

INSIDE: **Saturday Evening Post** • **Carolinas District** invents new convention model • **Youth Chorus Festival**

May/June 2015

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY



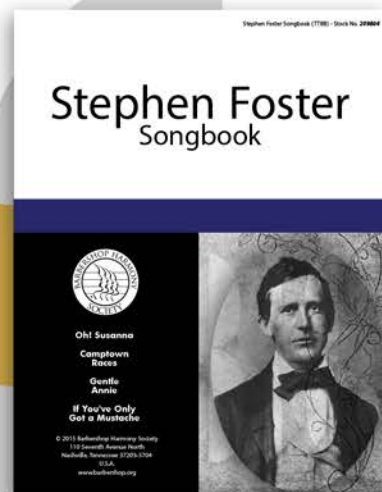
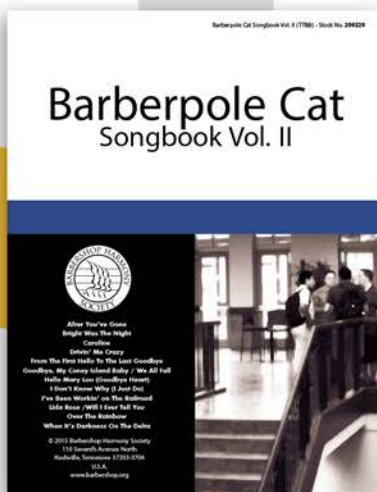
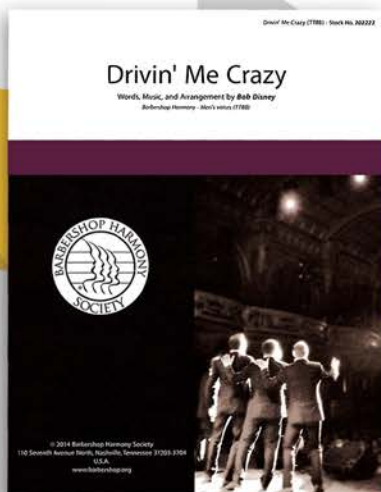
10

BEST TENORS
OF ALL TIME

YOU MIGHT BE
SURPRISED AT WHO'S
NOT ON THE LIST



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Top 50 Publications
preview samples
with new covers

**Barberpole Cat
Songbook Vol. II**

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front

back



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May/June
2015
VOLUME
LXXV
NUMBER
3

AND HERE'S YOUR DISTRICT CONVENTION SATURDAY NIGHT VENUE: Harmonizing on the U.S.S. Yorktown was the last of 7 venues for the 2014 Carolinas District Fall Festival, where non-competitors outnumbered competitors 6 to 1. Why? NSC chapters (and finances) demanded it. How'd it work? See inside.



LORIN MAY

Features

12 More from our Storytellers
Why a chapter rehearsed for months behind its director's back, why Connecticut loves Chinese barbershop songs, and how chapters are honoring WWII vets at airports.
VARIOUS

19 Saturday Evening Post
Members of the 2015 Seniors Quartet Champion have four international gold medals among them, and after singing together for 17 years in various forms, set a scoring record while winning seniors gold.

20 2015 Youth Chorus Festival
Hundreds of young men came to New Orleans this past January to experience the joy of four-part harmony. Here's your chance to spot some of the Society's future shining stars while they're still young!

24 Top 10 tenors of all time
In the first of a four-part series, an illustrious panel with a long memory picks the best-ever Society tenors. It's hard to argue against anyone who made the list ... or against many of the men who didn't!
JIM BAGBY

On the Cover
The ten best tenors in Society history all come together
COVER ART BY EDDIE HOLT

Departments

2
THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE
Don't box me in! Share Your Music in new ways

3
STRAIGHT TALK
If you want to grow, first determine why to grow

4
LETTERS
Why wasn't Barbershop 7th chord in Keynote?

5
TEMPO
We'll see you in Pittsburgh! (or get the webcast)
Old classics and new favorites: Song of the Week

10
HARMONY HOW-TO
Advanced tips to become a better bass

28
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Live national TV, social media celebrate April 11
Berlin hosts first European Harmony Brigade

30
MEMBER SERVICE DIRECTORY
Where to find answers

32
THE TAG
"Our Song Shall Rise"

Don't box me in! Share Your Music in new ways

In our chapters, we often overestimate each others' resistance to change and assume without reason that there is a widespread desire to maintain the status quo. The opposite is often true. Would your chapter *really* rather not learn new music, but only sing what they've sung before? Do they truly want to stick with the traditional show venue, even with the empty seats you never seem to fill? Would they quit sending show information to the local news sources simply because it wasn't used last time? I'll bet the answer to each is *no!*

Every box has many corners. The sidebar on this page includes examples of what you as a chapter member could do to boost your own barbershop experience while helping others. Your chapter may already be doing many of them. (Great!)

The will to Share Your Music

Many *opportunities* exist to do something just a little differently. No one really knows what new elements are going to



reach new guests, new members, new appreciative audiences, or even new community groups with which to collaborate on a new project.

Let's consider restating the box definitions in some slightly new ways:

- We *will* apply our existing vocal skills to new music and continue to learn new techniques.
- We *will* expand our community influence by reaching into new areas for future performances, even just having our chapter show in another location for some local cause.
- We *will* contact some other chapters and "borrow" some of their approaches to

our marketing and social networks.

The "storytellers" section of *The Harmonizer* is only one place where shared learning may take place. If you think your story deserves Society-wide attention (and it may), maybe your community and district should hear about it as well! Share your stories with Barbershoppers *and* with your communities!

You'll find that members in other chapters may take an idea, feed it with patience and planning, engage members and other supporters to make it work, and use persistence to work out the barriers to success. Take the time to find members who have done so via *eBiz*. barbershop.org and call and congratulate them. A new door in a "new box" of expanded success is born!

Focus on unstated expectations

Every member and leader should maintain a focus on the *unstated* needs of every new member and active member, as well as the inactive and former members.

What do others expect from their personal barbershop experience, and how could we strengthen it? How can we understand their unstated expectations?

Membership efforts should start first with reaching and retaining current members. That might involve some change. Some of our traditional "in the box" thinking might need a little morphing.

Members are driven away when their often unstated expectations remain unfulfilled. We constantly need to find the "itch to scratch" in terms of social contact and support, the challenge of vocal skill mastery, and the engagement with, and achievement of, the chapter goals.

Open that box a bit by asking: What is the initial itch that brings in a guest and compels him to come back for more? It may have been the challenge of learning new music in

preparation for a future performance. The lack of such may later drive him away.

Sharpening your music and engaging everyone becomes an invitation to join ... *and* the best reason to stay—both at the same time!

Why? We come together to sing because we groove on performing and bringing our harmonies to others for the joy that comes to their faces (and ours).

How? We work together to support all the chapter members, to continue to learn and improve our vocal craft, and to set realistic goals for everyone to attain through planning and barrier removal.

What? We are friends who love to sing, meeting during the week, and welcome anyone who wants to learn to sing or already sings but wants to sing better.

Let's take the time to ask your chapter members "What is your definition of success inside our current box?" And then we can deal with "What would be your definition of success in a new box?"

Let's *Share Your Music* together in Pittsburgh!

dfuson@barbershop.org

Some of our traditional "in the box" thinking might need a little morphing.



If you want to grow, first determine *why* to grow

Here's something I recently shared with staff—an experience with a very small chapter that is doing some important things right and is looking to grow. (Sound familiar? Read on.)

Watch the video of my discussion with the staff on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/monson61>.

10 members ... strong

It is so important to understand *why* the Society is here and why we exist. That's one reason that when I travel to district conventions, I try to show up early to visit at least one chapter that doesn't participate in conventions—one that may not be really engaged with the organization.



What a joy it is to share our successes, challenges and ways we can collaborate better together.

My favorite visit yet was to a chapter of only 10 guys. They don't have a director, and they rehearse in a church foyer, but they and I were having the time of our lives. *And* they're actually really good. These guys have the fundamentals to do something, and we started discussing *What do they want to do? What do they want to be?*

The chapter has been around for over 65 years, and 20 years ago they had 80 men. Then they lost their director, and men moved on or joined other chapters. Another director got them back to 25-30 men, then they lost him as well. But they really ring chords, and they are having a blast. They are getting together just to get reinvigorated with life.

The motivations for getting together were no different more than 100 years ago, when African-Americans gathered in barbershops to harmonize. They weren't trying to create a 150-member chorus; they were just getting together to ring some chords.

We have many chapters that sing well, they have unbelievable passion, yet they are struggling. Musical leadership is a key feature of chapter health. The chapter I visited had an unofficial musical leader whose only goal was to ensure the members kept coming forever to be reinvigorated through song.

Perfect shouldn't be the enemy of good

Can we expect that any chapter's music leader will stay forever? The answer is no. Yet, without a good director, chapter membership ebbs and flows.

What, exactly, is a *good* director? I fear we often overlook good musicians because we're holding out for a Jim Clancy clone who is both a great leader and a great musician. But how many directors are like that?

Your community likely has good musical directors both inside and outside barbershop circles. I hope you find them and allow them to simply do what they do

well—teach ensemble singing. Meanwhile, the chapter can continually develop members into better leaders so that when your director goes away, your leadership and vision—and your chapter—remain intact.

Path to growth: improvement, purpose and fun

Never move past the fundamentals of *why* your chapter is meeting every week. Sometimes you can be consumed with “I want to grow.” But how and *why* do you want to grow? That's not a trivial question. What is your culture? What do you want to accomplish? What musical styles do you want to add to your barbershop repertoire? How often? Reread Shannon Elwick's column in the Nov/Dec 2014 issue (www.barbershop.org/harmonizer; p. 2) for more tips.

Prioritize fun. I encourage you to read or re-read the cover article from the July/August 2014 issue by Jim Bagby: “Time for Fun.” It speaks of the need to drive for musical improvement on the one hand, and the priority to have fun on the other. You need both, or eventually you'll have neither.

Have a purpose. Singing has made a difference in your life; I hope you are also trying to use the power of singing to change-lives throughout your community. Join like-minded people to promote singing among all ages and backgrounds—no strings, whether or not they want to sing barbershop right now. (Let them come to barbershop as they come to know you.) Look for programs and entities unique to your communities and provide leadership. You'll not only perform more and have more fun, but you'll connect with those who can strengthen your chapter's mission or even join you on the risers.

How to grow is only half the equation—you also need to decide *why!*

Marty

mmonson@barbershop.org

What's in Marty's Daytimer?

- May 4, Americana Music Triangle, Franklin, TN
- May 12, Metro Nashville Arts Council
- May 14-15, 'Current State' retreat, HQ
- June 2, Philanthropic Architecture, HQ
- June 3, Program Managers Q3 update, HQ
- June 2-3, Leadership Development OPT, HQ
- June 4, SAI HQ, Tulsa
- June 8-9, HFI/BHS team meetings
- June 10-14, Americans for the Arts conference, Chicago
- June 17-19, Chorus America conference, Boston
- June 28-July 4, BHS Int'l Convention, Pittsburgh, PA



What is Marty listening to?

- “Welcome to Nashville,” a Barbershop Tribute to The Music City



Why wasn't Barbershop 7th chord in keynote?

Regarding David Wright's keynote address: My membership card reads 67 years, and some might think that makes me a fuddy-duddy who wants to return to the '60s. Please read on! When serving on judging panels with David, I always found him to be honest, pleasant, likeable, and very knowledgeable. His article is factual and very interesting, but does not once use the term "barbershop 7th chord." This includes his "Characterizing features of barbershop harmony" sidebar.

I am not terribly shocked by this, as I had become very disenchanted with our music for many years. It would appear as if that phrase has been intentionally diminished in our lexicon.

I'm a lifetime musician, 45-year chorus director, international quartetter with three quartets (including reaching the quartet finals with Freddie King in **Pros 'n' Cons**) and a 15-year Sound judge. I have attended most of our conventions since 1963. In Portland (2012) I found myself spending most of my time in the Harmony Foundation hospitality suite rather than sitting in the auditorium listening to music that I deemed not to be barbershop. I skipped Toronto (2013), and after Las Vegas (2014), I vowed to never, ever attend any BHS contest/convention.

I am sad to realize that I have seen the slow but sure decline and demise of our art form and am witnessing the death knell of an art form that our music people, who are very talented, have, in their zeal to be progressive and to satisfy their desire to have their work admired and sung, have rewarded the music we now have. *Requiescat in pace*, my beloved SPEBSQSA.

TOM EWALD
Hilton Head Island, S.C.

David Wright responds: I thank Tom for his kind compliments. Pros 'n' Cons certainly won my admiration. What a fine bass Tom was.

Please note that no specific chords are listed in Characterizing Features—not the 7th, the major triad, the minor triad, minor seventh, nor the half diminished, the latter being perhaps as characterizing of barbershop as the 7th, going back to the 1940s. Characterizing Features gives general characteristics common to all ages, and it includes the terms "consonant harmony" and "just intonation." The 7th, which appears early in the harmonic series, is very consonant, hence prominent in barbershop harmony. It is as prominent today as ever; and today's quartets achieve ring and lock perhaps better than ever.

I don't wish to change Tom's mind about the kind of barbershop he prefers, but I would offer this: From 1940 to 1960, the change in barbershop was profound and far-reaching. It changed in vocal style (immensely!), timbre,

song choice, complexity, style and sophistication of arranging, interpretive choices, and level of consonance. Plus, the Society had manufactured a whole new type of barbershop ensemble—the chorus.

*Why was it okay for that generation to alter the style so fundamentally, but not okay for a natural progression to take place thereafter? The barbershop of 2015 has far more commonality with 1960 than 1960 had with 1940. To wit, compare the **Suntones** (1961) to the **Flat Foot Four** (1940 - hear them at <http://bit.ly/flatfoot4>). Huge difference. Now compare the **Suntones** to any one of today's top quartets. Not so much difference.*

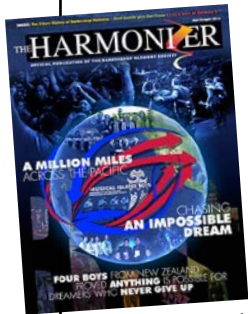
Having been a judge since 1981, I do not perceive any "zeal to be progressive," but rather a general tolerance for the natural change of trends in the style within the framework of its general characteristics.

It is my belief that in 30 years, the characterizing features will remain intact, though the sound will change. Some will call that the death of barbershop; most will accept it as natural, and continue to enjoy this marvelously accessible music that requires no instruments and appeals only the singers' innate gravitation to universal forces.

Time to formally apologize for past racism

After reading the articles and feedback on our "African-American Roots" in the previous two issues, I think it is time for our Society to issue a formal apology for our past discrimination against black members and quartets. We should also, specifically, include an apology for the exclusion from competition of the **Red Cap Quartet**. These actions are necessary to begin healing the wounds created by our Society's racist past. ■

LUDWIG E. OUZOONIAN
Kalamazoo, Mich.



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We'll see you in Pittsburgh! (or get the webcast)

Barbershop fans, you're going to love Pittsburgh, which marks a big evolutionary step to a new kind of International Convention—one that offers far more than world-class contests and tagging. From a massively expanded Harmony University presence (100+ classes!) to an unprecedented level of engagement with Pittsburgh's citizens and performers, expect a different kind of party the week of July 4th.



Ambassadors of Harmony



Westminster Chorus

Even the weather may cooperate, with an unusually pleasant June/July projected for the eastern half of North America. We'll play a big role in a city-wide outdoor party in the scenic, three-rivers setting of a Pittsburgh.

Chorus nailbiter. The last time Westminster Chorus and Ambassadors of Harmony faced off, both posted stratospheric scores—and they tied. Westminster won that tie-breaker,

and both choruses have added championships since then. This year, they'll compete back to back, while a surging **Alexandria Harmonizers** hopes to turn that matchup into a footnote.

Quartet champs? Forefront, Lemon Squeezy and Main Street have very different styles, and all have qualifying scores a little ahead of the pack, but a lot of surging quartets are comfortably within historical range of gold. **Trocadero**, a 2014 international semifinalist, seems to lead the collegiate pack, but that contest is even more unpredictable!

Webcast. There's no substitute for being there, but the webcast will let you still be part of the conversation. In the days before contest, sign up at www.barbershop.org.



Main Street



Lemon Squeezy



Forefront



Trocadero

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Society music offerings expand rapidly

The Society's publishing program continues to ramp up production, clearing more titles each year, and publishing a whopping 37 new arrangements in 2014. Keeping track of all the new material can be a challenge, yet there's also a deep catalog of undiscovered gems waiting to be sung.

Song of The Week (bit.ly/bbsongoftheweek) highlights a wide range of music in each weekly edition of LiveWire, the all-member electronic newsletter. Sometimes Music Editor Adam Scott highlights songs by theme; sometimes a new release; sometimes a favorite arranger. Check out these recent features:

- "Titanium" – Deke Sharon and David Wright have teamed up once again to bring us a barbershop arrangement (in both Men's [TTBB] and Women's [SSAA] versions) of this catchy number from the movie *Pitch Perfect*.
- "Stand By Me" – In memory of the recent passing of pop/soul star Ben E. King. *Rolling Stone* ranked it at 122nd on its list of the 500 greatest songs, in part because of its signature, soulful vocal performance.
 - "(I'm Afraid) The Masquerade is Over" – Commemorate the 25th anniversary of 1990 champ *Acoustix* with this Ed Waesche classic.
 - "King of the Road" – The 1964 classic by

Roger Miller that has been covered by everyone from the Statler Brothers to Zoëy Deschanel's hipster duo She & Him.

- "Forever and Ever, Amen" – Randy Travis had a bona fide monster hit with this simple, heartfelt, charming song, which won a Grammy for Best Country & Western Song and an Academy of Country Music Award for Song of the Year in 1987.

Society Briefs

Purchase and download learning tracks from iTunes and Amazon. This is big, peeps. Really big. Dozens of our top-selling titles now offer learning tracks as digital purchases using Amazon and iTunes, two of the largest distribution channels in the world. Use your existing accounts to get the materials you need instantly, anywhere. We currently offer the most recent dozen or so releases, and many, many more are in the pipeline for this year. Browse the selection now on Amazon or the iTunes store.

Farewell NZABS, hello BHNZ. It may not be as pronounceable as SNOBS or BiNG, but we think the rebranded Barbershop Harmony New Zealand (BHNZ) looks great, and will be easier to find at the easy-to-recall www.barbershopharmony.nz and www.facebook.com/barbershopharmony.nz.



CONVENTIONS

2015
PITTSBURGH
June 28–July 5
2016
NASHVILLE
July 3–10
2017
MINNEAPOLIS
July 2–9
2018
ORLANDO
July 1–8
2019
SALT LAKE CITY
June 30–July 7

LEADERSHIP FORUM

Nashville, Tenn.
Nov. 13–15, 2015

MIDWINTER

barbershop.org/midwinter

RENO

Jan. 26–31, 2016

HARMONY

UNIVERSITY 2015

Nashville, Tenn.
July 26–Aug. 2, 2015



JIMMY AND STING SMASH IT WITH "ROX-ANNE." In what might be the least ironic performance of *The Ragtime Gals*, multiple Grammy winner, Sting, reprises his hit on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. To properly expand the subject matter, we were hoping for a medley with "Midnight Rose" or "In The Heart of the City." Some themes never change.

Check out the performance on YouTube at bit.ly/stingbbsroxanne.

Apply for all-new staff position: Manager of Chapter Leadership and Education

Job Description: *Manager of Chapter Leadership and Education*

Location: *Nashville, Tenn.*

This position is responsible for the health of our chapter program. Directs activities between headquarters, districts and all official chapters. Facilitates the flow of information between the chapters, districts and headquarters. Assists chapters to enhance local activities, including education, public relations, and grassroots efforts. Responsible for complete management of the annual Leadership Forum. Reports to Director of Harmony University.

Responsibilities

- Annual Leadership Forum conference activities
- Oversee and organize all Leadership Forum-related activities at conference
- Serve as project lead to selected committees: advise moderators, attend meetings, prepare minutes, etc.
- District Presidents Council
- Leadership development (new)
- Chapter growth/development (new)
- Annual chapter governance
- Monitor programs and distribute/file chapter information
- Ensure Chapter/District legal compliance: 990s/CRA, copyright, etc.
- Chapter relations
- Work with BHS marketing team to create and execute a regular newsletter to chapter leadership
- Build and maintain relationships with chapter leaders via regular contact.
- Develop a repository of chapter activities, (success and failures) to be shared by all chapter leadership
- Develop program, perform meeting planning, publicize and manage the annual Leadership Forum
- Work with the districts to develop and maintain chapter content used for the regional forums (COTS & Leadership Academies)
- Create and deliver chapter leadership training programs
- Incent, recognize and reward exceptional chapter achievement
- Other chapter programs as necessary
- Develop and update chapter support/growth content for the website
- Office management
- Attend all staff & director meetings
- Provide input on staff priorities
- Other duties as required

Skills

- Experience developing program/product
- Successful project management and organizational discipline
- Proven accuracy/attention to detail
- Ability to balance workload and work under pressure on both short and long term project deadlines
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Good meeting planning skills
- Able to function as part of a team
- Desired: working knowledge of the BHS

Submit a cover letter and resume to careers@barbershop.org by July 5, 2015. ■

CHAMPS NIGHT OUT
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Advanced tips to help you become a better bass

While the Society is blessed with dozens if not hundreds of classically trained choral musicians who share the best learning from the academic world, let us not undervalue Barbershoppers from non-academic backgrounds who have attained high levels of individual and ensemble refinement. One such man is Greg Hollander from 2001 champ *Michigan Jake*. Respected by great basses all over, Greg helped popularize today's increasingly sought-after "brighter" and technically sophisticated approach to the barbershop bass part. Here are some of Greg's tips for basses (and other singers) who are looking to take the ensemble sound to the next level.

As the foundation of the barbershop sound, basses have some unglamorous but significant responsibilities. It is an especially high priority to keep an accurate tonal center, keep a steady meter (when applicable), and maintain synchronization among the other parts, all while matching the quartet's stylistic approach. Getting to that point requires making a habit of many singing techniques.

The following tips are more advanced strategies but many can be helpful to beginners. It reportedly takes an average of 66 repetitions for something to become a habit, so it will take a while for these techniques to seem natural. But when they begin to become habit, you will hear a difference in the quality of your performance. Not every technique is suited for every bass, but many will help you mold your own personal singing style.

Sound tips

1. Use a non-nasal sound. (Except when singing m's, n's, ng's.) If you pinch your nose shut while singing a typical vowel, your sound should not change.

2. Use "forward" sound production. Don't produce the sound farther back, where the vibrations transmitted through your body sound "bassier" only to your own ears. To everyone else, that tone sounds "swallowed."

3. Use almost 100% bright placement. Forcing extra air through the bright placement (without changing the placement) may produce a more pleasing sound, except at your louder volumes. The bass can consistently have more "edge" in his sound than the other parts, as long as that edge is not so strident that it sticks out of the quartet sound.

4. Eliminate "pulsing" of the sound. A pulse is either an unintentional gap in sound while jumping between notes or a brief burst in the sound when arriving at the new note. The barbershop bass generally makes greater jumps than the other parts, so this is especially an area of concern. Listen to how heavily

you land on a pitch. Keep a steady flow of air and become nimble enough that arriving on a note an octave away sounds no different than if you had moved a half step. This takes practice.

5. Maintain an "embouchure." Brass and woodwind players use this term for the placement of the jaw and facial muscles that produces the best quality of sound. They set it and keep it throughout the song. Some find this technique very useful in singing. Your singing "embouchure" needs to be natural but strong. The relaxed jaw moves very little, and the tongue, lips, and soft pallet do the majority of the movement. Find an "embouchure" that impedes the sound production the least, acting somewhat like the bell of a trumpet.

6. Know your place in the "pyramid." As in the shape of a pyramid, sound in the lower range and in the lower part of a chord should have a broader aspect to it, while the sound in the upper range and in the upper part of a chord should have a narrower aspect to it. Everything in between the two is graduated in a manner that is not noticeable. Obviously, the bass will almost always be responsible for the broader sound.

7. Never "manufacture" vowels. They should always sound natural, be pleasing to the ear, and be correct pronunciation. Although some vowels need to migrate somewhat to produce the best blend, the vowel should be obvious even when your part is isolated.

8. Be keeper of the tonic. All voice parts must know exactly where the tonic pitch is at all times, but the bass has the responsibility to not let the tonic move about. The tuning of a sung chord is not equally tempered (as when played on a piano); the same *written* note may be sung at slightly different pitches throughout a song depending on where the note is used within a given chord. A barbershop bass sings mostly roots and fifths of chords, so he does not need to adjust the pitch away from the "equally tempered" pitches as often. He can thus concentrate more easily on where his note is in relation to the tonic pitch.

As the other parts make their minute adjustments from chord to chord, the bass must be rock-solid in keeping his notes accurate in relation to the tonic pitch and forcing the other parts to get back to the correct pitches of the key. Additionally, the bass—perhaps moreso than the other voice parts—must hear the upcoming key of a modulation internally before it arrives and be ready to go there with confidence.

9. Listen to your voice externally rather than internally. You hear your own voice mainly through your tissues and bones, but you can train yourself to hear and



Greg Hollander
Bass, 2001
Champ Michigan Jake.
hollander@glasgow-ky.com

focus on the sound that's actually coming from your mouth. This can be critical for proper intonation. Especially if the internal and external sound don't match, the sound coming through the air is the most important!

Style tips

1. Extend every sound to the beginning of a beat (or to the portion of a beat preceding a note change or a rest), and end the sound with a slight push and a smooth, quick release. Where you *end* a note in relation to the beat is as important as where it begins, because Barbershoppers don't have a rhythm section.

2. Make consonants singable. Even a hard "g" sound should do nothing to prevent the vocal chords from continuing to vibrate. To do this, make the consonant short and *very* much in sync with the other voice parts. Some consonants are trickier than others (like k, p, and t) because they actually involve a short closing of the air path. You can still keep the vocal chords a hummin',

even through these, and it may be helpful to add an inaudible "h" sound after these consonants to keep the sound smooth and flowing. Listen to **Michigan Jake's** "All the Pretty Little Horses" for an example of this technique (PhRET-ThY LIT-ThLE). The "h" helps to connect the syllables and is used, for the most part, inaudibly.

3. Don't make an "S" into a "Z." Just sing a very short, very in-sync "S."

4. Do not pulse the beat of a tempo song. Allow the short consonants that create the beat to do their job without adding extra bursts of the diaphragm. This is especially important on triplets. Too many people try to place an accent on each note of the triplet instead of using simple synchronization between the voice parts. All voice parts must pay special attention to this technique. Be *very* careful not to pulse the notes of half-step intervals. (This is sometimes inadvertently done because the quartet is not tuning well enough to be able to clearly discern that small half-step interval being sung by the bass.)

5. To create a "swing" feel, use the preceding comments. Lay back on the tempo, and do anything but rush it. Keep it uniform. Be right on those syncopated beats, but *do not* over-power that last third of the triplet. Just treat it like the other, longer part of the beat. A "stomp tempo" section of a song might be considered the exception to this, but still, don't over-power those beats.

6. Use more air during quiet passages. Use more air forced through the typical (bright) placement, as opposed to less volume. This effect can be achieved by maintaining good support of the sound.

7. Brighten up during loud passages. Do this a little (but not too much), while adding not quite as much volume. The illusion of greater volume can be achieved in this way without approaching over-singing.

8. Sing solos as if you were a lead. Don't manipulate your sound and over-power your brief moments in the spotlight! Everyone will know you are the soloist, so enjoy the moment. ■

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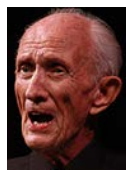
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Sturgeon hams it up in granny outfit with the SunSations quartet

Singing at his own memorial service



It's one thing for chapter members to sing at a member's funeral. It's quite another when the recently departed "sings" for those in attendance. Members of the **Cape Coral, Fla., Chapter** eulogized 22-year chapter tenor and 62-year Society member Dick Sturgeon, who passed away March 8 at age 89.

Hope Hospice Chaplain Rankin McGougan said, "I had never seen a memorial service where all attendees broke out in four part harmony to honor the deceased." The memorial bulletin read, "It is a rare opportunity to be entertained at a memorial service by the deceased. All prerecorded music heard today is as performed by Richard Sturgeon. Harmonizing was his passion and he would want his life to be celebrated with song."

The chapter dedicated its spring convention performance to their departed founding member.

— Merle Banek

LITTLE APPLE CHORUS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS. Six \$750 grants were given to the vocal music programs of area schools by the Manhattan, Kan., Chapter and its Little Apple Chorus. The grants were presented during the chorus spring show April 11. The Chapter has also provided a \$250 scholarship for two vocal music students at Kansas State University. The chapter has sponsored or identified four area local vocal music educators to attend Harmony University in the last three years, with two of them attending a second time. These educators have returned enthusiastic and have been able to utilize what they learned in the classroom.

— Harvey Kiser

Chapters honor WWII veterans coming and going

On April 25, the **Kalamazoo Mall City Harmonizers** (PIO) chorus was again honored by the Talons Out Honor Flight organization in being asked to sing for the WWII veterans who were getting ready to board their 7 a.m. flight to Washington, D.C. to visit the WWII Museum there. This event happens twice each year out of Kalamazoo Airport ... we also sang for the flight last October and will sing at another in September. The nearby **Great Lakes Chorus** (PIO) performed the honors on May 16.



Kalamazoo Mall City Harmonizers at one group's departure for the capital



The Harmony Heritage Singers of Mount Vernon, Va., at another group's arrival

It's a very fulfilling honor for 15 of us to be there and to pay tribute to these American heroes, most of the 60 veterans in their late 80s and early 90s. We sang our Patriotic Package, including the "Armed Forces Medley," "America the Beautiful," and "God Bless America," with many of them, most in wheelchairs, coming over to sing along with us. What a great way to start a very long day ... going from there over to Battle Creek to compete in the district chorus competition a few hours later. www.TalonsOutHonorFlight.org.

— By Michael Sobel

Submitted by John Cowlshaw

A group of veterans arriving at Reagan National Airport Wednesday morning, April 15 from Knoxville, Tenn., were greeted with

cheers, hugs, and patriotic music. The songs, including official hymns of the Armed Forces, were sung by the **Harmony Heritage Singers**, based in Mount Vernon, Va. The chorus is one of several local groups who volunteer to participate in the Honor Flight program, which makes it possible for veterans who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam to fly to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials built in their honor. Most chorus members are veterans themselves.

Harmony Heritage Singers, also known as the **Mount Vernon, Va. Chapter**, is a daytime chorus. Its members, who are retired and therefore can rehearse and perform during the day, give over 25 performances each year, mostly at retirement communities or assisted living facilities.

— Ron Brandt



Barbershop in Chinese wows Chinese New Year parties

"You should have seen the crowd, Mike. As soon as they realized that you were singing in Chinese, and singing such a well-known folk song ... They were that moved."



On Feb. 21, New Haven's **Connecticut Yankee Chorus** joined in the city's Lunarfest Chinese New Year Celebrations put on by the Yale-China Association, the Council on East Asian Studies, and the New Haven Museum. A lion dance parade down a closed-off street anchored a large, multifaceted celebration. Chapter Music VP Mike Packevicz works for Yale-China and helped add the chorus to the roster of dancers, martial artists, and others. They



learned two Chinese folk songs, "Rainbow Sister" and "Jasmine Flower" ar-

ranged by Brian Beck 10 years ago for a Barbershopper tour of China.

After overwhelmingly positive feedback from organizers, chapter members are already looking forward to next year's Lunarfest—and to learning a new Chinese song!

— Mike Packevicz, Jr.

Rehearsing behind director's back was a family affair

Ever try to hide your contest package from your director? (And seen tears of gratitude when he found out?) The **Lehigh Valley Harmonizers (Allentown-Bethlehem Chapter)** rehearsed two months in secret



With Mike (seated) are Nathan and Sean Feyrer, Chip and Mike Feyrer III, Drew Feyrer, Chip and Noel Moyer

as part of a tribute to retiring director (33 years) Mike Feyrer that was organized by his sons, Sean, Drew, and Chip.

They revealed their secret at the chapter's March retreat when the chapter president suddenly started directing the chorus in "Love at Home." Drew (lead of 2015 MAD champ **Last Men Standing**) entered next, assuming director duties; then came Chip Moyer (who was in **Second Generation** quartet with Mike, Sean, and Drew) and his son Noel, fol-

lowed by Chip Feyrer and his son, Mike III. Emotions ran high, and many chorus members experienced sniffles and tears from previously undiagnosed "allergies." Mike was overwhelmed and the chorus was honored and privileged to be a part of this special day,

The chapter plans to compete with "Love at Home" and "The Best Times I Ever Had (I Owe 'Em To My Dear Ol' Dad)" in June's division contest. ■

— Bob Berger, President,
Lehigh Valley Harmonizers

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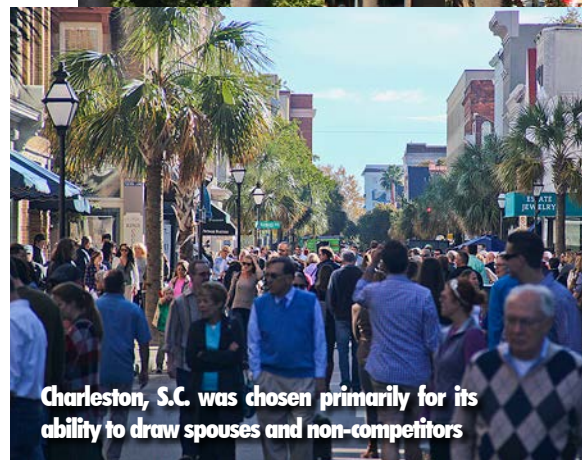
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Jeremey Johnson

NECESSITY

is the mother of convention

Determined to never host another low attendance, money-losing event, the Carolinas hosted a convention where ... wait, only 40 men were invited to compete?

So how did the Carolinas get 360 attendees—from a district of 850 men—to come along for the fun? The answer has less to do with the art of festival planning, and a lot to do with how the Carolinas District created a new playbook that helps leaders address chapters' needs



Charleston, S.C. was chosen primarily for its ability to draw spouses and non-competitors

PHOTOS BY LORIN MAY

After years of wrestling with two of its larger challenges (a money-losing convention, and chapters and families disengaged from district life), the Carolinas District addressed both with an outside-the-box November event (a “Fall Festival”) that turned out to be a big hit. Part of the solution lay in two of the district’s strengths: high-draw tourist destinations, and a number of retired Fortune 500 Executives who have established a “continuous improvement” mentality in what they describe as a “chapter-driven” district model.

When you’re trying to attract the less hard-core members of the barbershop world to an event, it doesn’t hurt to host it in a city like Charleston, S.C. (After three days, I had half a mind to pack up the family and move there.) But this article is no travel log, and your district may or may not even have the draw, demographics, or desire to pull off an event like this.

But Marty Monson didn’t send me to beautiful Charleston to collect convention planning tips. He was intrigued by the *thought process* and *values* that led to such a radical—and, as it turns out, successful—departure from traditional district events. While the particulars may or may not be universal in application, many of the guiding principles may apply to nearly any chapter or district.

A hard shove into out-of-the-box thinking

Leaders of the Carolinas District (NSC, or North/South Carolina) had plenty of reasons to question the traditional convention model. But the biggest catalysts were two-fold: the past NSC Spring International Preliminary Contest was hemorrhaging money, and NSC chapters told leadership that they didn’t want their choruses to go to two conventions a year.

The district’s traditional fall convention (now held in the spring) was solvent and well attended by the more competitive quartets and choruses (more on the less competitive chapters in a minute) but the spring preliminaries for the international contest drew sparse numbers. Yet, the district was required to host it, and had to absorb the prohibitive expenses of a required double judging panel and other overhead.

Put down the pitchforks, pick up the spreadsheets. *What is the point in making us host this money-losing contest?* That’s the conversation NSC leaders started having among other districts’ leaders and with the Society Contest & Judging Committee (SCJC) and Society Board. After a lot of collaborative work, districts now have permission to host only one convention a year if they choose. (Two important lessons from this: [1] The SCJC and Society Board are open to collaboration and [2] if you’re trying



Saturday Night Dinner Show on the U.S.S. Yorktown



I'm seeing wives of Barbershoppers I haven't seen in a long time. They want barbershop in smaller doses, and the contest tonight was more like a show.

— Cathy Benson *Wilmington, N.C.*



Charleston was the magnet that brought a lot of people here. And the format made the weekend less taxing on those for whom barbershop competition isn't their main reason for life.

— Paul Martin, *Fall Festival Chairman*



The 2- or 3-hour show last night, that's just right. Four, five, six hours of contests in a day, and I'm on overload. Today my husband is doing his thing, I'm doing my thing, and I've got a day to play. It's all about finding that balance.

— Marilyn Cluett, *Wake Forest, N.C.*



All 10 groups in the district quartet finals qualified during the spring convention

	Typical district convention	Carolinas District 2014 Fall Festival
Dates	Spring or fall contest windows, per rules pertaining to international qualifying contests	November, when hotel rates are lower; no international qualifying events take place, so spring and fall contest windows do not apply
Contest events	Varies by district. Many conventions host three contests: quartet semifinals, chorus contest, quartet finals. (Double or triple judging panel, per rules for international qualifying contests)	<u>District quartet finals only</u> (3-song sets with dialog, 2 songs judged for score), single judging panel allowed because only district quartet championship is at stake. (Chorus contest, quartet international qualification and district quartet semifinals take place during NSC Spring Convention with double panel)
Non-contest events	Usually limited due to heavy competition/rehearsal/eval schedules; many districts host Saturday night shows and/or afterglows after quartet finals; some host Sunday morning eval sessions	(1) Friday night quartet contest has show-like atmosphere with 3-song show packages and dialog; (2) Friday Night Afterglow; (3) extensive Saturday tours; (4) all-morning coaching/evals for competing and non-competing quartets; (5) all-afternoon coaching for choruses; (6) Saturday afternoon public performances for district quartets; (7) Saturday Night Dinner Show at U.S.S. Yorktown; (8) Sundays free for tourism
Event city	Heavily influenced by hotel/venue prices, travel distances, local chapter committee support	Primarily chosen for city's ability to draw spouses and non-competitors for tourism-related activities
Event venues	High consideration usually given to distance between hotel(s), contest venues, and chorus rehearsal space; this typically narrows available options within in a given city	Quality and cost of venues prioritized over travel distances. Only Friday Night Afterglow was within walking distance of HQ hotel. Separate venues for contest, coaching, public performances, tours, and Saturday Night Show were each about five miles from headquarters hotel, each in a different direction. Transportation provided only for tours; attendees encouraged to rely on personal GPS devices to navigate area.
Who attends	Primarily competitors and officers; limited draw/attendance for spouses and non-competitors. Attendees typically must purchase full registrations.	Only 40 total competitors (quartet finals); more than 300 non-competitors, including several chapters receiving Saturday afternoon coaching; close to half of total event purchases are women. All events purchased ala carte.



Lorin May
Editor, The Harmonizer
lmay@barbershop.or

Singing judge Eddie Martinez spent a grand total of three hours of his trip performing judging duties. He then spent all day Saturday coaching quartets and choruses, joined by the other two district quartet contest judges and by other coaches drawn from the Carolinas District. Every chorus in attendance was there for the express purpose of coaching ... and to enjoy Charleston and other Festival events.



THE WEEKEND'S ONE AND ONLY CONTEST SESSION. Friday night's event was at a low-cost venue—a church with a good sound system, low fees, and roughly the same seating space as the projected attendance. Note the judging pit: one contest administrator, three judges, and a practice judge—a configuration chosen to keep costs low. Each of the 10 finalist quartets (which qualified at the district's spring convention) performed a three-song package with dialog. The judges chose the district champ based on the two contestable songs; the audience chose which quartet would perform on the Saturday Night Dinner Show on the U.S.S. Yorktown.

to persuade one or both, it doesn't hurt to have the NSC—and its exhaustive data—on your side.)

After a win, keep scoring. Ironically, the Fall Festival means NSC is still hosting two annual conventions. But the removal of a once onerous financial requirement opened the creative floodgates. "We were allowed to have fun once we got around the need to have double panels at two separate events," said NSC President Bob Johns. "And we wanted to do something different."

This chapter-driven district didn't want a second contest-driven convention

NSC is culturally different from a lot of districts, and those differences are expressed in its "chapter-driven" governance model. The NSC House of Delegates not only has input in directing district affairs, but participates in the earliest stages of program and event planning and prioritization. By being "chapter-driven," the actions of the district board are to be for the good and betterment of the chapters. This "raise all boats" mentality means district leaders are called to take an active, hands-on role in the success and development of all of its chapters.

"The view from the bottom up is that

the district is there to help the chapters," said Brian Giersch from the New Bern N.C. Chapter, Southern Gentlemen Barbershop Chorus. "They're attending our chapter and board meetings to help us grow and self-evaluate."

Chapter polls play a prominent role in determining district priorities; chapters said they wanted quality judging input and coaching outside of and beyond a district contest eval session. There was essentially no chance the chapters would approve a primarily contest-driven fall event. The idea wasn't even considered.

The competitors already have their own convention.

If NSC hasn't been known for a lot of competitive powerhouses during its brief history, there are plenty of competitive singers working on it—and getting a lot of district-wide support. NSC's spring convention is built

District quartets spent Saturday morning receiving coaching, then on Saturday afternoon applied those lessons as roving performers at Charleston's large and popular Farmer's Market.



Swipes 'n' Swaps

"New director" ads are free in *The Harmonizer* (first 50 words) to Society chapters. Send to harmonizer@barbershop.org.

DIRECTOR WANTED

The **Norfolk Chapter**, the **Commodore Chorus** (commodorechorus.org) is searching for a new director. Interested candidates who are trained and/or experienced in choral directing can leave a message at 757-215-1602 or Jeff at jrob51@verizon.net.

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"Central Standard needed a better method for storing data, communicating chorus info, tracking rehearsal attendance and tracking song learning status. These are the core functions that Groupanizer provides in spades. Upon looking at the functionality provided by the Groupanizer system it was a no-brainer for us to start using it.

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Site Administrator
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primarily around contests, although starting in 2014, the quartets qualified for the district championship in the spring and competed for the title in the fall.

The district had traditionally hosted quartet and chorus coaching during its spring convention. That event was moved to the Fall Festival, which, along with the quartet finals, became one of the cornerstone events. A compelling city already chosen, the district then fleshed out the Festival by adding compelling venues (such as the U.S.S. Yorktown) and non contest-centric activities designed to attract as many spouses and non-competitors as possible.

How it all went down: practically a slam dunk

If you want the objective details of the event, read the photo captions and the table on page 15. It should be noted that the event was a financial success, and pre-purchases for the Festival were so positive that even before 2014's event had begun, the district was already planning its 2015 event in another impossibly beautiful seaside district town—Savannah, home to the district's only Georgia chapter.

Subjectively speaking, I believe NSC is really onto something with the Fall Festival. It was fun and well paced, and, to me, pretty close to a slam dunk. (Nearly 95% of attendees polled said they would attend another event like this.) As always, there were also unanticipated snags they'll address for the next event: Some scheduled choruses never showed up for coaching, the Friday Night Afterglow needed a bigger venue, and as great as the U.S.S. Yorktown was, the venue-mandated caterer wasn't ready for prime-time.

I must add that I've never seen so many women at a district event. None hesitated to tell me why: It's a much easier sell to join their husbands on a barbershop weekend when Saturday means a day of fun in Charleston—as opposed to being asked to iron shirts and then sit in an auditorium for 10 hours.

In closing, I share an observation that I suspect is anything but a footnote: I've never heard Barbershoppers speak more highly of their district leadership, or met leaders more certain that they are working on the district members' true priorities. I can't predict whether other districts can or will adopt a Fall Festival format, but I suspect it's no coincidence that the chapter-driven NSC came up with the idea first! ■



U.S.S. Yorktown, venue for the Saturday Night Dinner Show



The chapters have a say in what is going on. We have serious input as to what the district is going to do and how we're going to do it.

— Larry Hunt,
President of Cape Fear Chordsmen



We can't be stuck in the notion of 'well, we've done things like this for the last 40 years.' We're always questioning. What are we doing and why are we doing it? And can we make it more fun?

— Steve Tremper, *Let's Sing! quartet*



Our events have been making money. We've been trying to create realistic expectations and funding them realistically so we can keep a positive balance sheet.

— Brian Giersch,
Southern Gentlemen Chorus



We want to give our chapters every opportunity to drive the bus. This requires innovation and continuous improvement. As we have the right mix of things for our membership and our membership approves it, then we're doing the right thing.

— Bob Johns, *NSC President*

A long-standing cultural DIX/NSC divide becomes official—and total participation doubles

Did anybody notice that when the Dixie District (DIX) gave up nearly half its members to NSC in 2010, the number and quality of Dixie's quartets and choruses at international contests took no hit at all?

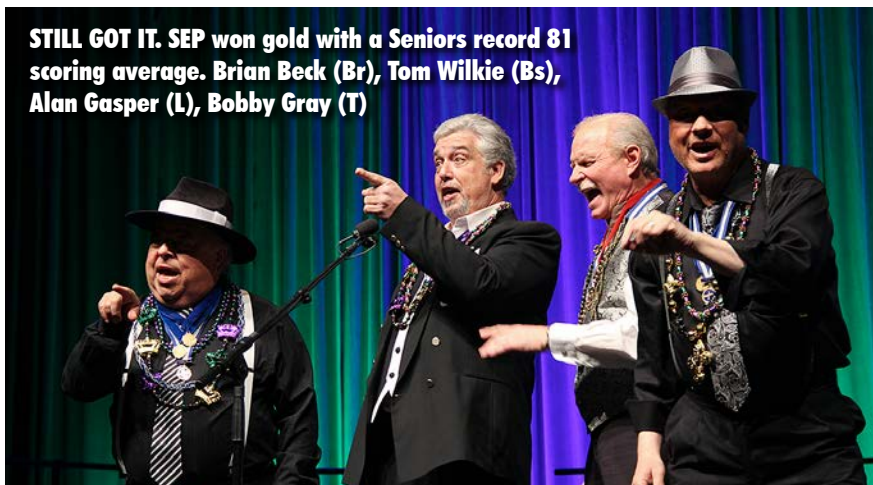
The story gets even better—for both districts.

Even before the split, the cultural divide between the two present districts was as distinct as the Appalachian Mountains that separate them. For many years, few Carolinas chapters had been willing to make the 20- to 24-hour round trip over the Appalachians for a typical DIX contest. Over time, most Carolinas chapters had become disengaged not only from contests, but from district and Society life in general.

Did the disengagement create a cultural divide or was it vice-versa? Draw your own conclusions. What matters is that Carolinas chapters were all ears when Bob Clark, Denny Evans and others starting evangelizing the notion of a "chapter-driven" district model. Skipping over a lot of details, NSC pioneers eventually received official sanction from the Society Board to let DIX continue under its preferred model while the Carolinas chapters would form a district under their own model.

How did the split affect participation? Both DIX and NSC hosted more competing quartets and choruses at their respective 2014 conventions than the larger DIX hosted in the year before the split. Total participation doubled!

STILL GOT IT. SEP won gold with a Seniors record 81 scoring average. Brian Beck (Br), Tom Wilkie (Bs), Alan Gasper (L), Bobby Gray (T)



Saturday Evening Post ... matured

Get to know the 17-year-old, high-scoring 2015 Seniors champ

Saturday Evening Post quartet has been performing its brand of barber-shop harmony for over 17 years and is still going strong as the Society's 2015 International Seniors champion—while setting a Seniors scoring record in the process. In various personnel configurations, the quartet had seven international top 10 finishes in a row, including 5th Place in 2004. All four current members have directed choruses, and three are recently retired Society judges.

Bobby Gray, Jr. (T) is the quartet's founder, and until recently, its baritone. A Society member since 1969, he was "Harpo" in 1985 champ **New Tradition** quartet's "Marx Brothers" set. He is also known as a creative show producer and chorus director. He is the only man to have directed two different district chorus champions during the same contest cycle—and within two weeks of each other! (**San Diego Sun Harbor Chorus** and **Seattle Northwest Sound**) Bobby is firm administrator for The Gasper Law Group and lives in Colorado Springs with his wife, Terri.

Alan Gasper (L) was born in New Orleans, and his legendary "Uncle Nouin" provide a tremendous comedic element to the quartet's performances. Allen is the senior partner in The Gasper Law Group, one of the largest law firms in Colorado Springs. In a "past life" Allen obtained a master's degree in operatic performance at Baylor University and

performed professionally for several years on the opera circuit. A past Singing judge and musical director of several choruses, Allen owns one of Colorado's finest quarter horse ranches. Allen and his wife, Lori, live on the ranch in Colorado Springs.

Brian Beck (Br) is the only man to sing as an international quartet finalist on all four voice parts. He was bari of 1973 champ **The Dealer's Choice**, lead 1983 champ **Side Street Ramblers**, tenor of 6th place **The Doo-Dads**, and bass of **Saturday Evening Post**. Brian's on stage Society achievements span five decades, and he is also a prolific arranger. A retired radio jingle writer and singer, Brian lives in Colorado Springs with his wife, Holly.

Tom Wilkie (Bs) is well known as the Lion bass for 1977 champ **Most Happy Fellows'** famous Wizard of Oz package. While living in Federal Way, Wash., he directed the **Federal Way Harmony Kings** chorus for 16 years and the **Jet Cities Sweet Adeline Chorus** for eight years. Tom works as an International Logistics Specialist for Entegris, Inc., and lives in Colorado Springs with his wife, Julie.

The Saturday Evening Post Quartet is proud to have been named the Barber-shop Harmony Society's International Seniors Quartet Champion and looks forward to continuing its show-stopping performances for audiences all over the world. ■

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2015 Youth Chorus Festival Participants

(By order of appearance)

For most of the young men who attend the Youth Chorus Festival, it is their first exposure to the broader barbershop world. A no-strings event created for the joy of spreading four-part harmony, every year young men come away saying that the music and culture has lit a fire that they vow will last a lifetime. Here are some of the young men who made a difference in New Orleans this past January!

Outstanding



52EIGHTY • Travis Tabares • RMD, Sound of the Rockies Chorus

PHOTOS BY LORIN MAY

Outstanding



THE GOOD LIFE CHORUS • Aaron Zart • CSD, Lincoln Chapter

Evaluation only



MUSIC CITY YOUTH CHORUS • Daniel Rushing • DIX, Music City Chorus

Excellent



FREQUENCY • Pricilla Rahn • RMD, Denver MountainAires, Denver Public Schools

Superior



THE RECRUITS • Jonny Moroni • CSD, St. Charles, Mo. Chapter

Platneau AAA Award*

*Highest Score, Average Age 22 > 25

2015 Youth Chorus Festival Participants

(By order of appearance)

Excellent

**PACIFIC SUNS • Kathleen Hansen
La Jolla Chapter, San Diego Chapter**



Excellent

**HARMONY 2 GO • Kathy Stokes
University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Area High Schools**



Excellent

FOOTHILLS SOUND • Lee Franks • DIX, Powell High School



Superior

EAST COAST SOUND • David Ammirata • Montclair Chapter Dapper Dans of Harmony



Outstanding

THE VOICE • Aaron Pollard • PIO



2015 Youth Chorus Festival Participants

(By order of appearance)

Good



MELODIC MORRISTOWN MEN • Kathy C. Bowen, Laura Ritter • West High, Waller State Community Chorus

Outstanding

THE YOUNG GUNS • Manny Lopez • SWD



Outstanding



GEORGIA SPIRIT • Clay Hine, Tim Reynolds • DIX, Atlanta Metro Chapter, Greater Atlanta Chapter

Superior

Plaque AA Award*



SOUTHERN GENTLEMEN • Shannon Jeffreys, David Hopkins • Georgia Southern University

*Highest Score, Average Age 19 > 22

Outstanding

Audience Favorite



CHANDLER HIGH SCHOOL MEN'S CHOIR • Lori Lyford • Chandler, Ariz.

2015 Youth Chorus Festival Participants

(By order of appearance)

Excellent



CLEVELAND HEIGHTS BARBERSHOPPERS • Craig McGaughey • Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Superior Plateau A Award*



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10

BEST TENORS OF ALL TIME

We know that about 3,500 quartet tenors have appeared on stage since Society-sponsored quartet competition began in 1939. That does not, of course, take into account the tenors of the countless unofficial or non-competing quartets over the years. So to say that any 10 are the best of all time is a giant mouthful—not to mention a major undertaking.

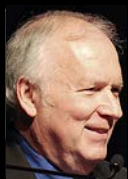
Let's agree in advance it's an impossible task. Other

than just voice quality, what parameters should be taken into consideration? Performer? Contribution to the quartet? Character? Longevity? Solo quality? Range? Technique? Competition achievement? Stage persona? You likely can think of others. Without giving anything away, we decided not to weigh all these factors.

The selection process covered several rounds of voting and passionate discussion over a period of almost

The illustrious, all-star voting panel

and renowned woodshedder and tag teacher.



JIM BAGBY — Author of this series as well as a voter, Kansas City native Jim is a frequent contributor to *The Harmonizer*. He's a third-generation, 56-year Society member and director emeritus of the **Heart of America Chorus**, which he directed 16 times in international competition. A former Society Board Member, current Presentation judge and C&J VP for the CSD, where he is a two-time Barbershopper of the Year. Jim is a Master Director, former Harmony University faculty member, tag teacher, winner of the Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement award and baritone of the 1986 gold medalist **Rural Route 4**. He is a retired Associated Press editor.



DON BARNICK — A 50-year Society member and one of only two men to medal on three different voice parts: gold-medal tenor with **Grandma's Boys** (1979), gold-medal bass with **Keepsake** (1992) and bronze medalist baritone with **Riptide** (2005). A former men's and women's chorus director, veteran coach, Harmony College faculty, former Sound judge



BRIAN BECK — The consummate four-parter, only man to reach the top 10 in all four voice parts, including gold on bari with **Dealer's Choice** (1973) and lead with **Side Street Ramblers** (1983). Medaled on bass with **Saturday Evening Post**, now one of his two senior quartet champs, and hit the 10 on tenor with the **Doo-Dads**. Studio singer and writer for 40 years. Voice teacher and coach, former Singing judge. Assistant director/vocal coach of the **Vocal Majority** from their inception to 1979. Arranger of 500-plus barbershop, choral and jazz arrangements.



BILL BIFFLE — A certified Sound and Singing judge from 1981 until 2003, Bill is probably equally well-known as a past Society president and the lead trumpet of the Barbershop All-Star Dixieland Band appearing at each Midwinter and International Convention. Since joining the Society in 1976, he has directed the **Albuquerque**

Chapter chorus to four district championships, sung in two district championship quartets, and competed several times at International. He is a Master Director, Harmony University faculty member and popular coach.



TERRY CLARKE — An award-winning marketing and communications guru in private life, Terry has been known to sing a little bass, most notably with the **Boston Common**, Society champs in 1980 and Hall of Fame inductees last July. He joined the Society at age 14 and formed his first quartet (**Teen Tones**) in high school. Terry says his claim to fame is that he's deeply loved by the judges, due to his insistence that they abide by the rules. And he figures he qualifies for this panel because he's been around long enough to recognize *original* quartets versus *programmed* ones.



GENE COKEROFT — Gene is a two-time member of the Society Hall of Fame: on his own and as a member of the **Suntones** (1961). A 65-year Society member, he is retired music

one month. We were sorely tempted to stretch our top 10 into an 11 or 12.

But anyone who has some knowledge of the barbershop sound, and the quartet art, would surely agree that the late Vern Reed of the Buffalo Bills (1950 champ) and the very-much present Gene Coker of the Suntones (1961 champ) would rank high on any tenor list. The top parts of those two Hall of Fame foursomes were, indeed, the only unanimous selections by the all-star panel [see sidebar below] that labored to come up with the top 10 barbershop tenors of all time. They will later follow with the top 10 leads, basses and baritones.

Our initial list of nominees contained no fewer than 36 names, ranging from quartets active now to heroes going back to the 1940s. The final choices are so impressive that three men with a total of seven gold medals among them were relegated to honorable mention—and that list is as eye-opening as the top 10. Two of the top 10 are not gold medalists.

We certainly would not try to rank nor compare these brilliant singers; choosing 10 was daunting enough, and we know you will have your own choices that will be arguably just as valid. So here they are, alphabetically, listed by quartets with which they are most commonly associated.

GREG BACKWELL, Nighthawks. Known for a voice that was bright to the point of brilliance; it characterized the sound of the popular Ontario District quartet in the early '60s as the Nighthawks claimed four med-

als—including a silver in 1963. In the Nov/Dec 2006 issue of *The Harmonizer*, the Nighthawks received strong consideration as one of the best quartets never to win. Tom Neal, who was competing in that era, says of Backwell and the Nighthawks, “nobody could figure out how they were never proclaimed champions!” Greg did most of the quartet arrangements. His ongoing work and support of his district helped make him a member of the Society Hall of Fame. Our panel called him “a smart singer” with “memorable quality and control.”



GENE COKECROFT, Suntones. As a panelist, Gene could not vote for himself. It was a slam-dunk regardless. The two-time Society Hall-of-Famer (individually and with the Suntones) helped move the bar in 1961 with his rich, full-voice tenor—and has created since then what panelist Brian Beck calls a “humongous body of work as a singer.” Beck, who knows something about the voice parts, says Coker can do jazz better than most and never sounded like a Barbershopper trying to sing jazz. His longevity is as amazing as his quality and performance stage personality. At the Kansas City in-

director emeritus of the **Miami Chapter**, which he served as arm-waver for 44 years. He remains active as a youth clinician and quartet coach, writing and arranging for quartets and choruses. He's a former Music judge and served as chair or member of the Society's Youth In Harmony, Museum and Hall of Fame committees. He co-produced the Society's 2001 three-show SING! a cappella festival in Nashville. Gene is retired Director of Productions for the Orange Bowl Committee.



JOE CONNELLY — He is as proud of his brand-new Golden Oldie badge as he is of his record four gold medals. You have to know Joe to understand that. Only the newest Society member can't reel off “Awesome Joe's” unmatched string of lead gold: **Interstate Rivals** (1987), **Keepsake** (1992), **PLATINUM** (2000) and **Old School** (2011). The longtime Interpretation and Presentation judge, fulltime barbershop vocal performance coach and medalist Sweet Adeline director also will be the first to tell you that it all began with his dad, Mike, a seven-time Society quartet medalist.



BOB LINDLEY — Bob is the baritone of the **Vikings**, our 1953 champs. He sang his first solo in church at age 2. He learned to sing alto early in years, which he credited for developing his interest in bari. In high school he joined two other Bobs and a Bruce that led to formation of the Vikings. They were one of the rapid-rising and highly popular foursomes in the early '50s, with Lindley doing most of the quartet's arrangements. He remains active with well over 60 years of Society membership.



RANDY LOOS — A tossup whether he's a better bass, chorus director, coach or administrator. A Society member since 1977, Randy is an AIC associate member for his turn with **Grandma's Boys** (1979 champs) and also sang with medalists **Sidelicks** and **Backbeat**. He was founding director of Sweet Adeline chorus champion **Toast of Tampa**. He was director or assistant in seven other chapters. He coached the two highest scoring Society quartets in the current judging system. And he served on the Society and Harmony Foundation boards.



TOM NEAL — This still fiery octogenarian joined the Society in 1951 and directed his Euclid, Ohio, JAD champs to the top 11 at the Kansas City international in 1962. He sang with the nationally popular **Village Idiots** show quartet on hundreds of shows from 1960-1975. He founded the **Singing Angels** children's barbershop chorus, now in its 50th year. Tom also is credited with starting the Barbershop Pioneers organization, now known as the Barbershop Quartet Preservation Society (BQPA).



DAVID WRIGHT — This prominent mathematician, professor, arranger, composer, director, coach, judge, historian and baritone is a Society Hall of Famer and associate director of the three-time champ **Ambassadors of Harmony**. David has been a musical consultant and arranger for numerous champion quartets and choruses, and has taught at Harmony University for 30 years. He helped design the Music Category and was its first Category Specialist. His academic and research background is far too extensive to begin to list here.



Hear all 10 tenors on YouTube at bit.ly/10bbstenors

ternational in 2011, the Suntones celebrated their 50th anniversary. Gene joined original gold medalist lead Bob Franklin and baritone Harlan Wilson for a full performance on the AIC show, with Harlan's son, Todd, on bass. Cokeroff also is a top Society arranger among his many other credits.

GEORGE EVANS, Confederates. Our 1956 champs from Memphis will go down as one of the most exciting ever, with their full-dress Confederate uniforms, and Evans could belt full voice or float a solo to melt the heart. During a Harmony College keynote address in the '90s, he was telling off-the-cuff stories of his quartet's traveling days when he suddenly shifted to regret that foursomes no longer seemed to sing from the heart. Whereupon, he launched into a lilting "Danny Boy" solo, giving a moving demonstration of what he meant. "Little George," says Cokeroff, "sang with a somewhat breathy but full tenor voice that was always dynamically complementary to the big, manly sound made by his singing partners."



BOB HODGE, Most Happy Fellows. He may be remembered by many as the guy covered with silver paint and a funnel atop his head, when our 1977 champs did their famed "Wizard of Oz" set. But the Haps' fans will tell you there was never a more compelling tenor solo than Bob's version of "When I Look into Your Eyes." Beck calls the Evergreen District hero "the sweetest natural tenor I can think of....a great soloist, masky, rich, just a natural." His quality and range were remarked on by other voters. Hodge also had a great comedic flair that often had him playing straight man to genius and unpredictable lead Larry Hassler.



BOB MACK, Mid States Four. Of the tenor of our 1949 champ, Neal says simply: "The greatest of all time." Joe Connelly is not far behind: "Without a doubt one of the all-time greats!!!" (Maybe three exclamation points put Joe ahead of Tom?) Joe goes on to describe Mack as an exceptional performer, soloist, musician and four-part singer. That all has relevance because the Mid States were our first true comedy gold medalists, who made their show fame with a variety of instruments and Mack a major part of the act—often the foil for bari Forry Haynes' zingers and antics. Cokeroff says Mack was a full-voice tenor who sang as many solos as he did regular barbershop tenor, and "was a fabulous vocalist and brilliant stage performer." David Wright calls Mack "clearly a towering figure in his day."



KENT MARTIN, Boston Common. Our 1980 champs will be remembered for a sound that featured quality of individual voices, starting at the top with the beauty of the tenor. Cokeroff calls Martin "an accomplished tenor soloist as well as barbershop quartet tenor, easy to listen to ... he made us feel musically comfortable when we heard him tell his story with his full, resonant voice." The Common were inducted this past year into the Society Hall of Fame, and at the ceremony they rendered their signature song, featuring Martin's hanger on the tag, "That Old Quartet of Mine." Beck says Kent has "a kind of heavy, what I call



pressed, sound, but tall and New England masky. Certainly very readily identifiable, with a quartet that had a good concept of long tones and singable consonant sounds." Uh huh. All the audience knew is they loved Martin and the Common long before they won.

VERN REED, Buffalo Bills. Can you hear anyone sing two high, full-voice notes on “Ice Cream!” and not think of Vern Reed? His friends used to say that all Vern ever wanted to do was perform, and he got his wish in a big way. His tenor with the Bills may be the best-known to all American audiences, after Meredith Willson plucked our 1950 champ to star on Broadway in *The Music Man*. Cokeroff describes Reed as “The epitome of barbershop harmony tenors: full-voiced, a joy and inspiration for other would-be singers and performers. Vern was always thrilling to listen to and watch, on the Broadway stage or the big screen.” More than 50 years after the movie first appeared, Reed’s bespectacled face and unmistakable voice still remind us of his vocal power.



LESTER RECTOR, Four Voices. Bill Biffle calls Rector “simply one of the best singers on any part we’ve ever had as a member.” Wright agreed: “Lester’s incredible voice



put him in the top 10 for me ... he totally captured the barbershop world with his virtuosity.” Another panelist suggested that while Lester may identify as a gospel soloist more than as a Barbershopper, he is a fantastic natural tenor. Cokeroff said, “Wow—the power and the glory! Lester sings loud, when the music calls for it. Yet, his delivery of a soft ballad

was always just as effective and highly enjoyable. His version of ‘All Rise’ was one of the most powerful songs ever delivered to a barbershop audience by our 2002 champions, Four Voices.” Lester now is a regular with the Disney World Voices of Liberty. He and his wife, Holly, also tour professionally.

EDDY RYAN, Easternaires. Our second non-gold medalist choice, Ryan was a Mid-Atlantic District favorite in the 1960s and ‘70s with the Easternaires, who were medalists in 1960 and always in the top 10. Connelly remembers him as a singer with “awesome full voice and falsetto!!!” (Joe writes like he talks). Cokeroff said Eddy, who remains active, is a true Irish tenor with the ability to “peel paint” on high B-flats. Ryan also sang the melody sometimes when lead Dan Heyburn switched to a lyrical tenor. Beck notes they had the advantage of being in a very creative quartet, singing imaginative arrangements primarily by Bob Bohn that would highlight Eddy and Danny switching off.



TIM WAURICK, Vocal Spectrum. The barbershopping world’s answer to Yma Sumac (post-baby boomers can look her up). The tenor of our 2006 champs drew solid support considering his relative short tenure on the Society scene. Cokeroff sums up this young man very well: “Folks who listen to Tim all say the same thing: ‘How the heck does he sing that high?!’ Fact is, he sings low as well, as evidenced by his own company’s four-track recordings (Tim Tracks). His performances and recordings with Vocal Spectrum, as well as his solo albums, continue to thrill thousands who are blown away with his vocal skills and stage persona.” Beck notes that Waurick has incredible technique and accuracy. “He can sing all parts very well, of course, but he can also do double high C’s all night, and we never heard him even think about not being 100% accurate.”



Honorable Mention

We could fill another chapter with the glowing words of our selectors about these seven sterling singers, all of whom were heavily involved in the top 10 discussion during this delightful and painful process. Again alphabetically:

- **KIPP BUCKNER**, *Interstate Rivals* (1987), *The Gas House Gang* (1993), *Old School* (2011)
- **BOB DOWMA**, *Happiness Emporium* (1975), *Good News Quartet*
- **FRED FARRELL**, *Second Edition* (1989), *Crossroads* (2009)
- **DON KAHL**, *Rural Route 4* (1986)
- **AL REHKOP**, *Auto Towners* (1966), *Gentlemen’s Agreement* (1971)
- **JOE SCHMITT**, *Schmitt Brothers* (1951)
- **JAKOB STENBERG**, *Ringmasters* (2012)



Live national TV, social media celebrate April 11

April 11 was National Barbershop Quartet Day in the U.S., highlighted by a national television performance from our 2009 champion. We also got unsolicited social media shoutouts from unexpected sources, adding up to additional millions reached.

- Many caught **Crossroads** on FOX-TV's *Fox & Friends*. Following a successful pitch from Headquarters staff, the 2009 champ traveled to New York and performed live. The quartet sang the tail end of one of its songs live to a large outdoor audience. A brief but great interview followed with bass Jim Henry, who did a great job talking up the Barbershop Harmony Society and barbershop singing throughout the world. The quartet later performed a



couple of commercial cut-ins and cut-outs.

- Ray-Ban Sunglasses, an icon of classic cool for the eyes since 1937, nodded to those of us who've specialized in classic cool for the ears since 1938. The company tweets an image from its hundreds of styles every day; to the left is the tweet for April 11.

• **The Oak Ridge Boys**, Honorary Lifetime Members since 2008, tweeted "We are proud to be honorary members of the Barbershop Harmony Society."

• *The Tonight Show* starring Jimmy Fallon celebrated the day and tweeted out a playlist of performances by Jimmy's barbershop quartet, **The Ragtime Gals**.



Berlin hosts first European Harmony Brigade

Why should North America have all the fun? Here's a scene from Europe's first official Harmony Brigade event, held in Berlin, May 1-3. Like other Brigades, the event features wall-to-wall quartetting with dozens of Barbershoppers who had pre-learned 10 high-caliber barbershop songs. (What's different: these were 60 co-ed, mixed voices.) In addition to enjoying endless possible quartet combinations at all hours, attendees competed in a random draw quartet contest and created a superchoir for a public performance.

European Barbershoppers

enlisted the help of many Society Brigaders—John Loucks, Neal Siegal, and Larry Triplett in particular. Some Society members, including Brigade pioneer Charlie Rose, crossed the Atlantic for the event! Learn more at www.european-harmonybrigade.org.

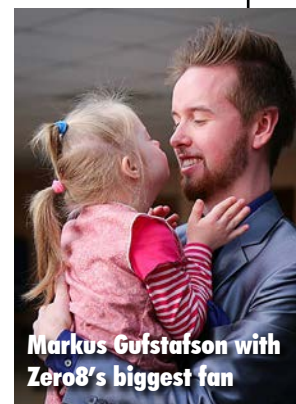
To attend one of nine existing North American Harmony Brigade-sponsored events or to start one in your area, visit www.harmonybrigade.org. Learn more about the Dixie District's unaffiliated Confederate Harmony Brigade at confederateharmonybrigade.com.

Zero8 chorus wowed Moscow, but orphans and special needs won hearts

Zero8, the 2014 international bronze medalist chorus from Stockholm, recently wowed Russian audiences with their sacred repertoire as part of the Easter Festival, held May 2-6. Singing in St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul and Moscow's Tchaikovsky Concert Hall was thrilling, but they'll never forget two other performances that took place on much smaller stages.

After performing at an orphanage and at a school for special needs children, "The love they showed us during and after our performance ... simply amazing."

www.facebook.com/zero8music



Markus Gufstafson with Zero8's biggest fan



Meanwhile on the Internet ...



"PRACTICE ISN'T THE THING YOU DO ONCE YOU'RE GOOD. IT'S THE THING YOU DO THAT MAKES YOU GOOD."



—MALCOLM GLADWELL,
OUTLIERS



May the 4th (say it out loud) is day of Internet geekdom observed annually by Star Wars fans—a day chosen due to its pun-full match with the movie's iconic catchphrase. Here's a music theory take on the pun. (If you don't get it, ask your section leader.)



Best fan of all time—from The Con Men on Facebook:

We had the coolest thing happen after our evening performance. (Lima Beane Barbershop Chorus, Lima, Ohio.) A young girl came up to us in the lobby and gave each of us a shiny dime because we sang "Brother Can You Spare A Dime" on the show. Now we will keep them in our jacket pockets everywhere we go! ... The cutest part was that she made us hold out our hands and close our eyes, then open them all at the same time. It was such a thoughtful gesture! ■

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Society members reported as deceased between March. 1 and May 1, 2015. Email updates to customerservice@barbershop.org.

Cardinal

Bill Fentress
Lake County, IN
Tad Heminger
Columbus-Greenwood, IN

John Darby
Centralia, WA
Charles Dunham
Centralia, WA
Robert Gally
Tualatin Valley, OR
Bob Gault
Tualatin Valley, OR
Almon Goldmann
Tualatin Valley, OR
Clifford Hall
Tualatin Valley, OR
Maurice Hanson
Centralia, WA
Michael McElliott
Centralia, WA

Dixie

Marc Gottlieb
Augusta, SC

Evergreen

Lawthan Austin
Tualatin Valley, OR
Warren Burt
Tualatin Valley, OR
Craig Crummer
Bellevue, WA

Olympia, WA
Harold Mitchell
Tualatin Valley, OR
Donald Mustard
Centralia, WA
Charles Osborne
Centralia, WA
Charles Pearman
Centralia, WA
Alfred Rigsbee
Tualatin Valley, OR

Harlen Roberts

Centralia, WA
Jack Smith
Centralia, WA
Horatio Thomas
Centralia, WA
J Lee Tobey
Tualatin Valley, OR
Clifford Wilson
Tualatin Valley, OR
Far Western
William Thompson
Whittier, CA

Illinois

Bill Fentress
Lake County, IL
Thomas Thompson
Bellevue, IL

Johnny Appleseed

James Barber
Ashland, KY
Robert Behlen
BuckeyeColumbus, OH

Thomas Dwyer

Warren, OH
Jack Koch
Butler, PA
Roy Rhoades
BuckeyeColumbus, OH
Leo Stefano
GreaterPittsburgh, PA
Pittsburgh Metro, PA
Paul Webb
Miami-Shelby, OH
Ronald Willis
Northwest Ohio, OH

Land O' Lakes

Keith Fransen
Hilltop, MN
Lee Williams
Oshkosh, WI

Mid-Atlantic

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Dundalk, MD
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Richard Boyle
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Lansdale, PA
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Northeastern

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Greensboro, NC
T Robert Donahey
Charlotte, NC
Robert Higerd
Edenton, NC
Harold Huitt
Research Triangle Park, NC

Rocky Mount, NC
Kenneth Kroeger
Wilmington, NC
George Poffenbarger
Rocky Mount, NC
Central Carolina, NC

Ontario

Ross Allin
Oshawa, ON
Robert Jackson
Grimsby, ON

Pioneer

Michael Jaissle
Rochester, MI
Jery Place
Livingston County, MI

Rocky Mountain

Peter Bailey
Albuquerque, NM
Douglas Johnson
Utah Valley, UT

Seneca Land

Charles Haslett
Geneva, NY
Mark Twain, NY
Kenneth Kemp
New Bethlehem, PA
George Vineyard
Warsaw, NY

Sunshine

Robert Bosomworth
Daytona Beach Metro, FL
Charles Gray, Jr.
Tallahassee, FL
Butch Hill
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Jack Koch
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**Association of International
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www.aisqc.com

Harmony Brigade
www.harmonybrigade.org



**Barbershop Quartet
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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 fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

Vision

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



THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster



Stand-alone tag may not be alone much longer

Music can raise us out of sadness and despair. It can inspire us to live life to the fullest and to love others unconditionally. We've all experienced this remarkable power in our lives. Through music we've made great lifelong friends, too. What would we do without our uplifting music?

For this issue, I began thinking about tags and songs and how enriching it is to sing harmony

with our fellow harmonizers. I sent an idea to two of my dear friends, Tom Gentry and Mel Knight, and they provided some helpful suggestions. So ... here's the tag for this issue, a version for male voices and one for female voices—not pure barber-shop, but fun to perform. This may be one of those times where a tag actually precedes the writing of the song. We'll see! ■

OUR SONG SHALL RISE

Words, Music and Arrangement by JOE LILES

Tag *May be sung a whole step lower*

Our song shall rise, — our song shall rise. —

Our song shall rise, our song shall rise, —

Now our song shall rise! —

for female voices
2015-04-16

Tag *May be sung a whole step lower*

Words, Music and Arrangement by JOE LILES

Our song shall rise, — our song shall rise. —

Our song shall rise, our song shall rise, —

Now our song shall rise! —

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