gather in Brisbane, Australia, from Sept. 28-Oct. 2, 2011. Preceded by a judging school and followed by a Harmony College. **Storm Front** will be the featured quartet. www.panpac2011.org.au.

New issue of Preservation Magazine available. This issue covers the 50th anniversary of the **Suntones**, historical info related to the 2011 international convention, and much more. Get all issues at www.barbershop.org/preservation-publication.html



American Harmony released for individual chapter promotion

Get ready to rent a big popcorn machine, because your chapter can now sponsor a showing of *American Harmony*, raising awareness of barbershop in your community and perhaps boosting chapter funds, too. Beginning September 6, your chapter can make arrangements to show the best barbershop movie of all time in a church, community center, hotel ballroom or library, for as many or as few showings as you wish. It's called a Four Wall Release—a theatrical release for any space that has four walls, adequate seating and appropriate sound and projection equipment.



American Harmony follows **OC Times**, **Max Q**, **Vocal Spectrum**, and **Reveille** over a span of years, on stage and at home, in the ups and downs of international competition. The movie received rave reviews from film distributors and non-Society audiences during its 30-city theatrical release in 2010 and won awards at several film festivals.

Learn how to do a showing in your community at www.barbershop.org/americanharmony. Contact info@tijat.com with further questions.

Meet Eddie Holt, Society Webmaster

(Jack's profiles of Society staff and Joe Barbershoppers will be a regular feature in future editions.)

"Webmaster" just begins to describe Eddie Holt. He's also the soft-spoken lead of audience favorite mike testing quartet **Lunch Break**, clarinetist of the Society Dixieland band, new father of twins, graphic designer, one-time temporary tenor of **Reveille**, member of 1994 and 1995 bronze medalist collegiate quartet **Moonlighters** and the person who took a room full of old *Harmonizers* and painstakingly digitalized them all. He is also a member of the U.S. Mime Guild and was the lead clarinetist of a polka band in Ennis, Texas.

For two years, Eddie has been responsible for the development, analysis and design of the main Society website and others such as eBiz and Harmony Marketplace. He is also responsible for all Society print design such as convention and promotional flyers, CD and DVD covers. Graphic design is Eddie's first love. With only a few classes to get him started, it has been a journey of discovery, learning and growing with each assignment.

After discussions with editor Lorin May, Eddie decided to tackle the job of digitizing back issues of *The Harmonizer*. Following a slow start and a little advice from the copy room, the entire job was completed between other

tasks within three months. They are now available on-line for everyone to enjoy at www.barbershop.org/harmonizer.

In 1974, while his dad, a career Army officer, was stationed in Tacoma, Wash., Eddie was born with music "in my blood." Enrolling at Baylor University, he earned a Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance and a Masters Degree in Information Systems. While there, he had his first exposure to barbershop quartet singing. After college in 2001, he left Baylor and barbershop, heading for New York City to pursue his IS career. Soon, he found and joined the **Big Apple Chorus**, meeting two seasoned barbershoppers, Joe Hunter and Roger Payne who became his mentors. ("They drew me in.")

Eddie credits them as having a profound and life-changing influence on him during his four years in New York (while changing him to a lead).

In 2005, he moved to Nashville for a new job. While singing with the **Music City Chorus**, he joined with Shane, Drew and Mike in 2007 to form **Lunch Break**. In 2009,

Eddie heard about a job opening on the Society staff. After much consideration, he decided to apply for his dream job that married career and hobby.

One night, while riding in a Nashville mall elevator, he happened to meet a Sweet Adeline friend on her way to her chorus rehearsal. After a storybook courtship, they were married in 2009 by Lunch Break tenor (and preacher) Shane Scott.

The barbershoppers he credits with helping him along the way are truly a roster of the greats—Rick LaRosa and Kipp Buckner top the list. He is also grateful to all of those who supply content for the web sites, mentioning David Wright, Steve Tremper and

Casey Parsons. Like all staff members, he can always use more help.

Asked for his advice when everything goes wrong, Eddie says, "Embrace the pain, it makes it real". About life "I enjoy being stupid on stage."

Eddie Holt, a consummate professional—on and off stage.
—*"Montana Jack" Fitzpatrick*



Compete in the world's largest choral festival! The World Choir Games will be coming to America for the first time in 2012, and it will also be the first time there's a barbershop category! The games take place in Cincinnati from July 4-14, 2012, with the barbershop category July 11-13, well past our own international convention. Sponsored by INTERKULTUR, the games are an opportunity to



experience the universal language of music with thousands of singers from many cultures all over the world. Join Cincinnati's **Southern Gateway**

Chorus and other men's and women's barbershop choruses enrolled to share the barbershop art form with

a world-wide audience. See the ad on the inside front cover of this issue or get more details at www.worldchoirgames.com.

Fall district conventions

Link to your District website for more info at www.barbershop.org/districts.

CAR—Sep 30-Oct 2, Columbus, IN
CSD—Oct 7-9, Kansas City, MO
DIX—Sep 30-Oct 2, Chattanooga, TN
EVG—Sep 30-Oct 2, Spokane, WA
FWD—Oct 14-16, Fresno, CA
ILL—Sep 23-25, Bloomington, IL
JAD—Oct 14-16, Lima, OH
LOL—Oct 21-23, Rochester, MN
MAD—Sep 30-Oct 1, Lancaster, PA
NSC—Oct 21-23, Florence, SC
NED—Oct 21-23, Springfield, MA
ONT—Oct 14-16, Belleville, ONT
PIO—Oct 14-16, Kalamazoo, MI
RMD—Oct 6-8, Colo. Springs, CO
SLD—Sep 30-Oct 2, Rochester, NY
SWD—Sep 30-Oct 2, Arlington, TX
SUN—Sep 23-25, Orlando, FL



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Why you over-sing, and what you can do about it

Over-singing distorts tone quality, causes musical inaccuracies, impacts blend and balance, and fatigues the voice; yet, it is extremely common among barbershoppers. After discussing this phenomenon with my sister, Dr. Rebecca Sherburn, and after some reading and research, we determined that most over-singing can be attributed to the anatomy of our hearing and to the environments in which we sing. Following is a summary of factors that can lead to over-singing and damage to the vocal mechanism. *This article summarizes a much more detailed, 3,500-word article that can be found with this issue at www.barbershop.org/harmonizer.*

The Acoustic Reflex

Behind the eardrum is an air-filled chamber with three tiny bones suspended by muscles. When exposed to very loud sounds (80-90 decibels), these muscles involuntarily contract so the bones can't vibrate as much. This protects the delicate hair cells of the cochlea from being damaged by too much motion. The reflex is especially strong if you are the one making the sound. Whether hearing or producing sounds above 80-90dB, singers are somewhat deafened by this protective acoustic reflex, which in turn can cause them to over-sing. At higher volumes, you can usually sing softer than you believe you are singing and still be well heard.

Extended exposure to high intensity sound beginning with 80-90dB (either sudden onset or prolonged exposure) will fatigue the middle ear muscles and decrease

their ability to protect the inner ear from damage. Hearing can be threatened by lengthy exposures to some everyday activities, including some performance and rehearsal situations. Some possible solutions include: working in a larger room, increasing the distance from the sound source, reducing the decibels and/or the length of exposure, or if necessary, wearing soft earplugs made for musicians.

Lombard Effect

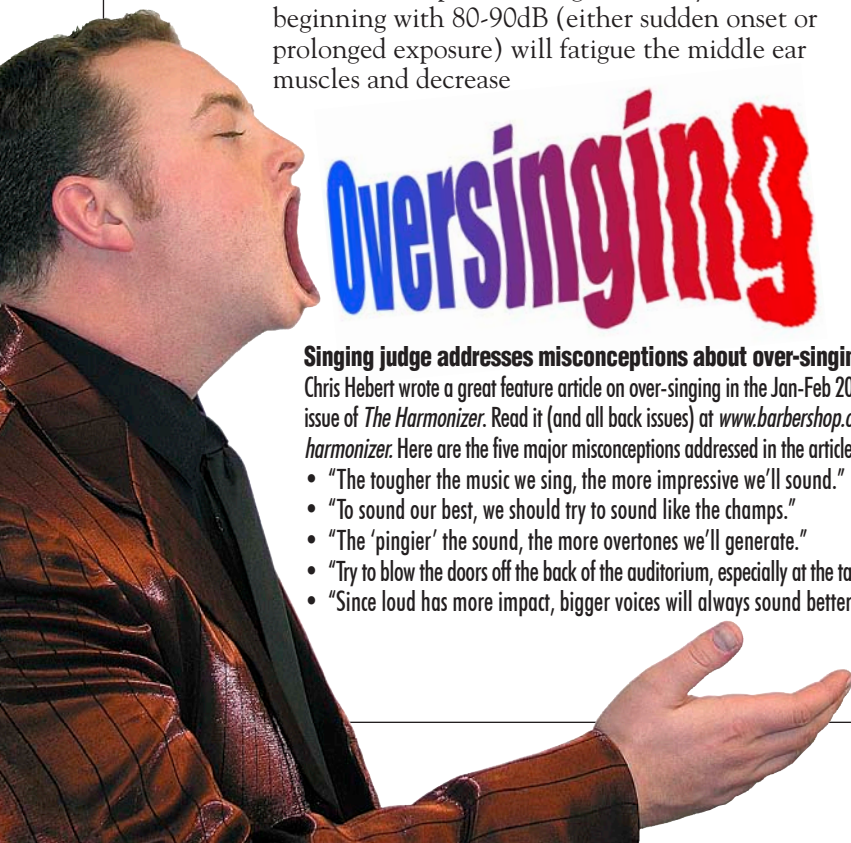
The intensity level of the voice is involuntarily raised in the presence of high intensity or competing sound. Any competing intensity, such as while singing in a car or in a large group, could cause singers to push the voice. However, one study showed that speakers can overcome the Lombard Effect and lower the intensity of their voices when presented with visual and audio cues to do so, and the effect can last after the cues are removed. When instructed to maintain a consistent level of vocal intensity, trained singers can be successful in doing so. Merely being aware of this effect, and having a director give a visual cue as a reminder, can have a major impact on the reflex to over-sing.



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Singing judge addresses misconceptions about over-singing

Chris Hebert wrote a great feature article on over-singing in the Jan-Feb 2003 issue of *The Harmonizer*. Read it (and all back issues) at www.barbershop.org/harmonizer. Here are the five major misconceptions addressed in the article:

- "The tougher the music we sing, the more impressive we'll sound."
- "To sound our best, we should try to sound like the champs."
- "The 'pingier' the sound, the more overtones we'll generate."
- "Try to blow the doors off the back of the auditorium, especially at the tag."
- "Since loud has more impact, bigger voices will always sound better."

A singer's perception of his sound

It is disturbing to hear your recorded voice because you are not used to hearing the sound others hear through the air. The sound of your own voice is largely transmitted through your bones and tissues, which makes the low-end frequencies dominant while the higher frequencies are diminished. Attempts to generate the "missing" high frequencies encourage the urge to over-sing. Singers learn to control their sound when, rather than responding to the inaccurate feedback from their own ears, they memorize what they muscally and skeletally feel while receiving feedback from a director or vocal coach.

Performance and rehearsal space

It can be intimidating to stand on the stage of a large, carpeted concert hall knowing there will be no amplification. The visual stimulation alone

could lead you to inadvertently increase intensity of sound. Then there is the vocalist who shows up to rehearsal vocally fatigued after having pushed his voice to get something back while singing in a car or in a small, dry practice room. In large and small rooms, acoustics can affect vocal behavior.

Good acoustics allow singers to hear themselves and each other, at the same time allowing the audience to hear well. If acoustics don't allow for proper hearing, singers may inadvertently increase intensity. Poor acoustics affect performance and performers.

In the shell-like shape of a large, ancient Greek amphitheater, even outdoors one still hears well without amplification. In most newer theaters, the cost of a rectangular room often wins out over the more expensive rounded shape. In a space under 600 seats, the human voice carries fairly well regardless of other factors. But a newly-built 600-seat house is rare, and carpeting and acoustic tile is common. Because of poor acoustics, some of the larger halls around the world have given up and installed amplification for the performance of what is meant to be unamplified music.

An acoustic shell can aid in hearing, especially if there are acoustic flaws in the performance space. A physical space between singers of as much as three feet from shoulder to shoulder and row to row aids in personal hearing and group sound, as does singing in a circle or facing each other while rehearsing. Alterations of choral seating are common ways to adjust individual voices to each other and the acoustics of each space in which ensembles rehearse and perform.

Dr. Robert Bode arranged a choir "so that all the sopranos are on one row, as are the basses, tenors, etc. This way, nobody is sitting directly in front of someone of their same voice part, thus making it much easier for each singer to hear him/herself. To my surprise, not only did I notice that there was less over-singing in the choir, the overall sound of the chorus became much more transparent. And the tuning improved!"

Conclusion

The Acoustic Reflex, the Lombard Effect and the way we perceive our own voices can cause us to over-sing. Information and encouragement may be all that is necessary to keep intensity levels healthy, and certainly musicians need to be informed about hearing risks. If one is informed about human reflexes and tendencies, behavioral conditioning could prevent potential hearing or voice

damage and assist in a more beautiful vocal sound. ■

Rebecca Sherburn is an Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. Scholarly work has been published by the Journal of Singing, the Choral Journal, and the College Music Society. Her master's and doctorate are from the University of Southern California.

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Society Chief Executive Officer job description

Background

The Barbershop Harmony Society, based in Nashville, Tenn., is an association of approximately 25,000 members in the United States and Canada, with an additional 10 affiliated international organizations dedicated to preserving the art of the barbershop style of a cappella singing and encouraging men to share in the joys of Barbershop Harmony.

Our Mission states: "The Barbershop Harmony Society brings men together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing."

There are more than 800 chapters in 17 districts in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1938, the organization will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2013. Members are men from all walks of life and all ages with a shared love of Barbershop Harmony. The members share their passion through regular weekly chapter meetings, performances, and occasional shows.

A system of contests leads up to a yearly international convention, which features quartets and choruses participating in the world's largest a cappella contest. The organization actively reaches out to new members of all ages but especially to young men who are leaving formal singing organizations in high school or college. Reaching a peak in membership in the mid-1980s of 38,000, the membership, like many other volunteer organizations, has been aging and in slow decline. The Society continues to show pockets of exceptional growth in selected age groups and in some locations. New members have developed into leadership roles, and others are creating more contemporary offerings that are attracting a new generation of singers and audiences.

Vision for the Future

- "To be the premier membership organization for men who love to sing"
- To have vibrant chapters and districts—actively involved in their communities; and to offer a musical experience and a sense of brotherhood to the members of the organization.
- To keep the harmony of barbershop music alive well into the future.

Current AIMS for the Society for 2011 include:

1. Grow membership throughout existing chapters.
2. Grow the Society by adding new chapters.
3. Extend the reach of the Society performances through wider external partnering with other organizations and developing new performance venues and audiences to share our harmonies.



Position Summary

The person stepping into the role of Society CEO will be a dynamic, forward-thinking leader and administrator, with an exceptional work ethic and solid experience in managing, mentoring and motivating both staff and a significant group of member volunteers. The CEO is responsible—with guidance and governance from the Board of Directors—to set and implement the strategic vision and goals of the organization, establishing appropriate milestones and objectives that benefit the local member, chapter and the organization as a whole. The CEO/Executive Director will also have oversight responsibility for many member volunteers serving with staff on integrated committees. This position will have the ability to inspire the entire organization by managing its present and envisioning its future.

Membership growth is the primary and critical goal that will reflect success of the Executive Director/CEO through the combination of appropriate leadership and management of the factors above and responsibilities below.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Provide vigorous, dynamic, visionary and strategic leadership and management for the Barbershop

Qualifications/Characteristics

1. 10 years experience in a comparable industry, with five years minimum in an executive leadership position.
2. Executive with clear passion and commitment to the Barbershop Harmony Society. A leader capable of harnessing the tremendous energy and enthusiasm of a dedicated membership.
3. Demonstrated ability to plan, implement, achieve and manage at both strategic and operational levels. Specifically, the ability to create and define operational objectives and measurements for success including time milestones and achievement of goals.
4. High energy, drive and fortitude to move an organization forward. Values integrity and honesty.
5. Exceptional communication skills, both oral and written.
6. Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, staff and the Board of Directors to create a high-functioning, team-oriented culture. Enable the team to accomplish targeted results.
7. Creates inclusive and trusting work environment.
8. Strong experience working with a Board of Directors.
9. Proven record of working with non-profit, service-based membership organizations.
10. Strongly preferred: A member of the Barbershop Harmony Society.
11. Education: Four-year degree with concentration in management or administration. MBA or related graduate degree preferred.

How to apply

After Sept. 15, 2011, go to www.barbershop.org/CEOSearch and follow the instructions on the page. Send follow-up questions to CEOSearch@barbershop.org.

CEO Search Task Force

- Chair - Larry Lewis (LOL)
- Don Blank (CSD)
- Larry Clemons (SWD)
- Joe Liles (LOL)
- Alan Wile (MAD)

Harmony Society.

- Achieve effective and ongoing communication with the membership of the organization, as well as its staff and Board of Directors.
- Oversee the most critical services to membership including the annual Society International summer convention, the Midwinter convention, and all Society-sponsored educational and administrative instructional events.
- Devise creative strategies and their successful implementation to help chapters and districts grow membership and increase the percentage of retention of membership Society-wide.
- Work closely with the 17 district presidents to foster successful membership programs, musical development and district conventions and activities; Ensure there is open communication both between districts and with the Society staff.
- Effectively motivate and manage staff to great productivity, low turnover, and staff satisfaction. Manage human resources according to personnel policies and procedures that fully comply with current laws and regulations.
- Create and recommend an annual budget that aligns with the organization's Aims for Board approval, and manage the Society's resources within budget guidelines while maintaining our service to the mission. Ensure the short- and long-term financial stability of the organization and mitigate risk.
- Represent the Society to the public as its "voice." This includes being a visible, dynamic leader to the membership, having a visible role at conventions, and having the ability to represent the Barbershop Harmony Society to the press and any relevant related organizations.
- Take the organization into the future. This includes use of technology, systems and social media

to provide better membership service, communication, and exposure for the Barbershop Harmony Society.

- Support operations and administration of the Board of Directors by advising and informing Board members, interfacing with Board and staff and supporting the Board's annual evaluation of the Executive Director/CEO's performance.

- Participate in the oversight of fundraising planning and execution in conjunction with the CEO of Harmony Foundation International. Key initiatives include support of donor programs and helping to create strategies for individual giving and sponsorship. ■



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Ask your chapter secretary about EasyDues.





Chapter members hadn't known their yearly activities were being tabulated, so they were surprised by the news they ended up with the highest score in a contest they didn't know they had entered. The many acolytes of the "Compellingly Attractive Chapter Meetings" approach (created by Asheville's Musical Director Chuck Greene, bottom left) were probably not surprised at all by the chapter's strong statistical showing. For more info on Chuck's practices and workshops, go to www.21stn7th.com.

1. Asheville, N.C. (NSC)

Land of the Sky Chorus

www.ashevillebarbershop.com

"Won What?!"

"The Chapter Achievement Program!"

"You're kidding! We won a contest we didn't know we were in?"

This was the reaction of our Music Director Chuck Greene upon learning that the Asheville Chapter won first place in the Society's 2010 Chapter Achievement Program.

Where did all the points come from? We hosted three annual shows in three cities in our area. We did Singing Valentines and Singing for Life. We offered financial support to local high school music programs and offered free "Ready, Set, Sing" voice lessons to the general public. We added members. The chorus, including regular and senior quartets, competed in district competitions and our board and music team met frequently, steering our chorus to new challenges.

But these activities only tell part of the story. Director Chuck Greene's "Compellingly Attractive Chapter Meetings" (*The Harmonizer*, Jan./Feb. 2011) make every rehearsal a fulfilling experience that keeps our members coming back for more. Our rehearsals begin with a rousing welcome for our visitors. When a member returns after a long absence, it's cause for a mini-celebration. Prospective members receive information packets about the chapter and the Barbershop Harmony Society along with sheet music and practice CDs.

Rehearsals never get dull with as many as four dif-

ferent directors leading the chorus in a single night, each with his unique styles, teaching, training and inspiration to help chapter members become better singing entertainers. The pace is snappy, moving quickly from one section to the next, with a lot of jokes and good-natured ribbing along the way. As Prez Burns says, "There are four basic tenets of this fantastic organization: FUN!, inclusion, entertainment, and FUN!"

Our camaraderie strengthens with every rehearsal as harmony, hilarity and education are blended to create joyful, funny and uplifting performances. In Asheville, when you hear us shout, "It's great to be a barbershopper!"—we mean it *big time*!

But we want to accomplish more. Almost all our members want to experience the challenge and thrill of quartet singing. So, we've started something new at rehearsals. Once each evening, a director/coach and a quartet of volunteers go to a separate room to practice the same song that the chorus is working on. The quartet training is great fun, and our musical growth is accelerating!

High school choruses have performed on our annual shows for several years. This year we are expanding our outreach to high school singers in a new way, teaching them the thrill of tag singing and preparing them to compete in a Tag Singing Contest at our 2012 annual show.

The Land of the Sky Chorus creates compelling barbershop experiences for its members, audiences and upcoming generations, enhancing the musical scene in western North Carolina. If you are in the Asheville area, please join us—we keep a warm welcome mat out year 'round!

The 10 highest-scoring chapters in the 2010 Chapter Achievement program are all growing and reporting high member satisfaction. Some are well-known on the contest stage while others are not. Along with an internal focus on a healthy chapter life, these groups are also focused on making a positive impact in their communities and are partaking of many of the benefits the Society has to offer. Here are their stories in their own words.

2010 Chapter Achievement survey data

Of the 333 reporting chapters (41% of all Society chapters) the following statistics were recorded. The following bullet points describe all categories in which chapters could earn points, stated in terms of how the 333 chapters reported their 2010 experiences. Some bullet points include additional stats in parenthesis, showing the average among chapters that reported a number under that particular category. To see all questions and results for the 2010 Chapter Achievement Program, go to barbershop.org/chapter-achievement-program.html.

- 23% experienced membership growth
- 64% established or reviewed a formal membership orientation program
- 98% performed within the community (non-chapter shows) with at least 1/3 of chapter members performing (10 performances/year)
- 92.5% performed for free at least once within the community (6.6 times/year)
- 85% hosted formal chapter shows (1.9/year)
- 20% received Standing Ovation Program critiques (1/year)
- 81% had a Singing Valentines program
- 9.6% hosted Singing For Life blood drives
- 67% participated in Youth In Harmony events or projects (4/year)
- 89% had a website or Facebook page
- 67% created or reviewed their mission statement
- 74% participated in Leadership Academy (4 men/year)
- 99% held board meetings (10/year)
- 93% held music team meetings (7/year)
- 89% listed their chapter leaders in eBiz.barbershop.org
- 94% filed their required financial forms
- 33% gave money to Harmony Foundation or SingCanada
- 17% gave money to charities as a chapter
- 80% had non-competing chapter members at an international convention (4/chapter)
- 74.5% had non-competing chapter members at a district convention (5/chapter)
- 52.5% competed at least once
- 62% had chapter members in a district quartet contest (8/chapter)
- 96% hosted chapter social events with at least 1/3 chapter members attending (4/year)
- 55% participated in at least one Society program: YiH, CACM, CDWI, Next Level, Music Mentor (1.5/year)
- 79% participated in some kind of quartetting activity each week
- 87% gave out awards
- 61% produced a chapter bulletin
- 41% had a chapter member attend Harmony U (2.5/year)

Balance



2. Mankato, Minn. (LOL)

Mankato Riverblenders
www.singmankato.com

"Sing Well, Have Fun" has been the goal of the Mankato Riverblenders for decades, and actually became our official chorus motto and mission statement. Our members come from more than a dozen southern Minnesota communities, and working hard to sing well and bring the fun of barbershop harmony across the region is the biggest contributor to our Chapter Achievement score.

A great example of getting out into our communities is Summer Church Singouts. We sing as part of local community worship services all summer long, with the chorus racing to five, six, sometimes seven churches on a Sunday. We're out in the community again for Singing Valentines with as many tag quartets as we can send across the land. We also sing the National Anthem for local ball teams, hit several local festivals, take our annual show out to multiple communities, Christmas carol around the Salvation army bucket, and do our best to brighten the day for community members in long term care.

That's just the chorus; our five chapter quartets and VLQ performed or competed more than 60 times in the last year. We also use competition to keep raising the "sing well" part of our goal. Preparing and competing at the division and district level with great coaching has continued to help us improve our skills.



In settings large and small, a combined 60 performances a year make for a big community profile



An active chapter needs active members, and one of the things the Chapter Achievement score doesn't reveal is that almost every member of the chorus plays a role in helping the chapter run smoothly. Most members have a specific duty, serve on a committee, lead as an officer, or help make rehearsals fun. They also routinely volunteer for some aspect of performance planning, show production, afterglows, or public relations. Beyond our chapter, our leadership group participates at the Land O' Lakes district level including at their Leadership Academy.

Our biggest challenge is membership growth. We co-sponsored our first Youth in Harmony Festival this year. We know that with our reach into the community and active members, we'll make this area a growing part of our next Chapter Achievement score. Until then, sing well, have fun, and we hope to see you at rehearsal next Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. sharp!

4. Northwest Ohio (JAD)

The Voices of Harmony
www.thevoicesofharmony.org

The Northwest Ohio Chapter, located in Bowling Green, Ohio, grows one man at a time by investing in each member's experience. Focused on musical excellence, director C.C. Snyder and the music team introduce songs that engage the whole performer! Members acquire leadership skills during weekly chapter meetings, with a quarter of the membership in front of the chapter each week. Further leadership is developed by sending our entire leadership team to the JAD Leadership Academy. Members are privileged to interact with internationally-known coaches. And, the chorus enjoys sharing barbershop harmony within



Focused on a satisfying member experience, quartetters make up half the chapter



our region through singouts and special events.

Approximately half of our members participate in quartets (including District and International competitors). A number of members also participate on District boards and leadership teams. Through the development and commitment of each member, the chapter has members of all ages involved at all levels of our hobby.

3. Bloomington #1, Ill. (ILL)

Sound of Illinois

www.soundofillinois.com

Located halfway between Chicago and St. Louis, Bloomington is about to celebrate its 70th year as a chapter. Over the years, the core ideals of the Bloomington chapter have not changed much: Great singing, great fun and great friends.

"We owe a lot to our patrons and supporters here in Central Illinois," says Doug Ferrier, chapter president. "The chorus has a tradition of strong leadership, both on the musical side and on the administrative side. That consistency has kept member interest high and keeps us visible in the community. We strive to be a top quality a cappella chorus, and that's largely responsible for our acceptance by the public and the arts community."

One of the chapter's biggest strengths may be its dedication to Youth In Harmony (YIH). The Bloomington chapter and friends from Sweet Adelines International host the annual Youth Festival (completely free to the schools—accomplished through grant writing and fundraising). Guest quartets and YiH quartets are always treated like rock stars, and the kids learn solid, singing skills from well-respected clinicians from both the men's and women's organizations.

"What the statistics don't show is that we've been blessed with strong leaders, including the founders, chorus directors and general membership who have set the tone for success," says Jim Stahly, a 54-year member and chapter

historian. "While we struggle with many things other chapters do, we do our best to continually listen to members and local supporters, and that has made a difference."



As for the next big goal ... well, it should sound familiar: Keeping a balance of "work" and "fun" at every rehearsal, hosting sing-outs where musicians from the local community sing with the chorus, developing a fun annual show that will entertain audiences (Beatles), remaining an inclusive chapter that welcomes all into their ranks, and finding new ways to help guests feel welcome and assimilate into the "sometimes overwhelming," yet hugely rewarding, world of barbershop harmony.

Chapter leaders provided data on activities in 30 categories (roughly outlined in sidebar on page 15), roughly broken down into the five categories on the right. For a full description of what was tabulated, and to see how your chapter did this year, go to barbershop.org/chapter-achievement-program.html.

		Membership	Community	Chapter Management	Events / Contests	Fulfillment	Total
1	Asheville, N.C. (NSC)	37	44	41	42	16	180
2	Mankato, Minn. (LOL)	13	92	40	19	13	177
3	Bloomington, Ill. (ILL)	17	41	41	48	23	170
4	Northwest Ohio (JAD)	37	37	38	34	22	168
5	Lexington, Ken., (CAR)	7	81	38	18	22	166
6	Sebring, Fla. (SUN)	37	40	31	25	29	162
7	Waterbury/Derby, Ct. (NED)	22	48	34	30	23	157
8	Salem, Ore. (EVG)	13	38	38	49	18	156
9	Atlanta Metro, Ga. (DIX)	7	35	48	39	23	152
10	Alexandria, Va. (MAD)	22	25	37	34	32	150

Honorable mention

CAP score was in the top 10 but chapter did not have membership growth in 2010

Santa Fe Springs, Calif. (FWD)

Louisville, Ken. (CAR)

Tampa, Fla. (SUN)

5. Lexington, Ken. (CAR)

Kentuckians

www.thekentuckians.org

Many hands make for fun work!

Our director relies on involved members to contribute to the chorus, fostering committed but fun meetings. We sing a mixed repertoire spanning traditional barbershop to contemporary pop. We try to achieve a balance between community performances and contests.

Our active Barberpole Cat program coordinates with quartet activities planned for each meeting. Nearly half the chorus sang in a quartet on our 2011 annual show. This is a major increase in quartet activity over the past year. We have weekly, pre-rehearsal workshops for members who want to learn the basics of music.

The chorus has recently participated in high school



and collegiate choral programs. The average age of members joining since January is 31, with the age range in our chorus now 9 to 81.

When all is said and done, our chapter finds that increased involvement within the chorus promotes organizational harmony as well as musical harmony.

6. Sebring, Fla. (SUN)

Heartland Harmonizers

www.heartlandharmonizers.org

The Sebring, Fla. Chapter is fairly new to the Society, having chartered in May, 2002. Our first show was in March of 2003, with 39 men on the risers.

The journey of growth has been the combination of men interested in continuing to sing in retirement and new voices discovering a great love of barbershop in their later years. We



think of ourselves as a "snowbird" chorus, and as such, the migration of our members each year and the short length of time (January-May) for us to prepare and execute our chapter activities, is a challenge.

As many as nine districts are represented in our membership; and yet,

our first Sunshine District convention in May of 2008 showed 61% of our participants had never been on the contest stage. The leadership is constantly in an education/orientation mode, trying to instill the barbershop camaraderie in our new members that has kept our core involved, many for 50 years plus.

Our leadership continues to push to instill the barbershop experience as we see growth, particularly in our Youth in Harmony outreach.

7. Waterbury/Derby, Ct. (NED)

Valley Chordsmen

www.valleychordsmen.com

Our chorus was established in 1947. We are akin to "The Little Engine That Could," because our chapter keeps on moving forward. Our

members agree that our strengths include great camaraderie, a feeling of mutual respect and a love of barbershop harmony that

holds us together like a brotherhood. Coffee before each rehearsal (and an afterglow after) gives us a chance to know each other in a broader sense. Our weekly newsletter, *The Tune Times*, keeps us all up to date.

We are active and annually produce a major Spring Cabaret and a Fall Show. We also participate in several Elks' programs and do 20+ performances in our area each year.

We are having fun!

Our ongoing challenge is membership expansion. Our new recruitment plan is aimed at the colleges and choirs in the surrounding towns. We are also performing in new venues, thereby allowing more people to become aware of all we have to offer.



8. Salem, Ore. (EVG)

Salem SenateAires
www.senateaires.org

The Salem Chapter works hard to make every chapter experience a family experience. Large growth in quartet activities included every quartet (many including members of neighboring chapters) competing at the Division level, with several competing at District and two competing in both International contests. Quality singing attracts quality singers.

For the past eight years, we have sponsored a Youth Spectacular Show featuring ensembles from high school and colleges within a 50-mile radius. Showcasing local talent, while not motivated by membership growth, has aided in immediate chapter growth.

Last, we try to make every rehearsal a fun and rewarding experience for every member, with consistent emphasis on quality singing. The demands from competing in the last 13 international contests has led to major membership peaks and valleys over the years, but even with this turnover, 35% of our members have been Society members for 25 years or more, with 28% under 10 years.



9. Atlanta Metro, Ga. (DIX)

Atlanta Vocal Project
www.atlantavocalproject.com

Our biggest strength is the involvement of all members of the chapter. It is stressed each week that we only get better when each member gets better. The music team is continually working on ideas to help each individual get better in the craft of singing. We have a very talented director, with assistant directors and section leaders that contribute their own special talents to the production of our ensemble sound. The music team and chapter leadership presents ideas and plans for a great rehearsal experience that is fun and rewarding for everyone.

We have forged an excellent relationship with Sandy Springs, Ga., and continue to support the community with performances. One of our goals is to become more involved in the community we call home. The next mountain to climb is to grow our chapter, increase our recognition in the community, and expand the abilities of our individual members.

10. Alexandria, Va. (MAD)

Alexandria Harmonizers
www.harmonizers.org

Having 98% of the chorus affiliated with the military or federal government has helped create an administrative juggernaut. This is evident during membership drives, when 25 to 50 prospective members show up. We use all available print, electronic and social media to advertise, which has nearly doubled our size over four years.

We seek out opportunities to participate in very unique venues that invariably open the doors to even more unique opportunities. In the past couple of years we have performed in Carnegie Hall, the nationally-televised Cherry Blossom Festival, the U.S. Supreme Court's annual Historical Society Dinner, and NBC's "America's Got Talent."

In the coming year, we will strive to consistently put more than 100 members in our performing chorus. We are planning a trip to Beijing, China, where we will perform in two separate venues. We will be doing a major overhaul of our repertoire in order to provide a new, fresh sound to our audiences.



Youth Chorus Festival sponsors go the extra mile

Harmony Foundation is grateful to the following people for their leadership and generosity as sponsors of the Youth Chorus Festival. Leadership, as you know, takes many forms, and they have each contributed \$10,000 as an investment in the future of barbershopping.



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Thoroughbred Youth Chorus

YOUTH CHORUS FESTIVAL PHOTOS BY MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY



Savannah Storm

Harmony Foundation Regional Representatives

Working under the direction of the three directors of development, Harmony Foundation is grateful to these Regional Representatives, who have been trained to represent Harmony Foundation at chapter meetings and district functions. Due to their efforts, record numbers are enrolling in Ambassadors of Song. To arrange a chapter visit or to become a Regional Representative, contact your Director of Development.

Sean Devine

Ron Black
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Ryan Killeen

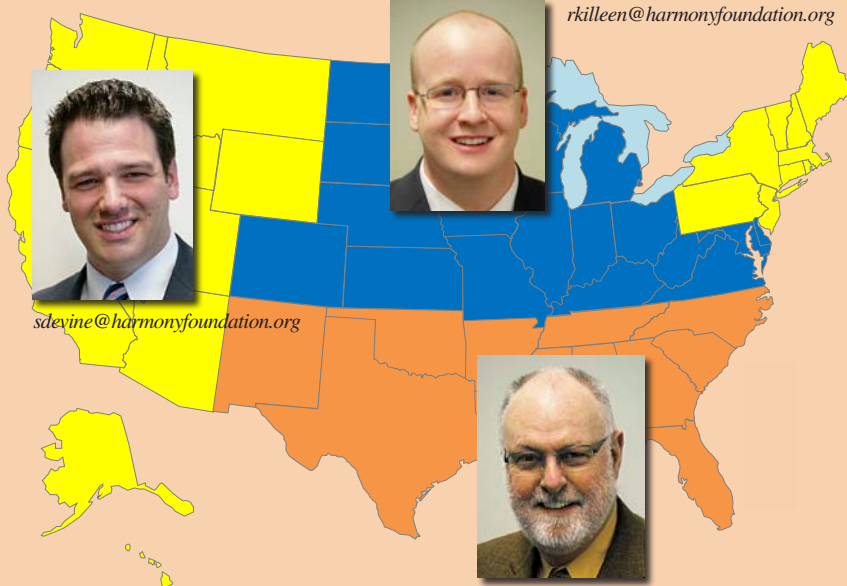
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The Harmony Bear Drive was a success on multiple levels.

Harmony Foundation was a major sponsor of the Harmony Bear

Drive introduced in the May/June 2011 issue of *The Harmonizer*. Givers in Kansas City purchased an estimated 2,300 bears for patients at Kansas City's Children's Mercy Hospital. In Kansas City, 85 people donated bears by becoming an Ambassador of Song or upgrading their annual gift.



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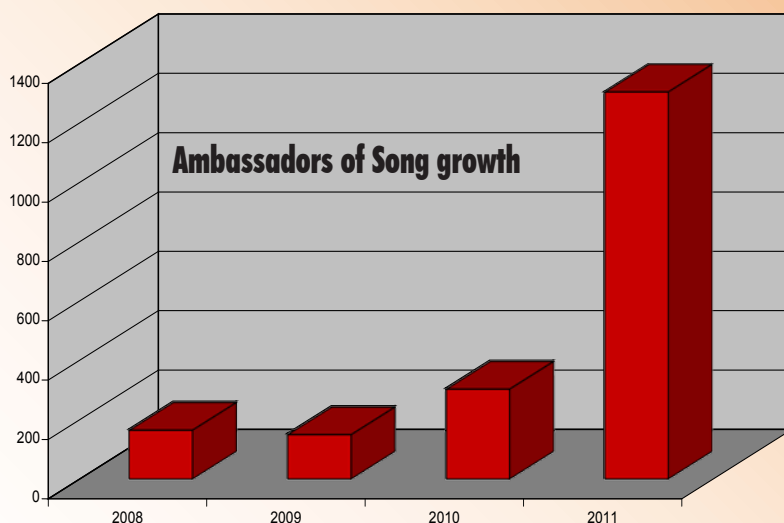
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The Ambassadors of Song program helps ensure a future of barbershop harmony when an Ambassador gives as little as \$10 a month through Harmony Foundation. Only halfway through 2011, greater awareness of the program has created an explosion in the number of Ambassadors of Song. ■



THE CAPENOS MATCHING CAMPAIGN

The Power of Everyone

Kansas City: an incredibly exciting convention that launched the Capenos Matching Campaign – ***The Power of Everyone***, a \$100,000 campaign created through the vision and passion of one man – Warren Capenos.

Warren challenged Harmony Foundation with \$100,000 to raise \$100,000 by year-end. We will meet that challenge by recruiting new Ambassadors of Song members and asking for increases from current ones. We have already raised more than \$25,000 toward the challenge, but we still have a long way to go.

Right now you have an opportunity to join over 1,300 others in the Ambassadors of Song program, and have every dollar you give count twice!

Call Caki Watson today to find out how you can be a part of this special matching effort to help keep barbershop alive for the next generation.

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A 34-year barbershopper and retired F-14 pilot / Navy captain took the Society's top post in 2006. While he regrets that the organization is smaller than when he took over, in many respects he has left the Society much stronger than he found it



US NAVY / DANIEL J MCCLAIN

Ed Watson: Post-mission recap

“Hawk has failed twice to qualify for night carrier landing,” said the Admiral, “but in every other area of flying he’s been a great pilot, Doc. We’re giving him one more chance; he either gets it right or he washes out, and we want you to fly backseat and guide him in.”

As a senior flight instructor, Ed ‘Doc’ Watson often flew backseat with young pilots during their final attempt at making a night landing; if they failed, they’d wash out as navy pilots.

“Hawk did have great skills,” agreed Doc (Ed), “but he was over-thinking and over-correcting the aircraft. My job was to get him to land the \$38 million-dollar aircraft on a small moving target—at night—without killing anyone. And since there are no flight controls in the backseat of an F-14, I had to connect with the pilot and lead him to make the right decisions, every time, to put us down safely.”

Ed never had one pilot fail. He would use those same proven abilities to instill trust and confidence when in 2005, he took command of what had become the troubled singing organization that he loved.

It was at shows and conventions that Ed, a 35-year barbershopper himself, had noticed a negative attitude that had entered into the Society. People were not enjoying themselves as much as they used to, and that’s what inspired Ed to apply for the CEO position.

“Ed wrote on his resume that he wanted to become CEO ‘to restore fun to the Barbershop Harmony Society,’” recalls Rick Spencer, Director of Operations. “Ed came aboard as CEO in the heat of all the change—the new logo, the new name, and the relocation of the Society headquarters to a yet-to-be determined new city.”

Restoring trust, laying new foundations

“The complaint letters and e-mails I received early on made it clear that Joe Barbershopper felt like he was being imposed upon,” remembers Ed, “and the Harmonet [an Internet forum for barbershoppers] was a poison pit of acrimony and terrible attitudes. I’m sure that O.C. Cash never intended for his singing hobby to become a source of stress in people’s lives.”

Ed’s first public action as CEO was to give the keynote address at Harmony University 2005. Spencer remembers, “The first thing he did, consistent with his promise to restore fun, was to teach them a tag. Ed then went on to make three promises:

First, I promise I won’t waste your money if you promise to pay your dues. Second, I understand your angst and anxiety about the logo and name change. I didn’t have anything to do with that, and

Ed never had one pilot fail. He would use those same proven abilities when he took command of what had become the troubled singing organization that he loved.

I felt the same way. However, those things are relatively unimportant in the scheme of barbershop, and I'm not going to waste my time worrying about them.

And third, it's your hobby. Do what you want to do—you decide how you want to enjoy it.

Ed's first promise was to be a prudent steward of the nonprofit's funds. It was immediately obvious that the Midwinter Convention was failing. Attendance was down to 800 and the Society was losing money on it. "It was just old guys, and lots of meetings," said Ed. "We needed to make it more successful, or cancel the convention and just hold the meetings,"

"Since I was the CEO for everybody, I reached out and suggested we hold a Buffalo Bills old-fashioned contest at Midwinter—and we tried it for one year. But when my staff presented me with the idea for a youth harmony festival I immediately said, 'Let's go for it!'"

The Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival debuted at the San Antonio Midwinter in 2008, and has since become known as the "Fountain of Youth Convention." The festival has become more successful every year, and attendance at Midwinter has more than doubled on Ed's watch.

"We don't do it to recruit members," says Ed. "we do it to expose the youth to the best hobby in the world, and because I believe every barbershop ex-

perience we give kids makes them better people"

Ed was often asked, "Why should I pay dues?" which, as he puts it, usually meant "What's in it for me?" His response was that, "We need to preserve, propagate, and promote barbershop harmony for our kids and our grandkids so that they have something wholesome, entertaining, and fun to participate in—because the world's entertainers don't care about our kids.

We've lost sight of this larger purpose. That's why you pay dues—it's not for you. For 35 years, I paid my dues even when I couldn't participate in a chorus because I wanted to support the movement."

"I received an e-mail from a barbershop dad complaining about the costs of competing with his sons at International. He said, 'I've got airline travel costs, food costs, hotel costs, and convention registrations—this is way too expensive. It's killing me.' So I wrote him back and said 'Thanks for writing to the Barbershop Harmony Society about how expensive this is. We spend a lot of time negotiating with hotels on your behalf, and if we could lower our registration prices we would.'"

"And then I told him, 'Let's take this one step further. You are going to sing on the international stage with your two sons. They will never forget the experience they are going to have with their dad. And I

believe that every experience you give your sons singing barbershop with you is going to be one more experience to make them better people. Don't you think that is priceless?' He wrote back and said that he was way off base, and thanked me." Some things are worth the money—making your kids better is worth the money.

(Ed's five kids recorded a CD with six barbershop



PHOTOS BY MATT BOSTICK



In 2005, members were deep in revolt over the Society name change and new logo. An atmosphere of open hostility was fueled by the perception that Society leadership was generally unaware and perhaps uninterested in what the members wanted from their Society experience. When Ed Watson took over as CEO in that environment, he lived up to the title of his "Straight Talk" column in every setting. Members soon learned that Ed was a Joe Barbershopper to the core, one who always shared his views without spin in what he saw as a two-way conversation. Storm Front's swan song in Kansas City summarized what many members felt about his imminent departure: "Even when we didn't completely agree, Ed, you were always our CEO and we're going to miss you."



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songs for his 60th birthday.)

Ed sang with the **San Diego Sun Harbor Chorus** from 1984-90. "I was the music VP and those were great years," said Ed, "We didn't put limits on ourselves.

"Bobby Gray Jr. and I created the Cavemen package, and the Great American Love Story, which Lloyd Steinkamp directed to a 5th place medal 1991."

Ed learned several important things about chapter life in San Diego:

- The only thing that stops a chapter from being the best it can be is the attitudes of the people involved.
- Get the people doing what they like to do.
- Don't be afraid to give the young guys a job to do. "A new college kid wanted to run sound for a show," said Ed, "and I had to talk the show chairman into letting him do it. The young Royce Ferguson did a great job, and has since earned both quartet gold and chorus-director gold."
- People don't realize that their individual actions make a difference toward membership.

Patty Leveille, Executive Assistant to the CEO, revealed some things that most people don't know about Ed:

"Ed personally answered every e-mail or note he received from barbershoppers. Not only is he an excellent emcee, he is a very creative show script writer, and he even taught a course on it at Harmony University. Choruses often sent show scripts to him for his input, which he gladly gave. He wrote personalized condolences to the families of every barbershopper that passed away. He hung the portraits of O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall in the Society boardroom to serve as silent sentinels over all Society business."

Ed's final thoughts: "The action required to save the Society lies within each individual member. Don't look

"We promote barbershop harmony so our kids have something wholesome and fun to participate in—because the world's entertainers don't care about our kids."

to the new CEO, the next Board, your District, your chapter, or your director."

Ed always closed his monthly column in *The Harmonizer* by asking all the readers, "How am I doing?" and

he signed off from his final column with, "How did I do?"

Let's take a look:

- The Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival is thriving.
- The Midwinter Convention is prospering and has grown every year.
- Las Vegas was the most successful Midwinter ... ever!
- The Harmonet is civil.
- The new Society headquarters is successfully rooted in Nashville.
- Perhaps most telling, tag singing in hotel lobbies is up! "There were so many people singing tags I had to fight my way across the lobby—at 4 a.m.!" Spencer said recently.

At the recent International Convention in Kansas City, **Storm Front**, which has always been tuned in to the pulse of Joe Barbershopper, invited Ed on stage near the end of their swan song set in which they reprised their re-enactment of the new logo. They broke from the logo-pose when Ed joined them at center stage.

"Don't go, Ed Watson, Don't go," they gummed like toothless old men. And then, in his last public action as CEO of the Barbershop Harmony Society, Ed posted a solid F# with lead Jim Clark, as the rest of the quartet finished the tag around them. Afterward, Ed said, "With the medalist quartets standing behind me on stage and the international audience in front of me, I was worried I wouldn't blend."

Trust us, Ed, you blended beautifully—not only in the tag, but you also blended the Society into a more harmonious combination of different members who are having fun pursuing their barbershop hobby the way they want to. ■

Australia's Got Talent was wild about Benchmark

With “voices like warm honey and hearts of gold,” to quote one of the judges, senior quartet **Benchmark** from Queensland, Australia (AAMBS) overcame serious personal struggles and made it all the way to the top 10 in the August 2 Grand Finale of “Australia’s Got Talent.”

Tenor Paul Roussell, lead Derek Cosburn, bass Tom Percy and baritone Ray Smyth (L to R in photo) began this journey of the heart in early June when they performed “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” in the first heat of the contest, garnering a standing ovation not only from the audience but also from the judges. The standing ovations continued through the next three rounds, with high praise from the judges about the barbershop style, their vocal talents and showmanship. At one point, one of the judges said “You’re a boy band!” To that Ray replied, “Oh no, we’re a *man* band!”, which brought both applause and laughter all around.

Cancer almost ends their amazing run

Their nation-wide accomplishment was nearly cut short. Midway through the contest, they received the shattering news that Tom had been diagnosed with lymphoma for the second time, and he had to start radiation therapy immediately. The side effects on his voice and his stamina almost caused them to scratch just before the semifinal. But Tom rallied for his mates and they dedicated their last song, “This Is the Moment,” to all the contestants who made it to the finals. The eventual winner of the contest and the \$250,000 grand prize was a 14-year-old tow-headed singer-songwriter, who of course had tremendous appeal.

Paul summed up Benchmark’s feelings about the experience with these words: “Even though we didn’t win, Benchmark has done what we originally set out to do, and that was to let the



Benchmark caps their final performance in “Australia’s Got Talent” with hugs and choked-back tears. There was nary a dry eye in the audience or among the judges.

Australian people know that singing a cappella music in the barbershop style is cool!” Take a few minutes to watch the videos of their performances on the Society website (shortcut link: <http://www.tinyurl.com/3humbke>), and you’ll know they accomplished that goal. The judges were obviously enthralled with the barbershop sound, Benchmark’s showmanship and the bond that these guys had throughout the competition.

“Just to be in the top 10 out of more than 3,000 acts that auditioned is a great result, and we got barbershop in front of about 2.5 million people. Our goal is to stimulate all ages into getting off their lounge chairs and participating in a local chapter,” said Paul. “We also acknowledge the wonderful support we received from Mike Donnelly and others in AAMBS, as well as members of Sweet Adelines here in Australia.”


Benchmark formed in 2008, and competed in the International Senior Quartet Contest both in Tampa in 2010 and Las Vegas in 2011. They sing with **The Blenders** chorus based in Southeast Queensland (www.theblenders.com.au). Learn more at www.benchmarkfour.com or www.facebook.com/benchmarkfour. ■



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Benchmark performs “I’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad” during the third episode, with the aid of great sets, props and dry ice.



Chordial Celebration quartet, featuring the fathers of three Storm Front members, performed "Wonderful World" at afterglows for years. Unlike their sons in Philly, they always sang it straight up ... and fully clothed.

Storm Front

EXPOSED

As Storm Front bows out as the reigning International Champion, lead Jim Clark gives the inside scoop on what it takes to "bring the funny"

Why comedy?

Ultimately, in a contest you want to capitalize on your strengths and develop your weaknesses. Since we had no strengths, we played rock/paper/scissors to decide which weakness to develop. Comedy won.

Is comedy more difficult than non-comedy?

We've had success at both, and comedy is definitely harder. The upside can be almost limitless, but if comedy doesn't work, you curl up into a ball in front of 10,000 people and start mumbling, "No place like home. No place like home." It's not pretty.

How can a group develop into a comedy quartet?

It starts with really bad choices in your youth. Actually, step one is to answer the question, "Is anyone in our quartet funny?" It's much harder to be successful at comedy if no one is inherently funny. (It's not impossible. Look at us.) Next, determine whether or not every guy is willing to throw all caution to the wind to make the audience laugh. It takes a personal resolution (or resignation, in Jeff's case) to say, "This could cost us the contest. But if the audience laughs ..." After that, trial and error, coaching, trial and error, coaching, trial and error ...

How do you balance comedy, contestable music, and quality singing?

With a whip and a chair.

How about just using someone else's material?

The rule of thumb is, *never steal someone else's shtick*. You'll always be compared to the original quartet. While developing your own original ideas is difficult, fresh material that's unique to your quartet is often better-performed (and better received) than copied routines. (We're still waiting to find out what that feels like.)

What does a quartet brainstorming session look like?

Honestly? Very little singing, a tremendous amount of laughing. Formal brainstorming usually only develops general concepts—it might occasionally get a song to around 75% complete. But it's usually more like this: Someone throws out a random idea while in the hotel room, then someone tacks onto that while in the dressing room, then someone else thinks of something more on the way to the afterglow, etc. Most of our ideas take quite a while to percolate. From concept to stage is usually a months-long process, and one that never stops. In fact, a strangely high percentage of our great "hits"

in contest songs were added during the International Contest week each of the last three years. It takes warped minds to operate like that. (Or a lack of minds, in our case.)

How do you “test drive” comedy so you don’t have to bomb in front of audience to learn something doesn’t work?

The #1 rule is *know your audience*. They must understand your shtick before they can laugh at it. (A non-contest audience won’t understand contest-specific comedy, for example.) Once an idea seems viable, it’s time to bring in “outsiders”—wives, kids, friends ... getting a reading from others is critical. Once it begins to develop, the inclusion of a coach who knows “funny” can be a tremendous help. (In our case, Rick LaRosa, lead of 1999 champ **FRED**, was an exception.) Ultimately, we tend to think that if something makes us laugh, it might make the audience laugh. However, until it is actually in front of that audience (contest or otherwise), you just don’t know. Zero guarantees of what will work. All part of the risk/reward and part of the excitement.

What got you over the top? Was there a watershed moment that helped you jump from 20 to 10, from being “accustomed to third place” to gold?

Work. Toil. Sweat. Time. Frustration. Effort. Plain old work. We’ve also worked with some great coaches over the years, including Jim Casey, Kim Hulbert and others. Since 2007, the two guys who took us the rest of the way were Chad Guyton (lead of 2002 champ **Four Voices**) and Rick LaRosa. They were the right guys at the right time. Rick taught us how to sing, and Chad “brought the funny.” Or was it the other way around? ...

Were you worried about how long each of your sets ended up lasting in Philly?

What? Were we on stage especially long? No one’s ever mentioned that. Actually, I think our default position



Our only two missions were to make sure everyone noticed our improvements in singing and to pull out all the stops to make everybody laugh.

laugh. If that meant we were on stage longer than any quartet in history, we’d be satisfied so long as we won the audience. (Jury’s still out on that.)

It’s odd, but once you begin to believe you can do anything, it becomes easier to do it. We always wondered where **FRED** got the confidence to work up new shtick during the convention week. Yet there we were, 10 years later, in Nashville, Anaheim, and Philly, changing things the night before, the day of, and backstage. It was thrilling.

Is it true that your wives gave you a “now or never” mandate in the year running up to Philly?

Maybe not a “now or never,” but there was an urgency unlike anything before. Jeff had spent many years with **Riptide** while the other three had been toiling away with **Storm Front**. While our families loved what we did for audiences and each other, we were often missing from our families’ lives. Even when we were home, we were often “not home,” with all the quartet work to be done. It was tough. In the spring of 2009, when we realized the only way to beat **Crossroads** was via sabotage, we looked forward to 2010. Things changed when Darin (an excellent musician and realist) said, “If we do everything right the next year, I think we can win in Philly.” Our wives gritted their teeth and said, “Okay, you have one year to go crazy. After that ...”

We loaded up with shows, coaching and rehearsal. Nearly every show weekend in 2009-10 became a three-day marathon. From Friday night, every moment we weren’t singing on a show or afterglow was spent coaching or rehearsing until we flew home Sunday night. Tough. (Especially when you are so tired, you show up for work Monday morning in your lime quartet suit.) But it was the fastest year of our competition lives.

How do the “straight men” in comedy make or break the buffoon’s shtick?

This was a challenging question for us. I’m naturally

was, “If they stop laughing, we’ll get off the stage.”

Why push the envelope so far? What gave you the guts to risk wearing out your welcome with all the talking, non-singing and disjointed music?

A change of attitude. For Philly, our only two missions were to make sure everyone noticed our improvements in singing and to pull out all the stops to make everybody



Jeff Selano (tenor): A native of Toronto, Jeff is well-known as a past Singing judge and bass with five-time quartet medalist **Riptide**, as well as with **Bandstand**. Jeff was introduced to barbershop by his father, Julian, singing in the International champion chorus, **The Dukes of Harmony**. A chiropractor and entrepreneur who owns several businesses, Jeff lives near Atlanta with his wife, Mary, and their children Julian, Camille and Annabelle.

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hammier than the other three, so we initially planned for me to be the buffoon. However, it was awkward for the audience to have the lead singer play the fool. It was Rick LaRosa (Mr. Know-It-All) who first suggested turning the traditional model on its ear, instead going with three fools and one put-upon straight guy. After some initial consternation we tried it, and everything clicked. It's been downhill ever since.



Jim Clark (lead): Jim sang in a handful of quartets, including 1995 CSD champ, *Freefall*, and won a medal with college quartet *Milennium*. For nearly 10 years, Jim sang with his wife and other family members and friends in *The Denver A Cappella Project*, and continues to perform on the front row with *Sound of the Rockies*, as well as direct the *America the Beautiful Chorus* in Colorado Springs. A retirement plan account manager, he lives in Aurora, Colo. with his wife, Rhonda, and their sons Simon and Seamus.

There were other tough adjustments outside of the comedy, weren't there?

A few. We had three guys changing voice parts [Jim-tenor to lead; Darin-bass to bari; Jeff-bass to tenor], a member switch [adding Jeff], quartet members in different locations [two in Denver, two in Atlanta], getting together only once or twice a month ... we didn't plan for it to be so hard. However, we didn't set out to find the four best voices to try to win gold. (None of those guys would sing with us.) We set out as friends and family with goals of putting on a great show and developing our singing to a point where we could win International, and then continue beyond. The gold medal was never the



The "Storm Front section" of the Father-Son-Grandson chorus in Kansas City.

BITTERSWEET CHAMPIONSHIP YEAR. Bass Syd Libsack's grandmother died during the 2010 finals, not long before Storm Front took the stage. (Syd found out just before posing for championship photos.) Later in the year, the wives of Syd and tenor Jeff Selano escaped serious injury while having their cars totaled in separate accidents; then between the matinee and evening shows on the shared weekend with their fathers in Kearney, Neb. (see sidebar), Syd and lead Jim Clark somehow avoided serious injury when their car was demolished in a high-speed collision. Two weeks later, bari Darin Drown's father, Gary, would be diagnosed with terminal cancer. The day after that diagnosis, Jim's father-in-law passed away. "It was almost as if Providence had said, 'We're going to hold off until you get this gold medal thing out of the way, and then we're going to cut loose,'" said Jim.

final destination, merely part of the journey. The road has sure been difficult, but it made the contest success awfully sweet.

Speaking of sweet, it had to mean everything for the dads to see your homage to them help you win gold.

Gary Drown, Steve Libsack, Dan Clark and Rod Businga formed the Rocky Mountain District quartet **Chordial Celebration** in the late 1970s. Darin, Syd, and I grew up watching their superb slapstick. They never competed at International, never won distinct,

Funny fathers upstage their sons in their last show together, then upstage their own performance during a backstage glance

"It was a God moment for sure ..."

That's how Storm Front tenor Jeff Selano described a chapter show they co-headlined with **Chordial Celebration**, a long-time Rocky Mountain District comedy quartet featuring the fathers of the other three Storm Front members. It's true that the evening looked even sweeter in hindsight; at the time nobody knew it would be Chordial Celebration's final performance. (Gary Drown was later diagnosed with the cancer that would claim his life.) Yet for Jeff, his "God moment" came sooner, during a fleeting backstage

glance at the three fathers' smiling faces.

Chordial Celebration had booked last October's **Kearney, Neb.** gig more than a year earlier, and Storm Front performed for expenses-only so the chapter could afford both quartets. From a purely performance standpoint, the champs never should have agreed to follow these comedy veterans. "We had our rear ends handed to us ... and we could never get the audience back on our side," Jeff said. "It was awesome!"

While the audience wiped away tears of laughter following Chordial Celebration's set, Gary himself teared up as

he prepared to introduce the men he vividly remembered as three boys playing on the carpet during their fathers' rehearsals. His buddies had already shared these stories, but Jeff had never heard it from the fathers' side. That new perspective, just as Storm Front was ready to take the stage, set up "the moment of my year," Jeff said.

As Storm Front began trying to coax laughs out of a laughed-out audience, he caught several glimpses of Chordial Celebration watching from backstage. Having spent an evening with those three fathers, Jeff's father, Jules, wasn't far from his mind.

"My dad is my personal hero," he said. Ten-year-old Jeff got hooked on barbershop harmony the first night Jules took him to a rehearsal with Ontario's **Dukes of Harmony** in the fall of 1976. The chorus was like "a freight train" as they built



but for their sons were one of the all-time great quartets. They showed us both the joy and power in making an audience laugh. Without ever saying it, they taught us that no award is worth more than releasing an audience from themselves for a few short minutes.

We were honored to share the show stage with Chordial Celebration at multiple shows over the years, including the Kearney, Neb. chapter show in October, 2010, which turned out to be their last show. Two weeks later, Gary was diagnosed with the cancers that took him from us in February, 2011. What a gift to perform with them that one last time.

Back to the original question, how did y'all pull off the "long-distance" quartet thing?

Lead-line tracks via e-mail, non-stop coaching/rehearsing on show weekends, and very forgiving wives.

Your contest parodies made the case for more traditional barbershop, and then you released a Beatles album that isn't barbershoppy at all. What's up with that?

It's not "barbershop?" Really? Actually, it was driven by eclectic tastes. Jeff is a major Beatles fan who had commissioned arrangements from Jay Giallombardo before joining the quartet, so we jumped aboard. Loving more than one style of music does not mean we love barbershop any less. In fact, we are all better Barbershoppers because of our appreciation of multiple styles and genres. Variety is the spice of life.

Variety indeed—your quartet is almost as famous for its trumpet finale as for its barbershop. Was that by fate or design that you all play?

Fate. Darin was a trumpet major in college (and can play anything). I played trumpet through college.

Darin and I first did the horn finale in the Central States District quartet **Freefall**, which had three trumpet players and a trombone player. When Storm Front first formed, Darin floated the idea of bringing back the horns. We cobbled it together with chewing gum and baling wire. When Jeff joined the quartet, it was pure luck that he happened to be a trombone player, even if he hadn't touched one in 15 years. He worked harder than anyone to resurrect his chops. (When that didn't work, we implanted a tiny digital player in the bell of his trombone. Syd and I have no excuse.)

How has being an international champion affected life outside of barbershop?

When you come back to work and show your co-workers the gold medal, they smile and say, "That's nice," and usher you to the work that piled up in your absence.

How does Storm Front "encourage"?

We have been humbled, more than once, to have parents tell us how they dragged their kids to a show, only to have them be so enthralled with our show that they didn't want to leave. Beyond the performance, we try to connect with every person we can during a show weekend. If we are not singing tags with kids and guys from a chapter, if we are not the last ones to leave the theatre, if we are not the ones "closing down" the after-



Darin Drown (bari): A 19-year music educator, Darin is Director of Vocal Music at Grandview High School in Aurora, Colo. His college quartet, **The Four Hoarsemen**, won silver in the first international collegiate contest in 1992. Darin directs the five-time International medalist **Sound of the Rockies** and for nearly 10 years was musical director and baritone of **The Denver A Cappella Project**, singing with his wife, sister, and other family and friends. Darin lives in Aurora, Colo. with his wife, Jenny, and children Colin and Mary.

on the energy from a surprise second-place international finish earlier that summer.

"I got my doors blown off, there was so much electricity in that room. I was so proud because I looked up and there was my dad," Jeff recalled. Jules went on to win his first chorus gold in the Dukes' record-setting 1977 performance in Philadelphia. Jeff's path to gold in the same city began at that 1976 rehearsal. "Everything I've done in this hobby ever since, I'm still chasing the feeling from that first rehearsal."

Back to Kearney. Jeff will always remember

the sight of the older men watching from backstage, their faces beaming with pride at a comically flat performance that only a father wouldn't recognize as

the evening's second-best. That's when he realized those smiles had little to do with the quartet's shtick.

On their faces, Jeff instead saw a powerful image of hearts bursting with joy at their sons' success. "I can't imagine what it would be like if my son got a gold medal in a quartet," he declared. "We'd be inconsolable." But these three men's sons had inherited more than a knack for comedy and a passion for barbershop harmony.

"Beyond being great barbershoppers," Jeff said of his quartet mates, "they're fantastic men, fantastic fathers." Their fathers' faces backstage told Jeff why this was so: "It's all they know," he realized. Like father like son, and barbershop harmony was part of the medium. "Everything kind of came together at that moment."



Gary & Darin Drown



Jules Selano



The show was "a God moment" to the quartet, even before learning it would be their last time together.

Two weeks later, all would be shocked to learn that this shared time on stage could never again be repeated. Yet, even while the evening's shtick was earning weak chuckles from out in the hall, Jeff already knew he wouldn't forget what he saw and felt from behind the side curtain. "I realized there were so many gifts we'd been given," he said. "God had brought this full circle."

—Lorin May

Swipes 'n' Swaps

"New director" ads are free in *The Harmonizer* (first 50 words) to Society chapters. Additional copy for director ads, or other ads for uniforms and risers are \$25 per column inch. Send to harmonizer@barbershop.org.

DIRECTOR WANTED

The Midwest Vocal Express (MVE) of Greendale, WI is seeking a new director who will help us build upon the rich and unique heritage of the MVE and take us to the next level of singing, performing, and International medal excellence. Contact Darryl Cremer at dbcramer@wi.rr.com.

The Wild Rose Harmonizers, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada are looking for a new director to take over the development of our chorus. More information and a job description available on our website www.harmonizers.ca.

Download thousands of your favorite contest performances from www.iTunes.com

Search the online library with the keywords "barbershop contest"



glow and the glimmer, it just doesn't feel right.

Why should men and kids get involved in barbershop?

Where else in the world can kids and teenagers be working toward a common goal alongside men in their 20s, 40s, 60s, and beyond? Where else is your background, your job, or your salary completely irrelevant, and the only important thing is what part you sing? What other "hobby" can be shared by fathers, sons, and grandsons, while simultaneously changing people's lives? Where else can youngsters be given so many great role models to admire? Oh, and that "small" thing about preserving a great American musical art form. Nothing like it.

You're all second-generation barbershoppers. Any insight to how chapters can encourage more people to enjoy more and sing more barbershop?

1. Sing well. A chorus or quartet doesn't have to be winning contests to sing well. Good singing brings people in.
2. Put on an entertaining show. It doesn't have to be comedy, but it has to entertain. Patrons who have a great time in the seats are more likely to show up at a rehearsal.
3. Reach out to schools and music teachers. It's a tightrope act, as you don't want to beat a music educator over the head with barbershop. (They have others trying to get "in with them" all the time.) But reach out. Invite a high school group or program to appear on a chapter

Nearly every show weekend in 2009-10 became a three-day marathon. Tough. Especially when you are so tired, you show up for work Monday morning in your lime quartet suit.

show. Learn what you can do to help a local school music program, then do it with no strings attached. Work to form a friendship. If a chorus gains the trust/friendship/respect of music educators, it is a conduit into the Society's future.

4. Ask for help. Many choruses have tremendous encouragement/outreach "programs." Find out what the other guys are doing. Share the things that work. For example, if we could all replicate the tremendous music camp that the **Rexburg, Idaho Chapter** hosts each January, the sky would be the limit! And there are countless other chapters in the world with similarly successful programs. Ask around. Ask your district leadership. Ask for help.

5. Always strive to improve. People like to be part of organizations who have purpose and direction.

Will Storm Front use its "champ power" to influence others to join the Society?

Unlike the Scarecrow, who became brilliant when Oz handed him a diploma, a medal didn't make us any smarter. (Just ask our wives.) We try to be the best guys we can be. If the gold medals give us some additional credibility to show audiences what a life-enhancing experience Barbershop is, we're proud to do it. Barbershop has given us more than we can possibly imagine; the least we can do is tell the world about it every chance we get. ■



Syd Libsack (bass): At Northwest Missouri State University, Syd and lifelong friend Soren Wohlers founded **Millennium**, which won the college gold in 2000. Syd maintains membership (if not activity) with **Sound of the Rockies** and **Great Northern Union** choruses and has competed with each many times. As Manager of Secondary Loan Markets for Delta Community Credit Union, Syd lives near Atlanta with his wife, Abby, and their children Carley and Graham.



¡Bienvenido Spanish Barbershop Singers!

Introducing the newest affiliate of the Barbershop Harmony Society and a brand-new acronym! SABS, the Spanish Association of Barbershop Singers, was officially installed as an affiliate on Saturday evening, July 9, 2011 at the International Convention in Kansas City.

Barbershop was virtually unknown in Spain until two brothers from Madrid, Nicolas (Nico) and Jorge de las Peñas Plana were shown a barbershop music book sent over by a friend's son who was studying in the states. Although they had sung in quality choirs for most of their lives, this was a new and challenging singing style for them and, with very little assistance, they soon grew to love it. They attended their first Harmony College in Coesfeld, Germany, where they met icons of the barbershop world and were firmly hooked. Returning to Madrid, they scoured the internet to find other like-minded people in Spain, discovering several ex-patriate groups in popular retirement

havens along the sunny Mediterranean coast.

SABS held its first get-together in Madrid in 2008, where they hosted 2006 champ **Vocal Spectrum** and in 2009 held their first convention, featuring SAI champ **Finesse**, and the Swedish sensation **Ringmasters**.

SABS is already a member of the World Harmony Council and has come a long way in just three years. Although their membership of 263 men and women is still quite small in comparison to other barbershop organizations, they are constantly spreading the word,

and now have members across Spain, as well as the Canary Islands and Portugal.

President and co-founder Nico said, "We are honored to be members of WHC and Barbershop Harmony Society and it means a lot to us. We are

proud of our achievements in such a short time. Members of the SABS Board have worked hard to bring the association to this point, and I am proud to head up such a great team."



PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY KRISTOFF

SABS President Nico de las Peñas Plana (L) performs with "The Investigators"



2011 men's champs "Hanfris" (front) with medalists "Midables" and "Melomans"



Ladies' Gold Medalist Chorus "Spangles" from Murcia, Spain



"Fenix" - Ladies' Gold Medalist



Barberidad Chorus



SABS champion choruses and quartets perform finale at 2011 "En Armonía"



Barbershop unites four Baptist music ministers in Spartanburg, South Carolina



Chris Hale, 1998 silver medalist with **Michigan Jake** and a Southern Baptist music minister, always remembered that when he was singing with the quartet, people would often approach him to ask why he was a music minister. This gave him so many opportunities to share his faith that he wanted to do it again. Enlisting three other Baptist music ministers, Butch King (Br), Steve Skinner (Ba), and David Satterwhite (T), he formed **One Accord** in the summer of 2008 with the intention of singing Christian a cappella music. Chris was the only one of the four with a lot of barbershop experience, but in 2010 the group decided to reform into a true barbershop quartet (the lead and baritone switching positions) and entered the Carolinas District competition, winning 3rd place their first time out. Hear them at <http://tinyurl.com/3p5q7s7>.

One Accord members (L to R) Butch King, Steve Skinner, Chris Hale and David Satterwhite are four Baptist music ministers who also sing with the Palmetto Statesmen Chorus (NSC) in Spartanburg-Greenville SC

One family puts 10 guys in Kansas City Father/Son Grandson Chorus

The **Father/Son/Grandson Chorus** in Kansas City was a tailor-made opportunity for the barbershop-blessed Kansas City-based Fortino family. It gave three generations some quality family time, as members sang on the risers at the start of the Quartet Finals on Saturday, July 9. Follow the branches on this family tree (there will be a test): 80-year-old Ron Fortino, the patriarch of the family, started it all years ago as a veteran of the **Heart of America Chorus** (CSD). His two sons, Mark and John, joined the chorus when they were fresh out of college in 1988, and soon they



PHOTO LORIN MAY

were each married and having barbershop babies. Eventually Mark's son Anthony (18) and John's sons Jonathan (16), Daniel (13) and Joseph (8) caught the bug. Ron's brother-in-law, Jerry Meier, also turned his off-spring-fans Andrew (19) and Michael (13) into members. That's ten in the Kansas City area. Mark and John both competed in Kansas City with the quartet **Voices Unlimited**, placing 21st. For this talented Italian family, life without barbershop would be like pasta without sauce!



AMERICA'S OLDEST 4th OF JULY PARADE!

Bristol, R.I. has been putting on its annual 4th of July parade for 224 years. If you don't want to do the math, that's since 1787—the longest running parade in the country! This year the Ocean State Chorus (Lincoln, RI Chapter, NED) were privileged to sing in this event—and they didn't even have to march in the sun! What a great float!

\$400 pies, barbershop guys and a giant egg in the sky: chorus helps rebuild church

It's hard to imagine the shock experienced by the members of the Vegreville Alliance Church in northern Alberta, Canada when they arrived for service Sunday morning February 3, 2008 to find their building ablaze. To their dismay, it burned to the ground before firefighters could get there.

As providence would have it, at about the same time, the **Grove City Harmony Chorus (EVG)** was looking for a community service project. One of their directors, Jim Moran, suggested a fundraiser to help rebuild the church, and Reuben Neufeld, a member of a neighboring church, made the contact. The church had not made any plans for a fundraiser and they were thrilled at



the offer. The event soon blossomed, with the Grove City Harmony Chorus and its quartets providing the main entertainment. Funds were raised through a huge silent auction as well as an open auction where home-made pies fetched over \$400 each. A total of \$15,000 was raised!

Now three years later, the chorus was invited back to the church this spring for a dedication service which included such dignitaries as Alberta's Premier Ed Stelmach, who happily chatted with the chorus afterward. Says Jim Cochrane, the chorus' PR & Marketing Director, "It was one of those 'feel good' moments that so many barbershoppers experience." ■



While in Vegreville, Alberta, Canada, the Grove City Chorus visited this local landmark, a giant Easter egg, or pysanka, which is decorated with traditional Ukrainian designs. It was built in 1974 for the centennial of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to express the city's gratitude for the protection the RCMP provided to the early Ukrainian pioneers who settled there.

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Society members reported as deceased between May 15 and August 1, 2011. E-mail updates to membership@barbershop.org.

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The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (DBA Barbershop Harmony Society) is a non-profit organization operating in the United States and Canada.

Mission
The Barbershop Harmony Society brings men together in harmony and fel-



lowship to enrich lives through singing.

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



THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster!!



“Friendship and Love” is what we’re all about

When I first joined the Society back in 1967, it was because a friend had patiently and persistently suggested that I visit his barbershop chapter. For a long time, though, I patiently and persistently avoided commitment to the idea. I was directing a church choir program encompassing children, youth and adults, and was commuting from San Antonio to Austin, Texas where I was working toward a doctorate in choral conducting at the University of Texas. Also, I was involved with the San Antonio Opera Chorus that met on the same night as the chapter. I was reluctant to take on any more activities, especially one that would interfere with my opera chorus obligations.

Fortunately for me, Ben Binford, a singer in the adult choir talked me into a one-time visit to a **San Antonio Chordsmen** rehearsal. I skipped out on the opera group that night and Ben picked me up and took me to the Gunter Hotel, where the barbershoppers met. That was the beginning of a new life for me. I was taken aback by the strong enthusiasm and the good singing of the men. There was a warm, friendly atmosphere and signs of great camaraderie. I joined right away and, in a matter of weeks, was asked to

become their director. The fabulous **Mark IV**, 1969 international quartet champion, was in that chapter. Each man of this foursome became a mentor and a great friend. Henry Lutz, the chapter secretary who signed my membership certificate, was best man in

my and Kay’s wedding in 1973. Soon friendships spread to so many other barbershoppers and I was overwhelmed with the flood of like-minded singers.

Just the activity of singing would be enough, but the forever-friendships are part of the cake and icing, too. What would we do without our music? And, what would we do without our friends?

That brings us to a tag that I love: “Friendship and Love to the End.” I’ve at-

tempted to find the source, and no one I’ve communicated with seems to know. If you have information about it, please e-mail me at joelilesmusic@gmail.com and I will make the changes to the male and female versions that are now at www.barbershop.org/tags. Speaking of which ... our website has a wonderful collection of tags for males and females, and they are free of charge! What a deal!

I hope you enjoy singing this super tag that expresses my sentiments exactly—both in music and message. ■



FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

for male voices

SOURCE UNKNOWN

Friend-ship and love _____ to the end. _____

To the end. _____

Friend-ship and love _____ to the end. _____

To the end, love _____ to the end. _____

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