

MAD QUALIFIES 5!



At last month's International Preliminary Contest in Harrisburg, five Mid-Atlantic District Quartets qualified for the International Contest in Pittsburgh June 28-July 4. Clockwise from top left: 'Round Midnight, Frank the Dog, Last Men Standing, Gimme Four, and Mayhem. Congratulations, gentlemen!



Volume 46, Issue 2
SPRING 2015
A BULLETIN FOR
EVERY BARBERSHOPPER
IN THE MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT



A SPRING OF HOPE

These are some of my reflections following our amazing MAD Spring Convention and Contests in Harrisburg.

After having served as a Board Member-at-Large, Executive Vice President and President of our great district for eight years, this was my first Spring Convention as Immediate Past President. I was not competing in a quartet or presenting as emcee at a contest session. While I was privileged to serve in my Board role during our very productive meeting on Friday, I was largely an “observer” throughout the balance of the weekend, with a birds-eye view of virtually every activity on stage and elsewhere in the terrific Hilton venue, which gave me a new and remarkably encouraging perspective on both the event and the wonderful future of MAD and our art form in general.

Quality Contest Performances



by **Bill Colosimo**,
MAD Immediate
Past President

First, I was impressed by the exceptionally high quality level of all the competing quartets during the Semi-finals session. This is a particularly gratifying outcome, as many of us in District leadership have worked hard to provide a framework for quartets to access valuable coaching resources, educational opportunities (like Harmony College-East), and other avenues of communication which have encouraged quartets (and choruses) to work toward raising their

performance skills to not only “do better at contest,” but to also represent our great art form in its best light in public performances!

QUARTETS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE



*Flash Point
Four TRAK Sound
Silverado (SWD quartet)
Sound Squad*



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A long contest session where quality performance is “hit or miss” can be a tough go for an observer. This session sped by, really! It was clear that quartets were well prepared, energetic and sincerely offering their “best” at that point in time to us as an audience. And conversations with our judging panel following the contest confirmed this. It may have been the best overall stream of quartet sets in a decade or two!

Variety is the Spice of Life

The programming of integrating mixed-gender quartets into the mix of all competitors in the Friday session was a stroke of inspiration, and one which I hope many others found enjoyable! Not only were we treated to four ensembles who had prepared solid performances for contest, true to our art form’s roots and innovative in presentation, but we were fortunate to have two sets of mic testers and coolers whose high quality level set a tone for what would follow which didn’t disappoint! For all the good reasons MAD blazed a trail here with our first “Mixed Harmony Championship,”

I commend our Board and our C&J and Events Teams for their perseverance and vision to bring this new initiative to our convention. Participants, their families and friends—some of whom were “new” to one of our events!—and the audience in general were delighted with exposure to this forward-thinking way of spreading

See SPRING, continued on next page



TOP:
Sum of Each
(Mixed quartet)
LoCo 4

MIDDLE:
The Fource
Lady and the Tramps
(Mixed quartet)

BOTTOM:
2nd Amendment
Youth
Reclamation
Project

SPRING

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quality close-harmony singing to a wider group of singers and patrons.

In addition, it's always a thrill to see quality Seniors quartets in the mix for a possible District Championship. Singing close harmony is, as we know, a lifelong love. Our Seniors participants demonstrated skill and good song selection to showcase how senior voices can soar!

Then There's Our Youth!

Ok, so I confess a certain predisposition to loving quality singing by young people! (I guess it runs in the family!) But I was absolutely thrilled by the quality level of the quartets and ensemble that participated in the lively and fast-paced Youth Adjudication on Saturday. No doubt you recall years ago when these events elicited great cheers from those attending—even as a relatively small crowd—simply to encourage the fine young people who dared to cross the stage and try out (what was likely for them) a “foreign” art form! This Spring, the level of performances was so high as to make virtually every performer a real “pro!” The music educators responsible for guiding many of the ensembles deserve a lot of credit for their growing enthusiasm for and skill in conveying our style to their students. But the collegiate-level singing was also superb, driven by internal motivation and good coaching, too. The ratings of “Outstanding” and

See SPRING, continued on next page



*FROM TOP:
For the Times
Distinction
Harmony Reunion (Sr)
Throwback (SUN quartet)
Half and Half (Mixed quartet)
Susquehanna Flats (Sr).*

SPRING

continued from previous page

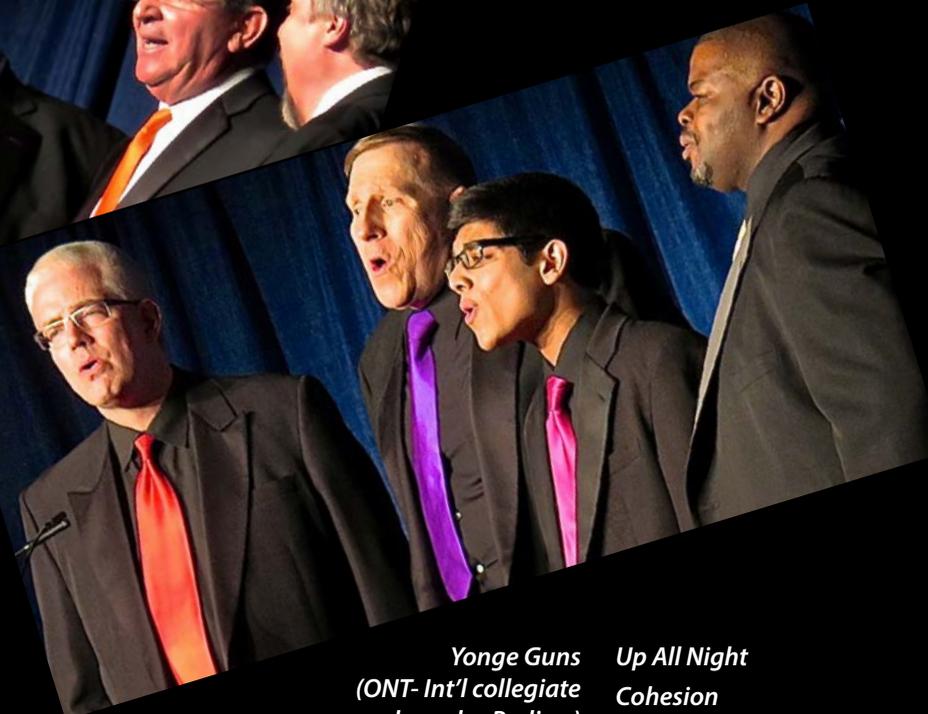
Superior," especially drawn from a matrix based on our own judges' scoring system, clearly show a higher degree of skill and comfort in navigating barbershop among young people today.

This, alone, may have been the greatest sign of a "Spring Full of Hope" that I witnessed during the weekend. But an even greater sign of "hope" was the experience of watching the evaluations and coaching sessions for these fine students provided by our judging panel. Our BHS judges "get it" when it comes to great coaching, positive-but-targeted correction, and overall encouragement of young people's enthusiasm for singing well. Further, the students themselves were sponges, respectfully absorbing the judges' suggestions and immediately implementing them to produce better results! That's gratifying to me as an educator, dad, and advocate of youth singing...but it was even more gratifying to the kids to know they can get better and their effort is appreciated!

The Finals and Jamboree ...and Beyond!

It goes without saying that the finals performances, including our quartet friends from other districts, were exceptional. The announcements of and acceptance songs by our International

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Yonge Guns (ONT- Int'l collegiate and regular Prelims)
Up All Night Cohesion
New Kid In Town
Forecast
Silky Mix (Mixed quartet)

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qualifying quartets were exciting and rewarding. The additional special performances by mixed quartets capped off a great show of shows! From the “new” perspective of “leader-turned-observer,” I was overwhelmed with joy at the prospects for our art form’s future, as well as the way MAD—YOUR district—is positioned to offer outstanding performance opportunities to ensembles and great entertainment for us as “patrons!”

We now await with great anticipation a round of Divisional Conventions and Contests which will no doubt be exemplary in quality and fun, too! This time, choruses will no doubt show the same level of improvement we’re seeing from quartets. And that’s great news for them as performers, as well as for our district, our Society and our community-at-large. Quality music is just one element though; we need to develop and sustain our outreach efforts to enroll more of our communities in understanding, appreciating and enjoying what we produce!

That, in a nutshell, is my mantra for the remainder of my time in district service...and likely for the remainder of my barbershop life. This “Spring Full of Hope” sure is a catalyst to encourage me—and hopefully you!—to introduce and enroll new participants and patrons into our “barbershop life!”



C'est La Vie (HS female quartet)
Very Ah-some (HS female qtet)
CJ4 (College male quartet)
Sass & Class (HS female quartet)
Sounds of Sauron (HS male quartet)
Afterglow (HS female quartet)



*Hearts In Harmony
(HS female quartet)
Quad Squad
(HS female quartet)
Brothers In Arms
(College male quartet)*



Mic testers, Mic coolers and all-around enthusiastic ambassadors for mixed-voice barbershop harmony, World Champion Double Date wows the crowd.



MAD's first Mixed Quartet Champs, Half and Half, include two members who are brand new to barbershop harmony.

First Ever Mixed Voice Quartet Contest in the U.S. held at M-AD Prelims

I sang with my wife in a mixed voice quartet and came in second in the first ever mixed voice quartet contest in the U.S. or Canada!

Mind you, I have participated in many Prelims contests since mid-1980. But March 13, 2015 was my first Prelims contest in a mixed quartet. To say it was awesome to sing with my wife in a contest would be a woeful understatement.

As a performer it was the same as when I sang in those other quartets through the years and the audience response was great. I would most certainly do this again and would encourage anyone who might be interested to give it a try. My quartet, **Silky Mix** (three males and a female lead), placed second behind Half and Half (two males and two females – young singers).

One of the male singers of **Half and Half** said that the entire experience was the best he had ever had in barbershop. He raved about the coaching from the panel and the incredible and positive response from the audience and throughout the weekend. Two members of his quartet had never sung barbershop before and had never experienced one of our conventions.

They are both hooked now!

Both the first and second place quartets scored well enough that they would have made the Saturday night show if they had been competing with the male groups.

The other two mixed groups also reportedly had a blast. One of the two featured a father/daughter combo. This was the first quartet that both dad and daughter had EVER competed with – they earned a third place medal.

VP of Contest & Judging **Gary Plaag** had purchased medals with blue, red and white ribbons for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place and the award ceremony occurred right after the semis on Friday night. **Double Date**, the reigning Mixed Voice Quartet World Champions from St. Louis presented the medals to the delight of the crowd.

Double Date offered a Master Class which had about 25 attendees was very well received. Their presentation was not unlike any of the master classes that I have attended over the years of BHS champion quartets. As members of Double Date so succinctly summarize, “good singing, is good singing”.

An Idea Whose Time Had Come

So, how did this event come about? In some regards, it was just an idea whose time had come. Our MAD Spring Prelims are typically held in mid-March and generally at a hotel where we guarantee a certain number of rooms in exchange for access to a ballroom along with change/warm up rooms. This had served us very well in the past. But when we had a sig-

nificant drop in attendance in 2013 and 2014 and did not meet our room guarantees we were required to pay a significant penalty. We needed to find ways to attract more people and increase the room occupancy rate.

By happenstance, Gary Plaag had just returned from Germany having judged the World Mixed Quartet contest and suggested that we host a Mixed Quartet Contest ourselves. He further suggested that we invite Double Date, the 2014 World Mixed Quartet champion to our inaugural event. After some discussion the MAD BOD agreed that we would host the first mixed harmony event and that we would do it just like the Germans, i.e. intermix all of the quartets into the Friday night semi-final round of our International Preliminary Quartet contest. We also agreed to invite Double Date.

Gary checked with **Kevin Keller** (C&J) and got the green light to proceed. Gary quickly developed the “rules” (since there are none). We opened the contest to MAD mixed quartets first and then to any from out of the District. We wound up with five registrations (one ultimately scratched) from MAD and none from out of District. Our final Prelims tally (after some scratches) was 20 male MAD quartets (including seniors), 3 out of District quartets, and 4 mixed quartets for a total of 27 competing quartets

I know that some folks had questions about our judges being able to accurately score male and mixed quartets one after the other. We knew that various European affiliates (SNOBS, BABS, LABBS, Holland Harmony and BinG!) have been including mixed voice, all male, and all female quartets in their contests for years...with high acclaim by the audience for the variety it brings to their contest events.

In the end this turned out to be a non-issue. None of our judges had any problem evaluating and coaching any of the contestants.

And some folks had voiced concerns about lengthening the contest by about 30 minutes from our experience of the recent past. I (and the BOD) thought it was worth it and our audience certainly seemed to agree.

Rave Reviews

Some of the “after contest” comments from attendees give you an idea of the fun you missed if you weren’t there:

“Reflecting back after the Friday-night round, I was surprised at how non-controversial the mixed quartets turned out to be. The women sang in the men’s key, and other than in appearance, the mixed quartets were on par with the all-male versions. As for all contestants, once you notice the physical makeup of the quartet, then it’s all about the performance.”

“Everyone that I talked with enjoyed the mixed quartets and said that it



Silky Mix proudly displays their second-place medals at the first-ever U.S. Mixed-Voice Quartet Contest.

added a new “wrinkle” to the otherwise routine convention. None of the judges with whom I talked seemed to have any problem judging the mixed quartets.”

“It was a really super contest. I was looking forward to hearing the mixed quartets. As I told a few others, as I was listening to Double Date sing If You Love Me, I wrote in my program “WOW”. There was also this vision of a few years in the future when there was a mixed QT contest with 10,000 people bouncing up and down in their seats — sponsored by BHS, SAI and HI. Will it happen, who knows? I will dream. I hope we continue the contest and it provides us all kinds of logistical problems!”

And from members of the judging panel:

“I thought the mixed quartet competition was awesome. I’d never seen mixed quartets perform live before so that was neat to see. Luckily, I didn’t think it was too hard to change gears. Maybe it would have been easier if they were all grouped together (like all at the beginning or the end) but as it was, I don’t think it affected my ability to score. I hope more districts follow suit and adopt a mixed quartet competition.”

“I enjoyed the mixed quartets. I didn’t have any issues “calibrating” or anything with the mixed quartets being mixed in with the male quartets.”

Oh, and by the way, we met our room occupancy targets and did not have to pay any “penalty” to the hotel thus saving the district a great deal of money!

Make your plans now to attend Prelims in 2016 and see for yourselves what all the excitement is about.

— *By Ig Jakovac, MAD President*

The 2015 Competition Cycle is posted at www.midatlanticdistrict.com.

2015 Conventions

Atlantic Division
Cherry Hill, N.J.
May 15-16

Southern Division
Reston, Va.
May 22-23

Northern/Western
Divisions
Cherry Hill, N.J.
June 5-6

Fall District
Ocean City, Md.
October 23-24



Atlantic Division — May 15-16
Cherry Hill, N.J.



Southern Division — May 22-23
Reston, Va.



Western Division /Atlantic
Division — June 5-6
Cherry Hill, N.J.

Conventions, conventions, conventions!

Prelims were fantastic! Now we head into the Division contests. Registration deadlines fast approaching!

We are off to a quick start this year and have a very successful Spring Prelims Convention under our belt. I am honored to be your Executive Vice President and chair the best Operations Team in the Society. The move from backstage to in front of the curtain presents new challenges but I've got a great team and we are dedicated to providing the quality events and services you've come to expect.

The M-AD Division convention cycle is just around the corner. We will be visiting the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cherry Hill, New Jersey on May 15th for the Atlantic Division Convention and then again on June 5th for the combined Northern and Western Division Convention. The Southern Division Convention is set for Memorial Day Weekend at the Hyatt Regency in Reston Town Center in Reston, Virginia.

Then, on October 23rd and 24th, we are heading back to Ocean City, Maryland for our Fall District Convention. M-AD has a two year contract with the Ocean City Convention Center with first right of refusal for a third year. The date for this year's District Convention is a little later than we would like. We are working on that and plan to get back to the first weekend in October in the near future.

Convention venue selection continues to be a big challenge.

Finding the happy medium between location and cost while taking into consideration all the physical and logistical limitations makes identifying a viable location tough. The Events Team is creating documents that identify the essential elements and minimum criteria for a convention venue. Factors such as ballroom size, ceiling height, number of warm-up rooms, and available power to support lighting and audio top the criteria list.

Once we get the details worked out our Division Vice Presidents will share these documents with M-AD chapter leadership and get everyone involved in bringing forward venues for consideration. In addition, the Events VP is in touch with a consulting firm which specializes in matching convention venues with meeting planners. I will keep you posted on the results of our efforts.

In later articles I will provide some of the insider information on what drives us to use hotels vice schools or performing arts centers as convention locations; why we choose certain locations over others; and why we want you to stay at the headquarters hotel vice the cheaper lodging facility down the road. Some of the details, trade-offs, and realities may surprise you. Armed with the insider info we can work together to find the best facilities in the right locations at the best prices to meet all of our needs.

GIRLS...

We Love 'em

A Musical Review by the

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Last Men Standing

Sunday, May 3rd
3PM

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Dennis Ritchey
M-AD EVP



By DIANA GOOVAERTS
dgoovaerts@njherald.com

Nearly 50 students from across the county and beyond filled the halls of Vernon Township High School with the sounds of barbershop music Saturday during the first Youth Harmony Explosion Festival sponsored by the High Point Harmonizers.

The event, which attracted pupils from Vernon, High Point, Pope John and Kit-tatinny high schools, Rutgers University and Milford, Pa., featured chorus workshops throughout the day and culminated with an evening concert put on by the attendees and their instructors.

High Point Harmonizer Rich Taylor said the musical group decided to hold the program to promote music education and show educators and the community what a motivated group of singers can accomplish.

“Our clinicians are really thrilled with the quality of the kids who have turned up here,” Taylor said. “When the schools had to cut budgets, they didn’t cut the sports, they cut music and the arts. We want to keep music in the schools and we want them to see what happens (when the students come together). The kids come here and they meet other kids and they learn together and sing together. We’re planting seeds this year.”

Thanks to grants from the Mid-Atlantic District and the Barbershop Harmony Society, free registration was available for those wishing to participate, Taylor said.

According to Taylor, the students spent the day learning two songs for the evening performance, and were taught by members of three barbershop quartet groups, **Gimme Four**, the 2013 Mid Atlantic District Collegiate Champions; **Faces 4 Radio**, the 2014 International Barbershop Harmony Seniors Champions; and **Class Ring**, the 2014 Sweet Adelines International Rising Star Quartet Champions. Overall ladies’ director for the program was **Stephanie Britson** and men’s director was

See Encouraging, continued on next page

High Point Harmonizers, under the direction of June Noble, show music educators and students what a motivated group of singers can accomplish at the first Youth Harmony Explosion Festival they sponsored in February.

Youth Harmony Explosion!

Encouraging

continued from previous page

David Ammirata. The combined ensemble was directed by music educator **Doug Carnes.**

"When Rich Taylor asked me to direct today, I just thought it was such a great opportunity for the kids to learn what I know and truthfully for me to learn what the kids know," Carnes said, of his decision to be a part of the event. "It's always exciting to show kids something that they don't know, especially about music, and barbershop (music) is just a great vehicle for that."

Encyclopedia Britannica defines barbershop music as a "typically all-male or all-female popular choral form characterized by a cappella singing, with three voices harmonizing to the melody of a fourth voice" with an emphasis on "close, carefully arranged harmony, synchronization of word sounds, and the use of such devices as variation of tempo, volume level, diction, color, and phrasing."

According to High Point High School students Teresa Toriello and Becky Turro, the style was a huge draw to attend the event.

"Mr. Taylor came to our school to promote the event and I really liked what he had to say about barbershop music," Toriello said. "I had never been into it until he mentioned it but then I listened to it and I was like 'whoa, this is cool.'"

Turro and Toriello, who both plan to study music in college, said the intricacies of pitch and harmony in barbershop music create an ear-catching sound.

"Faces 4 Radio came and gave a presentation and that was so cool," Turro said. "All the harmonies are really cool and it's a lot harder to sing than regular choral music. It just made

February 9
Just got back from a long weekend of choral workshops, singing, clinics and performances.

The HIGH POINT YOUTH HARMONY EXPLOSION FESTIVAL was great. ClassRing Quartet. AND Gimme Four were wonderful guest artists that really showed the youth in Vernon, N.J. a great time filled with passion and music.

Stephanie Britson came in and conducted the women's chorus and David Ammirata conducted the men's chorus.

Richard M. Taylor had this idea some time ago and finally put it into place this year. I have a feeling thanks to his hard work and dedication this program will run for many years to come!

I couldn't think of a better way to spend my weekend than conducting the future of choral singing and music in America.

I had a blast!

Thank you to all the participants, supporters, and parents!

Doug Carnes

me want to come learn more."

"I like how they can just stay perfectly in pitch with no instruments under them," Toriello said. "It's amazing."

Vernon High School senior and Sounds of Sauron quartet member Justin Metz agreed.

"It's an amazing genre of music," Metz said.

"Some of the most talented singers I've heard are barbershop singers because it takes such a good ear and voice to match."

For Vernon High School junior Dominick Gonzalez, barbershop is all about the feeling that comes with hitting the right notes.

"My favorite part is when all the chords hit together and they ring," he said. "It's hard to describe but it's a great feeling."

Saturday evening Gonzalez and his fellow students got a chance to make the school auditorium ring with rousing barbershop renditions of "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" by the boys chorus, "Up, Up and Away" by the girls chorus and "Lonesome Road" by the combined group.

Songs performed by the three clinician quartets, two Vernon High School quartets and a quartet from High Point High School were also included in the program's 7 p.m. concert finale.

Taylor said this year's program was a spectacular test run and said he hopes next year's event will see an even bigger turnout.

"We're all learning this year," he said, "2016 is going to be amazing."

For more information about barbershop music or next year's Youth Harmony Explosion Festival, visit www.highpointharmonizers.org.



THE CHORUS OF THE CHESAPEAKE DUNDALK, MD CHAPTER, BHS



PRESENTS

THE "LOOK" OF OUR HARMONY - THEN & NOW

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Last Men Standing
2015 Mid-Atlantic District
Quartet Champion



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6 reasons your chapter should host the next District Convention:

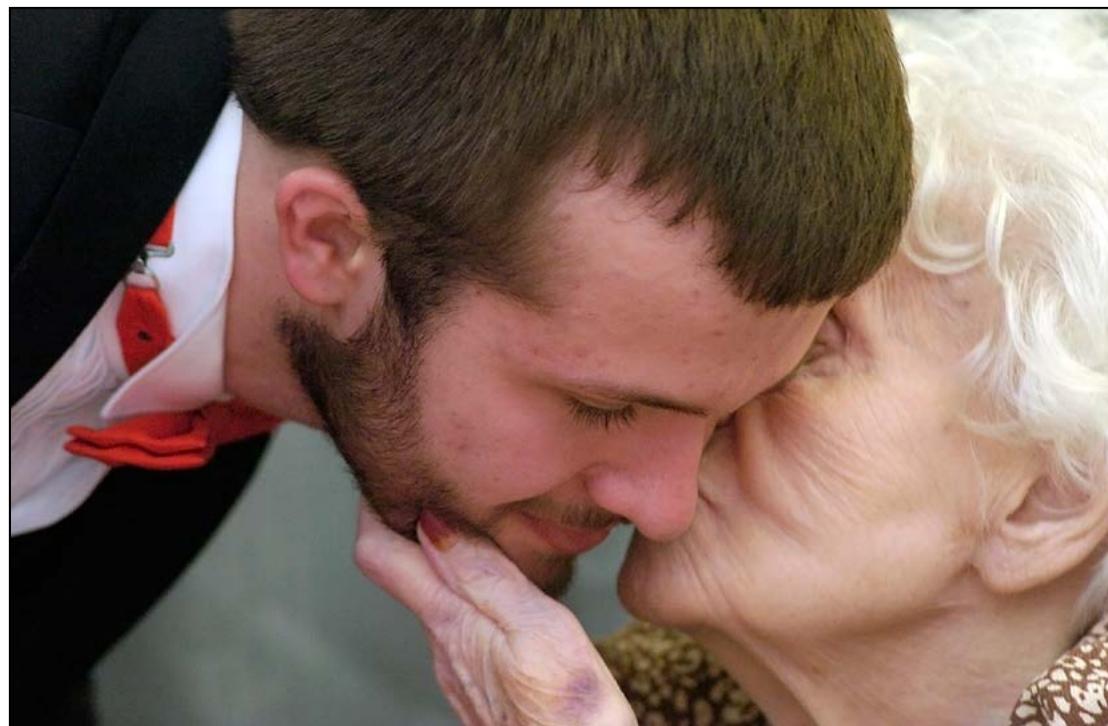
1. you get to see *what really goes on* behind the curtain
2. you get *up close and personal* with quartets, choruses, judges
3. you can look important with a *walkie-talkie!*
4. closing doors in people's faces is *power!*
5. so is waving a *hush!* sign
6. And did we mention you get **PAID** for having all this fun? Yep. **\$\$\$** in your treasury.

Contact Walter Griffith, *NOW*, to tell him your chapter is ready to meet this challenge — and have all this fun!

imabar1@aol.com

See you
(and your walkie-talkies)
in
Ocean City, Md.
October 23-24

Barbershop quartet sweetens people's day with serenades



COLLECTING KISSES
ABOVE: Lottie Ziko, 103, busses baritone Evan Sedor, 19.

Barbershop quartet singers Herb Daniels, Ralph Gillespie, Phil Brown and Evan Sedor sing Valentine's Day songs to Lottie Ziko..



For a moment Friday afternoon, the sounds of work in Riverstreet Manor died down.

Phil Brown pulled out his digital pitch pipe, played a tone, and soon began to sing.

Brown sang bass. Ralph Gillespie sang the melody, Herb Daniels was tenor and Evan Sedor the baritone in a rendition of Let Me Call You Sweetheart.

Lottie Ziko, a resident at the manor, was their audience. She mouthed the words as the quartet harmonized.

"There ya go," she said as they finished their first piece.

Applause followed.

"That was so cute," said someone in the crowd that had gathered to watch the four men sing to Ziko.

She gave every one a hug and kiss afterward.

Ziko was one of several recipients of singing valentines delivered by the *Wyoming Valley Barbershop Harmony Chorus* Feb. 13. Brown, Gillespie, Daniels and Sedor were one crew. They call themselves "Harmony Notes."

From Moosic to Nanticoke, from Bear Creek to Harveys Lake, teams of four from the barbershop chapter were out serenading unsuspecting loved ones with romantic tunes and deliveries of a card, candy and rose.

Harmony Notes started the day at Austie's Diner in Hanover Township, then spread holiday cheer at a PNC Bank branch, Aspen Dental, a Bob Evans Restaurant and Mohegan Sun Arena.

After their performance for Ziko, they headed to King's College.

One door was locked, but like love itself, they persevered.

— By Bill Wellock, *citizensvoice.com*,
Feb. 14, 2015

Cast your bread upon the waters.

Church donates hall for party as thank you for Harmony Heritage Singers' benefit performance

A recent Sunday afternoon benefit concert by the Harmony Heritage Singers at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church had strings attached – strings with knots that the chorus itself had tied. Audience members at the March 15 performance contributed a total of \$1143 to a local organization, United Community Ministries, which serves people in need living along the Route 1 corridor. In return for presenting the benefit concert, the chorus gets to hold their annual holiday party at the church with no rental charge.

This unusual win-win-win arrangement began seven years ago when the chorus was looking for a place to hold their annual party, which had become too large for anyone's home. As a member of both the church and the chorus, I arranged for the bargain, which has been the pattern ever since.

Harmony Heritage Singers is a daytime chorus. Our members are all retired or independent, so we can offer performances when most other nonprofessional musicians can't. We present about 25 performances each year, most of them during the day on weekdays. Many of these shows are at retirement communities or assisted living facilities.



photo credit: Steve Hunt, Mount Vernon Voice

The Harmony Heritage Singers, under the direction of Bob Wachter, has a win-win-win agreement with a local church, trading performances for use of the church hall.

Our rehearsals are also during the day (and sitting down), so we do a lot of barbershop singing.

one that not only yields a benefit for a worthy charity but earns a nice benefit for the chorus as well.

But our annual concert at the Unitarian Church is the only

— By Ron Brandt, Mount Vernon Chapter



FIVE reasons you may be the **PERFECT** volunteer to staff the **Harmony Marketplace** in Ocean City in October

1. You like getting your hands on other people's money (temporarily).
2. You just loved playing store as a kid — fulfill your childhood fantasies!
3. You enjoy helping shoppers find just the right birthday gift or stocking stuffer.
4. You look forward to spending time totally surrounded by all things barbershop — charts, tracks, books, clothes, tchotchkes
5. Having 500 people smile at you and say, "Thank you," would really make your day.

Contact Walter Griffith, NOW, to tell him you want to play store — and have all this fun!

imabari1@aol.com



The Best Times I Ever Had ...

Lehigh Valley Harmonizers surprise retiring director with moving tribute



Lehigh Valley retiring Director Mike Feyrer is surrounded by his sons and grandsons during a surprise rendition of their new contest set at a recent chorus retreat.

As barbershoppers, we're all familiar with "retreats", where we gather for an extended intense rehearsal of a few songs in preparation for a contest or show. The *Lehigh Valley Harmonizers (Allentown-Bethlehem Chapter)* did something a little different for their March event.

As a tribute to their father, retiring Director (33 years) **Mike Feyrer**, sons **Sean**, **Drew** and **Chip** enlisted the Harmonizers to sing two new songs for their contest package. Rehearsing for two months in secret, the chorus worked on *When There's Love at Home* and *The Best Times I Ever Had (I Owe 'Em To My Dear Ol' Dad)*.

Retreat day arrived with Mike none the wiser.

Sean and his son Nathan set the scene for the surprise, telling Mike that the chorus had been rehearsing a new song for contest, and the Harmonizers started singing *When There's Love at Home*. Drew (lead of M-AD 2015 Quartet Champion *Last Men Standing*) entered next, assuming Director duties, then came Chip Moyer (who was in *Second Generation* with Mike, Sean, and Drew) and his son Noel, followed 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.

Now that we've biased the judges in our favor with this touching tale, the Harmonizers are eagerly looking forward to presenting these two songs at the Northern Division Contest in June.

Open Door Series 2015
presents

SOUNDWORKS



A Cappella Champions!

Sunday, May 3
4 PM

Reception to Follow

First United Methodist Church - Fox Hill
1 Salt Pond Road
Corner of Fox Hill Road and Old Buckroe Road
Hampton, VA
Further Information: (757) 851-6302

Back to the Future: Inter-chapter Fun in the Good Old Days

As some of you know, I have been a barbershopper for 64 years. So when the results from the recent Chapter Visitation Program revealed that one of the top five things chapters across the Society wanted was help in coming up with more inter-chapter activities, I figured it was time to dust off my old memories.

NEWS from NORTHERN DIVISION

by **Oley Olson**,
VP Northern Division



Back in my younger days, I was a member of the Livingston "Dapper Dan's of Harmony". Besides doing pretty well in competitions we had a well-earned reputation for organizing lots of inter-chapter activities. Here are some that come to mind and you might want to try.

On or around Halloween, we dressed up in costumes (ghost, pumpkins, zombies, etc.) and climbed on a bus not knowing where we were heading. When we arrived at another chapter meeting location, we flooded into their meeting grunting, groaning, and shouting "Trick or Treat" before assembling and singing them a few songs.

When the weather got nice (it does occasionally do that here in New Jersey) we would organize picnics with games, singing con-

tests, and prizes. We invited all the chapters in our area to come with their families for a day of fun, food, and singing. One chapter I know down near Baltimore even had a summer picnic in a tobacco barn. They picked corn right out of the field, cooked crabs, and had a feast with a pickup quartet contest. The winner got the biggest watermelon you ever saw!

We kept track of chapter shows in our area and a bunch of us would take a bus to the show to support them and their quartets, and sing during intermission.

When we held our own shows we made a point of inviting all the Society and District Officers and their wives to join us as our guests. Many of them took us up on that offer and it gave us a chance to get to know more members of our barbershop family. These days most of us don't sell out our shows so why not offer complimentary tickets to the presidents of near-by chapters as well as local music educators? You'll make lots of new friends and they may even return the favor!

Inter-chapter activities are fun for all – and a great chance to expand your connections throughout the barbershop community. It's not hard. You just have to pick something to do and then go do it! Need some more ideas? Look back to find some great ones, dust them off, and have fun!

Enjoy singing, you'll live longer!

Attention Chapter Treasurers!

990 Reports due to the IRS by May 15, 2015!

Update eBiz once you submit to the IRS!

Financial Reviews due by May 15, 2015!

Update eBiz once the Financial Review is Complete!

Your attention to this is appreciated by the Society, your District, and your chapter donors (for your continued non-profit status)!

Bob Eckman, District Treasurer

bob.eckman@comcast.net

<https://ebiz.barbershop.org/ebusiness/>

Great way to contribute to Harmony Foundation

There is a great new (easy) way to support the Harmony Foundation International.

If you shop at Amazon, as most of us do, just go to smile.amazon.com and select Harmony Foundation Intl. (Not Harmony Foundation).. Make sure it's the one in Nashville, and 0.5% of every purchase goes to support Barbershop Singing through the foundation. It takes less than a minute to do.

AmazonPrime purchases (subscription, videos, etc.) also are included in this promotion.

Ambassadors of Song and President's Council Make a Decided Difference



by **Alan Wile**,
VP Financial Development,
MAD Endowment Fund Chairman
& HFI Regional Representative

In nearly every *Mid'l Antics* issue there is an article that speaks to the Society's primary donation programs: Ambassadors of Song (AOS) and President's Council (PC). In every chapter there are red and blue ribbons attached to individual name badges that proclaim, "I belong!"

Contributions to these two programs enable Harmony Foundation to change lives through the medium of barbershop harmony. Here are a few of last year's programs that 1,000 President's Council members and 2,800 members of

Ambassadors of Song helped fund:

- 7,537 students and 304 Music Educators received scholarships to 54 youth events
- 42 Chorus Directors, 23 Music Educators, 11 Quartets attended Harmony University on scholarships
- 11 individuals attended Harmony University on Lou Perry, Larry Ajer, or Jim Miller scholarships

- 108 individuals participated in the Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Festival on scholarship at the summer (international) convention
- 565 students and 20 choruses received scholarships to the Youth Chorus Festival at the midwinter convention

New members continue to enroll in the Ambassadors of Song and in the President's Council. By doing so their contributions continue to impact the future of barbershopping

by underwriting the expenses of Society youth and education programs like Youth Harmony Camps, the Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest, Harmony University scholarships, and the well-established Youth Chorus Festival, etc.

Want to add your name to those responsible and help preserve barbershop harmony for future generations? I can help you achieve your personal goal. Give me a call or drop me a line: 703-538-6526 or alan.wile@comcast.net.

Atlantic Harmony Brigade Now Taking applications for 2015



The Atlantic Harmony Brigade is now taking applications online for its 2015 Rally to be held August 14-16 in Wilmington, DE.

If you are a serious quartet man looking to spend a weekend singing in quartets with about 119 other incredibly well prepared quartet men, singing 12 great championship arrangements, presenting an awesome BIG SHOW on August 15, and eating well too, then the AHB is for you.

You'll get great learning tracks and music for the weekend, lodging at a great hotel, and meals. Don't be shy.

Check out the AHB at Atlantic Harmony Brigade www.atlanticharmonybrigade.com and apply online.

Slots are filling quickly so do it now. Let's ring some chords together.

Extreme Barbershop Quartet Singing



The U-Tones

2014 Bucks County Youth-in-Harmony Festival Champion

The Bucks County Chapter will host their fourth annual youth barbershop quartet festival on May 27. Quartets from several of the Central Bucks County Middle schools will participate in the festival starting at 7 p.m. at the Lenape Middle School in Doylestown, Pa.

The winning quartet and their chaperone will have the opportunity to attend the Mid-Atlantic District's Harmony College East at Salisbury State University June 18-20 (Fathers' Day Weekend) as guests of the Bucks County Chapter. Last year's winner, **The U-tones** from Unami Middle School in Chalfont, Pa. captivated the Harmony College East audience with their performance of *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*. With matching financial support from the Mid-Atlantic Harmony Brigade, the 2nd place quartet from Lenape Middle School, 3 n 1, also was able to attend Harmony College East. Their performance of *Silhouettes* also earned a warm reception from the audience.

Bucks County Chapter members are busy providing support to local school choral directors and quartets with sheet music, learning CDs, and face-to-face coaching. With some additional financial support they hope to sponsor more than one youth quartet to Harmony College East again this year.

Come on out and enjoy the show! Wednesday, May 27, 7 p.m. at Lenape Middle School, W. State St, Doylestown, Pa. 18901.

NORTH CAROLINA HARMONY BRIGADE ANNOUNCES 2016 YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Full Scholarships are NOW AVAILABLE for qualified **male a cappella singers ages 18-28** to attend the North Carolina Harmony Brigade and its "eXtreme Quartetting" rally in Pinehurst, N.C. on

January 15-17, 2016.

Recipients will enjoy an expense-paid weekend of wall-to-wall singing in dozens of quartet combinations with over 100 well-prepared and experienced quartet singers, while being treated to the first-class lodging and cuisine, found only in the Carolina Inn and Resort.

Interested? Click on NCHB.Scholarships@gmail.com to receive a prospectus from the Scholarship Chairman.

For information about all "eXtreme Quartetting" rallies: www.harmonybrigade.org

Bucks County hosts 4th annual Youth-in-Harmony festival



Dukes of Ellington
 + **Singing Capital Chorus**
 + **1 groundhog**
 = **a rehearsal to remember!**

BROTHERS IN SONG —
 Dante, 13, Fred, 97,
 and Groundhog, 67.

The **Dukes of Ellington**, 14 young men from the Ellington School of Music, an elite public charter high school in the District of Columbia, joined the **Singing Capital Chorus** at their rehearsal Feb. 2.

The exciting event, conceived by Program VP **Don Spero**, was part of the chapter's outreach to the D.C. community. It exposed each group to the other's repertoire and style of singing. **Director Bill Colosimo**, and **Associate Director Sheryl Berlin**, and the Duke's director, **Steven Allen**, led the groups in separate and combined singing.

"Needless to say, we learned much and came away with a commitment to explore similar opportunities in the future," said **Chapter President Stan Marcuss**.

Also present for the event was a groundhog. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: A GROUNDHOG???* This requires explanation!)

The groundhog is an honorary member of the Singing Capital Chorus. He came to the event as it was Groundhog Day and shadowed the combined choruses from beginning to end. With him were the Dukes' youngest member, **Dante**, aged 13, who sang like an inferno, and Singing Capital's most senior member, **Fred Peters**, 97 years young and the sweetest lead singer this side of heaven.

"Song erased the decades and linked them and us together," said Stan.

The Montclair Chapter presents
SPRING CONCERT 2015
 starring
The Dapper Dans Of Harmony



featured quartet
Instant Classic
 2014 Int'l Quartet Contest Las Vegas 8th Place,
 2012 Int'l Collegiate Quartet Silver Medalists,
 2011 Cardinal District Quartet Champions

plus
 2014 Mid-Atlantic District Bronze Medalists **GIMME FOUR**
 and Special Guest Quartet **WAREHOUSE FLATS**

7:00 PM Saturday, May 9th at the
 Doris M. Byrne Performing Arts Center
 Mt. Saint Dominic Academy 3 Ryerson Ave. Caldwell, NJ
 All tickets are \$25 and are available at
ShowTix4U.com
 Search for Dapper Dans



*OLD LINE STATESMEN
READY TO DANCE —
ROW 1: Chuck Botts,
Dave Highfield, Jed
Davis, Jim Ensor,
Chuck Forbes, Pat
Liebknecht, George
Pittinger, David
Hjembo, David Des-
rosiers, Steve Horr,
Brad Yates; ROW 2:
Jim Botelle, Al Chaff-
man, Dan Bridge-
water, Jim Bird, Seth
Hench, Russ Vriezen,
Ed Herring, David
Koontz, Ken Bowen,
Steve Bowman, Web
Taylor, Dale Wilhelm*

Old Line Statesmen to stage two shows in Westminster, Md.

‘Dancing at the Ritz’ features radio host Steve Rouse and crooner Frank Curreri

The Old Line Statesmen Barbershop Chorus, the Carroll County, Md. Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, will celebrate the 33rd anniversary of their founding by presenting two shows this year. Enjoying three sellout years in a row, our goal is to fill the seats again this year, not once but twice!

The first show is Saturday, June 20 from 7 to 9 p.m., and the second show is a matinee on Sunday, June 21 from 3 to 5 p.m. The shows will be at the Scott Center for Performing Arts at Carroll Community College, Westminster, Md. Entrance to seating begins 30 minutes prior to ‘curtain’ for each show.

Entitled, “Dancing at the Ritz,” the shows will feature the chorus in a nightclub setting, singing tunes a la the big bands from the 40s and 50s and later. Steve Rouse, previously one of the most popular radio personalities in the Baltimore metropolitan area, will be donning a few different hats this year as waiter, maitre d’, and our guest emcee. Steve’s radio show, Rouse & Company, aired on WQSR-FM from 1989 until 2005, and he had his own TV show, Baltimore Saturday Night, on WMAR-ABC 2.

We are honored to have two Special Guests this year. Our

Saturday evening show will feature Frank Curreri, who will bring back the vintage sounds of Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Perry Como and others from our golden years past.

Sunday’s matinee show features Faces 4 Radio, the 2014 International Senior’s Quartet Gold Medal Champions in the Barbershop Harmony Society.

So come, “trip the light fantastic” with us, as we take a pleasant trip back in time. We hope to get you swaying in your seats!

Tickets are \$10 each for non-reserved seating. Tickets for children, age 6 and younger, are free. Limited handicapped seating is available and can be reserved by contacting the chorus at 410-795-5050. Tickets are available at the Carroll County Arts Council, Coffey Music, Menchey Music, or from chorus members. In addition, tickets may be available at the door or can be ordered online at the chorus’ website, www.oldlinestatesmen.org, using your credit card via PayPal.

For more information, please call 410-795-5050, visit www.oldlinestatesmen.org, or e-mail the chorus at oldlinestatesmen@live.com.

The Old Line Statesmen Barbershop Chorus
Carroll County, MD Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society
presents

Dancing at the Ritz

Scott Center for the Performing Arts ♦ Carroll Community College
1601 Washington Road ♦ Westminster, MD

Saturday, June 20

7 pm
featuring



Frank Curreri

Sunday, June 21

3 pm
featuring



**2014 Senior Quartet
Gold Medalist, BHS**

ALL TICKETS: \$10

Children: Age 6 & younger:

FREE with a paying adult

Advance tickets available at:
Coffey Music, Menchey Music & CC Arts Council, Chorus members
→ (available till 3 pm Saturday) ←

or **ORDER ONLINE** using **PayPal**

For information or tickets:

Call: **410-795-5050**

Email: oldlinestatesmen@live.com

Web: www.oldlinestatesmen.org

**Theater opens
30 minutes
before
showtime**



The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to the Carroll County Government and its programs, services, activities and facilities. Anyone requiring an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or who has a complaint should contact Gina Valentine, the Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator, 410.386.3800, 1.888.302.8978, MD Relay 7-1-1/1-800.735.2258 or email gvalentine@ccg.carr.org as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours before the scheduled event.

Handicap Parking Available. **WHEELCHAIR SEATING IS LIMITED.**

The OLS Chorus is funded in part by a Community Arts Development grant from the Carroll County Arts Council



What is a show clearance and why do I need one?



by Neil Keihm,
M-AD Asst. Sec'y

Does your chapter plan to put on one or more shows this year?

Do you plan to sell tickets to those shows and are they open to the public?

Do you want to make sure your show does not conflict with a scheduled district or Society function?

Do you want to make sure you are covered by Society insurance in the event someone is injured while attending your show?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you do need a show clearance and you probably want to know how to get one. Here in the Mid-Atlantic District, we have an Assistant Secretary for Show Clearances. Me!

If you take away nothing else from this article, please make note of how to contact me and feel free to call, email, or write with any question or concern you may have. I promise to assist you and make the process of obtaining a show clearance as painless as possible.

Neil Keihm
104 Sycamore Drive
West Grove, PA 19390-9468
Home phone: 302-737-6141
Cell phone: 302-983-8155

Email: keihm@verizon.net

Here are a few tips that may make this process less confusing for you.

Complete instructions and links to required forms may be found on the district web site at www.midatlanticdistrict.com/ShowClearances

To ensure that your planned show will not conflict with a scheduled district or Society event please check the District Events Calendar on the District web site (www.midatlanticdistrict.com/MPC). The calendar covers a few years in advance.

ASCAP Show Clearances

Every society chapter must file at least one ASCAP form during 2015. This is true even if your chapter has not held – and does not plan to hold -- a show!

If your Chapter has not, or will not, "produce" a show in 2015 (that is to say, if you have not or will not sell tickets to a concert you perform for the public), you will owe NO ASCAP fee! Use the [ASCAP form](#) for 2015 that is online on the Society Web Site under the documents section.

Fill in the first two blocks on the form with your Chapter Number and the printed name of your Secretary or Treasurer. In section A where the minimum licensing fee is printed indicate that you did not produce a show, and then please send the form to me at the address listed above. I will take it from there.

If you produce a show in 2015, you must send a completed [ASCAP form](#) to me at the address listed above. Download the form from the Society web site. You cannot fill this form out online, just print it and fill it in manually.

Do not worry, only a few chapters make enough net profit for the year to exceed the dollar limits described on the form. The ASCAP fee is paid AFTER your show has been performed and is based on your gross ticket sales.

The ASCAP form and payment are not due until the end of the year. Refer to the Mid-Atlantic district link on show clearances above or call me directly if you need clarification or assistance.

BMI/SESAC Show Clearance Licenses

All the standard rules apply for any show your chapter produces:

You must call up the [BMI/SESAC License Form](#) online in the Documents Section on the Society web site. You can fill this form out online so just use the fillable form fields. (They are the blue highlighted areas.)

Just type the required information into those spaces and print 5 copies, sign each copy and send all of them to me with a check made out to the Society for the appropriate fee for EACH PERFORMANCE.

Include the Chapter number on the check and send the check and all 5 signed copies of the form to me at the address listed above.

I will process the form, sign it and return one copy to you to denote the show is "cleared".

Please note that BHS Liability Insurance is NOT in force for non-cleared shows!

Thank you for your past adherence to these procedures. Keep a smile on your face and a song in your heart.

Happy Daze
(Re-Visited)
A Barbershop dinner theater
Presented by the
KEYSTONE CAPITAL CHORUS
Saturday, May 2, 2015
Dinner Show @ 6 PM
All Tickets \$35.00
St. Patrick's Parish Activity Center
87 Marsh Drive
Carlisle, PA 17015
For Tickets: www.kcgsing.com
or call - 717-695-7527
OUR 67TH ANNUAL SHOW
50'S - 60'S ANTIQUE/CLASSIC CARS ON DISPLAY COURTESY OF
BLUE MOON CRUISERS ROD & CUSTOM ASSOCIATION



by Roger Tarpy,
VP Music & Performance



HIP is off and running and, so far, we can celebrate two events, one for the Sussex County chapter and the other for the Teaneck chapter.

District Coach Dave Ammirata coaches the High Point Harmonizers, directed by June Noble, in the first HIP session in Sussex County, New Jersey.

Says Dave, "I had an excellent time working with the High Point Harmonizers last week. They really sounded great and were so receptive! Can't wait until the next time!"

DISTRICT COACHES

The following is a list of the official MAD District Coaches to date. I want to thank these men for being willing to share their considerable talents by becoming a District Coach.

Dave Ammirata
Sussex County
March 4, 2015

Jeff Glemboski
Teaneck
April 29, 2015

Let's all get HIP!

Announcing the Harmony Infusion Plan, a new coaching program for choruses

LET'S ALL GET HIP: I am pleased to announce that there is now a new, additional, coaching program for choruses called the Harmony Infusion Plan – HIP for short. Its primary focus is on choruses (not quartets) that have been less involved with coaching, and, possibly as a result, have begun to seek the sidelines during Division competition.

(As an aside, it is disconcerting to report that over 50% of our MAD chapters no longer compete).

HIP provides high-level coaching for these choruses with the hope that the experience will help jump-start an interest in developing a higher-caliber music program, in competing, and in taking advantage of

the many opportunities within MAD such as HCE and further coaching.

Not all chapters are alike, of course, so HIP offers three kinds of coaching sessions. Here's a brief description of each.

• Is your chorus not functioning as well as it should? Then consider Administrative coaching where the assigned coach observes a rehearsal, and then helps the chorus strengthen its leadership team. Principle points of focus might include the (a) rehearsal environment, (b) musical program and those involved with the program, such as the director and music team members, and (c) the management team and the programs it oversees, such as membership

recruitment.

• We are a singing society and singing well is our most important challenge. Musical coaching, therefore, where the coach works primarily on the development of singing skills, may appeal to your chapter. Principle points of focus might be (a) rehearsal strategies designed to elevate singing skills, or (b) instructional materials for the director and music team.

• If BHS is to survive, then we must perform well in public; otherwise, few new singers will be interested in joining our ranks. If this is the area that you'd like to strengthen, then Performance coaching should be your choice. Here, the coach

works primarily on developing good showmanship skills. Principle points of focus would be (a) singing quality, (b) content and pacing of the show materials, and (c) visual plan, etc.

If you think that your chorus could profit from the HIP, then here's all you need to do:

Email me to indicate an interest.

If you're eligible, we'll discuss a possible date for the coaching and then I'll recruit an appropriate person to serve as District Coach.

If, for any reason, your chorus is not eligible, I'll steer you to the MAS program run by Chuck Lower. Either way, you'll have a chance to receive some great coaching.

Most everyone knows that MAD subsidizes a coaching program (called the Musical Assistance Service – MAS) that serves both quartets and chapters. It has been very ably managed, for many years, by its coordinator Chuck Lower.

The idea is that a quartet or chorus arranges to meet with a coach of their choosing, after which Chuck reimburses the coach, up to \$75, for expenses.

Thanks to this District initiative, many groups have received some wonderful coaching.

MAS helps!

District subsidizes coaching for your quartet or chorus. Just ask!

Why would a chorus wish to receive coaching? There's hardly a person in MAD who would disagree with the notion that coaching is a valuable part of any musical program.

CHUCK LOWER'S TOP TEN

But here is how Chuck Lower expresses it. He's compiled a TOP TEN REASONS to obtain coaching.

(10) It is part of the development program for top-tier choruses and quartets, and it might just work for you too.

(9) The District helps with expenses, so it's easy on the budget.

(8) Coaches with tons of experience in successful barbershop performance are just waiting work with you and your group.

(7) For chorus directors, it's a way to update your skills and learn new approaches to old problems.

(6) For chorus members, it's a way to develop your individual skills and become a more independent singer.

(5) For quartets, it beats the heck out of trying to coach from within the quartet.

(4) Even if you already know everything about barbershop, the guy standing next to you on the risers, or the guy standing next to you in the quartet, may not.

(3) There are no magic tricks or secrets about achieving better vocal and visual performance, but there are different ways to look at skills that you may not have heard or tried.

(2) Your audiences will notice the difference and will give you great feedback and positive reinforcement.

(1) And the number one reason to seek coaching for your chorus or quartet is (drum roll, please): It only takes an email to get things rolling.

For information about the District's MAS, for a chorus or quartet, go to www.midatlanticdistrict.com/?Code=MAS or email Chuck Lower at chucke80@comcast.net.

To find out more about the HIP for your chorus, email Roger Tarpy at: rtarpy@verizon.net.



Chas. Byram congratulates Noah Morrison upon passing his AHSOW audition at Harmony University.

Although it's likely woodshedding has never actually left the Mid-Atlantic District, we are pleased to announce that AHSOW rooms will be 'popping up' at events around the district. Arrangements are in the works for there to be AHSOW rooms at both the Atlantic Division and Northern/Western Division Conventions this spring in Cherry Hill.

Woodshedding is ear singing. A lead sings an unfamiliar melody while three (or more) other singers improvise a four-part harmony on the spot. No paper arrangements are used. The fun comes from hearing the progression of those traditional barbershop chords on a brand new melody. Even more enjoyable is using good vocal technique and ringing those chords.

The Ancient Harmonious Society of Woodsheddors (www.ahsow.org) is a barbershopping organization that preserves the ancient art of woodshedding by recreating the way barbershopping got started before there were printed arrangements of songs. Anyone is welcome to stop in and visit an AHSOW room to listen or to try it. You will find these rooms at many district and divisional conventions (spring and fall), as well as at each international

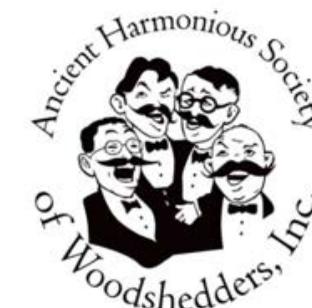
Woodshedding returns to M-AD

convention (mid-winter and summer).

Also there are AHSOW rooms at Harmony University and often at other educational events.

Although you don't have to be a member of AHSOW to woodshed in the room, you can join this organization by auditioning. As with passing any audition, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you were able to harmonize and produce barbershop chords with three other singers to a melody that you had never heard before. You will then receive a yellow badge proclaiming you as a member, and allowing others to recognize you and ask you to woodshed. AHSOW has over 1000 members from early teens to men over ninety. Check it out next time you see an AHSOW room.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Chas. Byram (ccchas@gmail.com) who will be coordinating AHSOW events in our district.



— by Chas Byram, AHSOW

Skill-based teaching versus song-based teaching



by **Glenn Phillips**, VP Chorus Director Development

One of the most difficult and frustrating issues that directors face is how to get singers to transfer skills from one song into the rest of the repertoire. How often have you achieved great success in rehearsing a tender ballad (tall open vowels, free and easy singing, diphthongs turning as one, good unit sound from all parts, etc) only to start singing a different song and hearing most of those great techniques go out the window?

Or having a blockbuster rehearsal, then everybody goes back to “lobby singing” at the afterglow?

I have witnessed a lot of chorus directors teaching by “song-based” methods. Essentially this means that the singers begin a song, and the director stops when something is not working, corrects the problem, and then the chorus resumes singing.

Example: first the director fixes two notes the tenors were singing incorrectly; then a short while later the basses change their timbre and sing with a “wide” tone; then there are intonation problems right after the breath; then the group sings the next phrase with no emotion; then members of the group forget the choreography on the word “love”; etc.

Directors defend this teaching style by claiming that their job is to help the chorus fix its problems so that the guys can sing their best.

Unfortunately, however, the group never seems to focus on any skill in particular. Everything is done hodge-podge, so the singers are making corrections but never getting sufficient practice in any of the corrective techniques to actually learn the skills the director wants them to perfect.

As a result, the men can, over a fairly long time, learn how to sing a particular song very well. But when it comes to a different song, they begin singing at their old default, complete with all of their old habits. This is a hard cycle to break unless the director explores different ways to teach good singing concepts.

I highly recommend avoiding the “song-based” teaching method and using “skill-based” teaching instead. This involves teaching proper singing techniques, irrespective of the song, and holding your chorus accountable with these techniques at all times.

Let’s look at what it means to use the skill-based teaching method, highlighting the importance of the short- and mid-range planning cycles. Then we will examine “layering” these skills together. And finally, we will examine how you can work to change the culture of your singing chorus in embracing this method.

Skill-based teaching

The first step in skill-based teaching is defining the skills that you believe your chorus needs to learn in order to sing its best.

Some examples include proper singing position, good breathing techniques, pouring large quantities of warm air into the tone, tall vowels, unified timbre, good sectional and overall unit sound, well-executed choreography, etc.

Your list should ideally have at least 20 essential singing techniques, probably more.

Next, determine which of these skills your chorus is lacking at this moment in time. By lacking, I mean that your singers are inconsistent in repeating the appropriate technique time after time.

Finally, which three of these techniques do you think are most important for your chorus to learn right away? As an example, let’s say you choose proper breathing, tall vowels, and good intonation.

Now you must come up with a short- and mid-range plan to develop ways to teach these three skills to your singers and give them plenty of opportunity to hone these new techniques.

What warm-up exercises can you employ consistently to address these items? Can you find ways to get your singers to employ these techniques when you break out into quartet activities? Can you choose a new song or two that seem to fit well with these new items? Can you schedule a coach to come teach these techniques?

Which two critical skills will you explore at rehearsal this week? What about next week, then next month? Are you drawing up lesson plans for every rehearsal? Planning at all levels is essential for allowing your singers to succeed using the skill-based teaching method.

As for your weekly rehearsals, the skill-based teaching method requires that you address those three critical

I highly recommend avoiding the “song-based” teaching method and using “skill-based” teaching instead.

skills at all times, without letting up. Instead of stopping to fix wrong notes, then balance, then choreography, then syncopation — whatever you wish to correct on a whim — you must continue to focus on those three critical skills.

From time to time you will naturally shift to other skills for variety, or to fix particularly egregious mistakes that crop up. But the lion’s share of your time will be practicing, honing, and maintaining those three critical skills until your chorus learns to change its default singing in those areas.

Please note that during this process, there will be times when you must turn a blind eye (ear!) to certain types of mistakes in order to maintain focus in your critical skill areas. No worries; make a mental note of these errors and find time in your next lesson plan to add a quick, five-minute drill to help fix them. Then turn your focus back to your critical skills. Don’t sweat the small stuff!

If you notice that your chorus is picking up these three skills relatively quickly—say, in the first three months—then add another critical skill into the mix, but ensure that the first three do not get sloppy. Once you get to the fifth month in the cycle, you should notice a significant increase in the three critical singing skills you have been hammering for the last five months. Now you can come up with your next six-month plan, adding another three critical skills into the mix.

Layering skills

You will note that I allowed for adding a fourth critical skill in your initial six-month planning cycle if the chorus is picking up your original three skills rather quickly. It is important when adding critical skills that you not let the

See SKILL, continued on next page

Nelson Robin proudly sports his barbershop mustache and sings in his first valentine quartet six years after his wife introduced him to the hobby by sending him a singing valentine.



FULL CIRCLE

Singing valentine recipient catches the BBS bug

Six years ago, my wife bought me a singing valentine from the Germantown, Maryland chapter (Harmony Express). I have always loved barbershop singing, but I never thought I could do it. I've played piano since I was a child, played trumpet in grade school, and can read sheet music. But my singing experience was limited to the car and the shower.

In early 2014, I found the contact information for the group and went to a rehearsal to learn more about it – the guys told me if that I could reproduce a pitch they would teach me the rest! Several members of the chorus spent extra time with me before and after many of the rehearsals.

I had trouble with learning to hit a pitch at will, as well as drifting into the other parts. I practiced a lot on the computer using Audacity to record myself and then playing it back against the correct part. I wasn't willing to give up and I wanted Harmony Express to know it – if they didn't want me to be there, they were going to have to kick me out the door!

It took me 4 months to pass the audition, but I finally did it in May of 2014! The accomplishment was even sweeter since I had to work so hard to finally be good enough to be offered membership.

I'm totally hooked on the harmony as well as the new friends I've made! I've worked hard to give back to our chapter by signing up for pretty much every event – I'm also now the webmaster for the chapter and am happy to use my technical skills to help in any way I can.

Since officially joining, I've sung in our annual show, performed at 10 sing-outs (including quartets), and I went to the district competition in Wildwood just for inspiration. I've also bought tickets to the international competition in Pittsburgh this summer.

In February, I even performed my first singing valentine – now I've come full circle.

Nelson Robin, Bass
webmaster@harmony-express.org
Harmony Express Men's Chorus
Germantown MD

2nd chance for procrastinators!

Many thanks to those PR guys and editors who sent in information on their chapters' upcoming shows and activities, as well as those who wrote accounts of your chapter's recent doings. You are the indispensable providers of content to this newsletter.

And I have good news for those of you who missed our April 7 deadline. This issue of Mid'l Antics is really only half an issue. The second half will be published the end

of May, so if you send in your story by **May 22**, there's a good chance you'll see yourself in "print."

Roxanne (Ye Ed)

P.S. You may have noticed various show flyers and ads in these pages. For 2015 they are running free of charge. Why not send yours to editor@midatlanticdistrict.com ?



SKILL

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

prior skills diminish so as to learn the new ones.

Remember that you are trying to elevate the default singing of your chorus. If you allow them to regress in the skills they just learned simply so you can add new skills, then in quick fashion the chorus will be back to the "same old sound."

I call this technique "layering."

You get the chorus singing a particular skill well, then "layer" on another skill, then another, then another. Once you add a layer, you must hold your chorus accountable for that layer and all previous ones. So when you stop your chorus to correct something, ensure that you are correcting something they already know how to do.

Ultimately, you will know when it is time to add another skill or two into the equation, for your chorus will be correctly employing the techniques you have been focusing upon consistently across your repertoire.

"Changing the culture" of your chorus

So far, every step in the process of using skill-based teaching is the responsibility of you, the director, and your Music Team. Now comes the time when the men in the chorus must shoulder the responsibility in order to continue this musical growth.

I call this "changing the culture" of your chorus.

Since you will be regularly and incessantly honing certain skills every week as part of your new teaching plan, the men in your chorus simply won't have the excuse that "we don't practice that skill enough." You and your Music Team will be in a much better position to hold your singers accountable for practicing these skills at home so that they can develop consistency.

To help them with this, I recommend making regular audio and video recordings of your group. You can post these recordings on your Chapter website with homework assignments for your

singers to scrutinize what they see and hear and answer a few questions about their personal performance and that of the group.

Meet with your Board of Directors and your Music Team to come up with some fun but challenging ways to build and maintain a greater level of commitment in your singers.

And most importantly, hold your singers accountable once you've adopted this new strategy.

In conclusion, if you wish your singers to transfer skills from song to song, you have to teach them the skills you want them to learn and then you must give them repeated opportunities to succeed in those skills.

It is not sufficient to decry the value of tall vowels for 15 seconds and then spend the next 15 minutes covering 20 other topics and paying very little attention to tall vowels.

The skill-based teaching method ensures that you will make your chorus aware of a finite set of important skills and then give them plenty of opportunities to learn, enhance, and become consistent in these skills.

Your short- and medium-range planning cycles are critical in setting out a weekly/monthly/six-month plan that caters to the musical skills you are trying to perfect.

Finally, once your chorus demonstrates consistent results in a few techniques, "layer" another skill into the mix while maintaining precision on the first ones.

Consistent adherence to a program of skill-based teaching affords your chorus members the opportunity to learn the skills important to singing and, by extension, to transfer these skills from one song to the next.

Isn't that ultimately what a director is trying to achieve?

Glenn Phillips directs the Patapsco Valley and Queen Anne's County Chapters in the Mid-Atlantic District.



*immerse yourself
in a weekend of*

MAD barbershop

What you can expect

- When you arrive on Thursday you will be given your room assignment
- Classes start Thursday evening
- Everyone starts Friday morning with breakfast at the cafeteria followed by vocal warm ups
- You will be involved in either classes or coaching (quartet or chorus) all day Friday with breaks for lunch and dinner
- Steve Armstrong will direct a Mass Sing from 6:30-7 p.m. followed by the Friday night show where some of the quartets being coached get to strut their stuff
- Following the show you can sing or socialize until whenever...
- Saturday is similar to Friday
- There will be a Master Class conducted by an International Quartet, followed by a gala event on Saturday night where both quartets and choruses get to perform for you
- This is followed by more singing and socializing if you have any energy left
- Sunday morning you turn in your room keys and drive home — exhausted BUT VERY HAPPY!

Where, When, Cost?

FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND

(weekend of the third Sunday in June).

Why not introduce your family member — son, grandson, dad or grandad — to our great art form?

Jun 18-21, 2015

Tuition is around \$200, which includes a 3-night stay, 6 meals, all courses, two barbershop shows.



To download a printable course catalog or to register, go to www.midatlanticdistrict.com/hce



The best value in barbershop!
Guaranteed to improve your singing and performance skills, raise your *Barbershop IQ* 30 points, double your "friends" list and keep you singing all night as well as all day.

Our host is:
Salisbury University
1101 Camden Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21801

www.salisbury.edu/campusmap/

Questions
or Comments?

Ig Jakovac
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Roger Tarpy
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Who is welcome?

EVERYONE! BHS, SAI, HI members, directors, section leaders, Joe Barbershoppers, quartets, chapter officers, music educators, youths interested in the art form, Society Associates, your entire quartet, and choruses large, small and in-between!

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*by Ig Jakovac,
MAD President*

HCE-2015: Fantastic deal!

Well it's about that time of year when I hope you're all thinking about the opportunities at Harmony College East this summer.

If you've never attended, then you are in for a rare treat. *HCE is, by far, the best District school in our society.*

There are dozens of courses to take, up to 12 hours of coaching available, two fantastic shows featuring all of the quartets and choruses in attendance, and lots of opportunities to sing tags and socialize with barbershop friends.

If you have been to HCE before, then please realize that the school is worth attending once again. We offer, of course, many of the same basic courses every year (classes in music theory, vocal training, performance skills, directing, etc), that many barbershoppers wish to take, but we also have lots of special classes and some new ones to chose from.

For example, here are the new courses for 2015:

How to do chorus voice coaching

How to plan a great chapter meeting

How to put on a great show

Song Repertoire: Arrangements from BHS

We're also trying a few new activities this year.

For example, we're having a:

1. Mass sing just prior to the Friday show led by non-other than Steve Armstrong, the director of the Toronto Northern Lights, 2014 Gold Medal winners.
2. A Master Class given by the quartet "Frank

the Dog" prior to the Saturday show. Here, you'll be able to hear how one of MAD's finest Internationally-ranked quartet selects material and prepares for a contest.

3. There will be a room reserved just for informal quartetting – copies of lots of tags will be available, and a staff member will be there to facilitate the singing.

Finally, there is absolutely no music school where one can get so much benefit for so modest a cost, because HCE:

1. Uses many of the same faculty that teach at Harmony University in Nashville
2. Has unprecedented opportunity for individualized instruction e.g. tutorials in vocal techniques
3. Still costs only \$215 per person and doesn't involve expensive airfare
4. Extends only for a weekend so one's limited vacation time isn't used up by a week-long school
5. Uses an easy on-line registration method

For all the details (classes, schedule, etc) go to:

www.MidAtlanticDistrict.com/HCE

HCE will take place on June 18-21 in Salisbury, Md.

Put it on your calendar today!

Thanks for giving HCE consideration. Please let us know if we can be of help.

Roger Tarpy (MAD VP M&P, rtarpy@verizon.net),

Ig Jakovac (MAD President, ijakovac@comcast.net)

There are dozens of courses to take, up to 12 hours of coaching available, two fantastic shows featuring all of the quartets and choruses in attendance, and lots of opportunities to sing tags and socialize with barbershop friends.

No TB risk for Barbershoppers

Salisbury University (SU) and the Wicomico County Health Department (WiCHD) are collaborating on preventive health measures following diagnosis of tuberculosis in an SU student in March.

The student is currently under medical care and is no longer attending classes.

"There is no risk of additional exposure to SU students, faculty or staff," according to Lori Brewster, Wicomico County Health Officer."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tuberculosis is difficult to contract.

"It usually takes at least eight hours of close proximity in a small room for TB transmission to possibly occur, and the air space is only contagious when the untreated patient is actually present," Brewster said. "A healthy person cannot be infected from casual exposure such as walking through the halls or eating in the same room as the affected person."

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**NEXT DEADLINE:
May 22, 2015**

Want to see your name in "print?" Have you or your quartet or your chorus had an amazing barbershop experience? Tell me all about it: editor@midatlanticdistrict.com

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EDITOR'S NOTE: At a recent Dundalk chapter meeting, Program VP Mike Mililo decided to deliver the usual vocal production reminders to the chorus in a more memorable form. The result: this reading from the Book of Barbershop. Enjoy!

Book of Barbershop, III:1-10

Today's scripture comes from the Book of Barbershop, Chapter III, verses 1-10. A letter from Pitch, Resonance, and Vowels.

Pea, shouldst thou sing with vocal quality including support and matching vowels, for this shall please the audience and judges.

Take unto thyself the notion that this hobby is not thine unless thou commitest to honing thy craft through practice and repetition.

Pitch and Resonance saith, go forth and create angelic tones by using the tools the associate disciples have provided, for even a blind man can hear and if he heard this warm-up.....

Let us remember to share vocal space with our brethren and sing with fervor and purpose, especially when we sing quietly.

Takest with thee that lyrics are only lyrics until thou givest them life and bless thy listeners with a story set to music.

Our Director hath proclaimed we should sing using warm air and support with pleasing diction and proper vowels. Why would we sing any other way?

Let us all sing tall and convey to our audience the message of our songs by singing the whole word, for it is difficult to understand lyrics that sound like we're trying to order a #5 meal from Chik-Fil- A at the drive thru.

Lastly, own thy music. It is up to thee, and thee alone, to step forth and master the choreography and lyrics. Aid is available to all who need it, all thou hast to do is ask.

Glory be to all who actively listen and participate at chorus practice.

In the name of the Buffalo Bills, Arcade and BSQ.

Reverend Mike