



The Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus

Hatter Chatter

Newsletter of the Danbury Chapter, Yankee Division, Northeastern District of the Barbershop Harmony Society
Meeting every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. at Church of Christ, 90 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury, Connecticut

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www.madhatterchorus.org

Happy New Year 2018

Mad Hatters Welcome Holiday Season With *Secret of Christmas*

By John Bradley

On Saturday afternoon, December 2, 2017, the Danbury Mad Hatter Chorus presented its fifth annual holiday show, *Secret of Christmas*, at the Danbury Church of Christ.

The concert featured favorites such as “Jingle Bells,” Feast of Lights Medley,” and “Jingle Bell Rock,” along with a Christmas song of African origin titled “Betelehemu” (Bethlehem). That performance was a favorite of many of the people I spoke with after the show.

Secret of Christmas featured three chorus quartets, Four to the Bar, Blue Moon and Traveling Men, along with a fine solo by Andy Bayer on “Do You Hear What I Hear.” Chuck Kreiger’s percussion talents shone on “Feliz Navidad.”

Chorus music director, Joe Hudson, was pleased with the quality of the concert. “An amazing job for everyone involved,” said Joe. “Audience members, especially member Terry Dunkle, said they heard a significant improvement in our singing.”

Although the concert was free, donations were encouraged. All proceeds are donated to a fund established in memory of John Dunkle, son of long-time chorus member Terry Dunkle. The fund provides scholarships to high school students to attend the Harmony Explosion camp each summer in Worcester, MA.



Maynard G Kreiger. Picture by John Bradley.



It wouldn't be a holiday concert without Santa and her elf. Picture by John Bradley.



*The Mad Hatter Chorus, Saturday, December 2.
Picture by Miss Taralily.*



A contingent of Mad Hatters sang at Ann's Place Festival of Trees on Sunday, November 19, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Danbury. The event is a fund raiser that helps underwrite the clinical services programs to support and guide anyone on a cancer journey, including patients, family and loved ones. Picture submitted by Joe Hudson.

In 1966, when the Danbury chapter was founded, Al Maino was the president of NED. He's the father of our current Executive VP, Mike. At that time, the average chapter size was 43.7 members, the 0.7 guy being very short. The society as a whole had 30,400 members.

In 1966 there were nine chapters in Canada, nine in New York, five in Maine, five in Vermont, eight in New Hampshire, 30 in Massachusetts, one in Rhode Island and fifteen in Connecticut. NED had 2,866 members. Connecticut chapters included Danbury, Litchfield, Bridgeport, Norwich, Rockville, Meriden, Waterbury, Housatonic, Enfield, Manchester, Middletown, New Haven, Stamford, Derby and Hamden.

In 1966 the judging categories were arrangement, voice expression, harmony accuracy, balance and blend, and stage presence.

The number of Connecticut chapters peaked under Danbury baritone and former NED and Society president Dick Ellenburger. We old timers fondly remember singing with him for all too few years. Today there are nine chapters in Connecticut.

I heard that the Christmas song, "Do You Hear What I Hear," was written in Ridgefield, CT. Is that true?
Debbie from Danbury

Debbie, you are correct – it was. Noel Regney, who lived on High Ridge Avenue in Ridgefield and who wrote the song largely in response to the Cuban missile crisis.

According to Geoffrey Morris, who recently wrote an article about this in TOWNVIBE RIDGEFIELD, Regney, at the height of the standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union over nuclear missiles in Cuba (1962), was ecstatic when he learned from the radio that he was not going to be obliterated. Walking down the street, he saw two babies in side-by-side strollers smiling at each other.

When he got home, Regney, a French resistance fighter during World War II, began to write some lyrics. According to Morris Regney thought of the green fields of his native France, the innocence of newborn lambs, and the peacefulness of the first Christmas. Regney handed the words to his wife Gloria Shayne, who wrote the music.

Repertoire Notes

"Once Upon a Time" is a song with music by Charles Strouse and lyrics by Lee Adams from the 1962 musical *All American*. In the musical, the song was performed by Ray Bolger and Eileen Herlie, and their version appears on the Broadway cast recording. Although the play got poor reviews, "Once Upon a Time" became a popular song and has been recorded by Eddie Fisher, Bobby Darin, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Tony Bennett and Bob Dylan, among others.

Continued on the next page



Emails to the Editors

Please e-mail your questions and comments to either the Hatter editor, John Bradley, at jbrad1313@earthlink.net, or the Chatter editor, Dick Zang, at jezang@charter.net. If your e-mail appears, you will receive an autographed picture of our 2008 Yankee Division Bulletin Editors Award

I am a Connecticut barbershopper and I was wondering if there is any written history on the Barbershop Harmony Society's Northeastern District. I'm especially interested in learning more about Connecticut chapters.
Dan from Darien

Dan – I passed your inquiry on to our chapter's Immediate Past President, Robert Bradley, who is currently one of the district's vice presidents of important stuff. His reply follows.

The first chapter in this area was in Northampton, formed in 1941. Between 1941 and 1946 there was an apparent rush to sing four-part a cappella harmony which begat the Springfield, Holyoke, Terryville, Hartford, New Haven, Troy and Schenectady choruses.

NED was born on a sunny, harmonious day in 1946. Around the same time a chapter was formed in Brewster, NY, which folded in 1953. That year also brought us a Norwalk chapter. Willimantic followed in 1959.

Two International Conventions have been held in the NED, in Boston 1965 and Hartford in 1987.

Repertoire

Continued from previous page

All American's book was written by Mel Brooks. The action is set on the campus of the fictional Southern Baptist Institute of Technology where the worlds of science and sports collide when the principles of engineering are applied to football strategies and football strategies are used to teach the principles of engineering. The techniques of a Hungarian immigrant, Professor Fodorski, prove to be successful, and he finds himself the target of a Madison Avenue ad man who wants to exploit his new-found fame.

The show was beset with problems from the start. Brooks never completed the second act, leaving the task to Logan whose comedic sensibilities were incompatible with those of Brooks. Theatre writer Ken Mandelbaum noted that Brooks used his experience working on the show as a basis for his 1968 movie *The Producers*, in which an out-of-luck producer intentionally mounts a musical flop.



District Dirt

By Robert Bradley

I hope all of you had a lovely holiday season, Happy New Year to all and let us get ready for the 2018 singing season.

On April 20th and 21st the NED Eastern Regional & International Quartet Preliminary Contests will be held at the Nashua South High School, where the stage is very large and there is a warm up area directly behind it. All of the rooms are on the same floor and in the same hallway

The hotel will be the same we used in the past: Holiday Inn and Suites, with Judges in the same hallway as before. The host chapter is Nashua.

On May 4th and 5th the NED Western Regional Contests will be back in Lake George. At the high school we have rooms for warm ups in the back hallway. We have to be very careful this year as the school found liquor bottles around when we left last year and was not happy about it

We will be using the Marriott alongside the school for the headquarters, so we will not need buses as we did before. I am sure that Diane is working on a show for Saturday night and more information will follow. We have no host chapter as of this time.

In the fall (October) the Northeastern District Convention & Contests will be in Portland, Maine, and the HQ hotel will be the Holiday Inn, the same as we used last time we were in the area. The host is the Portland Chapter.

Continued on the next page

Music Notes

By Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox



As I look back on 2017, I am energized by the progress that our chorus has made. The results of the more intensive work are still evident in every performance we do. The sound at the holiday show, for example, was excellent.

In 2018, the music team will focus on continuing to seek improvements. Our goal for this year is to have a chorus of musicians by the division contest.

What we mean is that we hope to have each man in the chorus make and maintain a substantial improvement in his individual craft of singing and for everyone in the chorus to be able to have sufficient music reading skills to be able to learn music on their own at home.

In other words, our music learning goal is that with the assistance of a piano or a pitch pipe, each chorus member will be able to learn his notes through reading the sheet music.

To achieve these goals, we hope to continue to offer coaching and possibly some form of singing lessons; to devote portions of the rehearsal to small-group music reading work; and to work on the sight-singing book we distributed at our December 5 rehearsal.

We are emphasizing these skills because learning them will make each chapter meeting more enjoyable for all of us. The more each of us can learn music quickly and with ease, the less we have to spend time correcting notes on the risers and the more time we can spend on fun activities.

The other item on which the Music Committee hopes to work in the coming year is a revised version of the growth plan. The more good singers we bring in to the Mad Hatters, the more fun all of us can have. We bring in good singers by offering them a good chorus with which to sing. There will be more on that in the coming months.

The hardest aspect of the kind of improvement we have seen in the last eighteen months is in continuing to improve. I look forward to seeing what fun singing in a consistently improving chorus will be in 2018.

Baritone Deep Thought

Once you have a PhD, every meeting
you go to becomes a doctor's
appointment..

Dirt

Continued from the previous page

So far in 2019 we will be in Cape Cod for the Eastern contests at the Cape Cod conference center in Hyannis. Western will still be in Lake George. The District contests will be somewhere in Connecticut, and we are working on that now.

The 2020 Eastern will be back in Nashua. Western, at this time, in Lake George, and the Sunrise District will be in St John, New Brunswick, Canada.

I am sure that you can see a pattern developing. I feel that moving from opposite sides of NED and the divisions is more than fair to our members when it comes to travel distance

Rest up, be in good health and have a wonderful and harmonious New Year.



Mad Hatter Chorus Immediate Past President, Robert Bradley (second from right), being sworn in as NED VP of Events for 2018. Picture submitted by Joe Hudson

Improving Resonance

By G. I. Cansingh

Assistant Professor of Music, Muzaka University

Sound can be described as vibration. Each note and pitch is defined by the speed with which an object can vibrate. Resonance is the vibrations that create tone within your mouth, throat and nasal passages – your resonators. Resonance is what determines your sound. When I talk about resonance, I am talking about singing with fullness and space.

The amount of resonance in the voice is determined by our ability to keep the mouth and head cavities open and relaxed while we sing. The result is what we often hear referred to as an "open, freely produced tone."

Your soft palate is the soft tissue on the roof of your mouth. It serves as a partition separating the mouth cavity from the nasal cavity. Knowing what it is, where it is and what it does can help you sing pleasing resonant tones. Barbershop sounds should ring, and lifting your soft palate will help you create those ringing tones. A soft palate that does not lift leaves you with nasal tones.

Try to find your soft palate. Run your tongue along the back of your teeth, then slowly move your tongue toward the back of your mouth (along the roof of your mouth). There's a ridge, then your hard palate. As you move your tongue back you will come across softer tissue. That is your soft palate.

When the soft palate is normal, or down, the sound is unpleasant and nasal. To find out if the soft palate is raised while singing vowels, do the pinch test: Sing a vowel and pinch your nose. If the sound/tone does not change while your nose is pinched shut, your palate is raised. If the sound changes to a very nasal tone, the palate is down. Test yourself often while singing. Learn to feel the difference and consciously think about keeping the palate up.

Something else to try. Sing "kuh." This sound creates an action that lifts the soft palate. Now sing "ng." This drops the soft palate. Sing "kuh" again. Now it is lifted. Remember how it felt to have your soft palate lift.

The next step in creating and maintaining a balanced resonance is learning how to coordinate the movement of your soft palate with your tongue. We will explore that next time.

Top Ten Habits of Highly Effective Lead Singers

1. Learn basic barbershop chord structures to be aware of proper balance.
2. Diligently study successful leads' strengths and adapt them to your own voice and personal style.
3. Plan ahead for maximum mental focus in each rehearsal and performance.
4. Be fully prepared in every aspect of your music.
5. Be consistent -- sing each song the same way every time.
6. Practice singing the melody against a continual fixed tonal center -- an electronic pitch pipe works great.
7. Always rehearse as though in front of an audience.
8. Develop a physical exercise plan that works for you.
9. Drink a lot of water every day to keep your body and vocal cords hydrated;
10. For quartet singers, find a great bass, baritone and tenor whom you trust musically.



The President's Podium

By Danny Anderson

I received so many compliments concerning this year's Christmas concert. People commented on how the sound and blend were much improved. My wife's friends were impressed. One said she felt like she was at the theater! Terry Dunkle asked what we had done to improve the sound. He felt that we had improved immensely.

Some of our friends commented about the variety of songs presented this year. I mentioned that our music committee had to be thanked for putting together the program. Additionally, the committee is to be thanked for their leadership in singing and voice lessons. These have contributed to improvement for the chorus and the quartets.

The audience was large, thanks to the many members who invited family and friends to attend. It was good to see so many staying around to visit and encourage one another.

Many members of the chorus journeyed to Brewster after our concert to participate in the city tree lighting ceremony. This was the second annual street parade and tree lighting. We were told that last year there was no one who took on the leadership of the singing. Wynn was compared to the Music Man as he led us and the townspeople in Christmas songs while strolling down the middle of the street

A thank you to the members who took time out of their busy Sunday to attend and perform at the Ann's Place charity fund raiser. The audience was different from what we are accustomed to. Ann's Place has a special place in my heart as they were a support for my wife this year.

Our annual installation dinner will be the fourth Tuesday of January (23rd). This evening will afford the opportunity to have our wives and significant others get to know one another while we install the new officers and lay out plans for the new year. Make plans now to attend.

We will soon be in possession of the history book written by Wynn, The book is with the printer and will make an excellent gift item.

As mentioned in my article last month, we need to secure additional venues for performances. We each have contacts with groups or events where we might perform. We can provide a quartet, VLQ, or the entire chorus. We should be proud of our hobby and wish to share it with others. Our improved performance ability should be shared. Provide the contact information and Lee and Walt will take it from there

Many members of the chorus will be traveling during this holiday season to visit family and friends. I wish each safe travel and a joyous time.

December Board of Directors Minutes.



Respectfully submitted, Robert B. Golenbock, MD, Secretary.

Meeting called to order by Danny "Legs" Anderson, at 6:10 pm on 12/5/2017, at the Church of Christ.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Previously sent out. The report was received on a motion by Dickson DeMarche, seconded by Jim Hopper. The Board then promised not to let anyone read it.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The chapter will finish the year even. The Holiday concert made over \$750 in donations for our scholarship fund, and the bills for the book on the history of the Mad Hatters are not yet due. Meanwhile, our expenditures are less than budgeted. On a motion by Robert Golenbock, seconded by Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox, the report was received. BHS has offered insurance for the loss or damage of our equipment. This would be in addition to our regular liability insurance. We have determined that this extra insurance is not necessary until we move or buy new equipment.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: We have no new members.

VP PUBLIC RELATIONS: Art is not here tonight.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: Wynn reported that Scott Colman is on hiatus. He expects to be back at the beginning of the year. Meanwhile, Jim Hopper is our interim bass section leader. Peter Daubner printed our sight singing manual. We will continue taking people out in quartets and working on sight singing as well. The list of songs will be available in the *Hatter Chatter*. Our Annual Show has a problem with the venue. WestConn has activities that will affect our use of their parking lots. We are not very interested in having a show on a Friday night. Therefore we will need to find another venue such as White Hall. Wynn will look into White Hall. Danny will look into Bethel Middle School.

OLD BUSINESS: Wynn, John Bradley, and Andy Bayer are members of a committee to revise the membership growth plan. Wynn presented his report. We talked about making sure that our quartets are singing at a high level and that our new members maintain our standards. We need to invest in the improvement of the singing of our chorus. Then the people who want to join are likely to be of high quality. Jim suggests that the head of the Music Committee make the decision re acceptance. In general, we need to have explicit testing. In fact, the current qualifications are acceptable if they are enforced. Wynn will make the presentation for his committee after the first of the year.

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Board Minutes

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Wynn has also sent us samples of the book. He moved to allocate \$947 for the publication of the book. Robert Golenbock seconded. The motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS: We will try to have the Installation Dinner at the Meeting House Pub on the 9th (preferred) or the 16th of January starting at 7 pm [it is now scheduled for the 23rd]. We're shooting for \$25/person.

For now, instead of a uniform chairman, we will have a formal, an informal and a holiday outfit. The casual uniform: blue shirt with black pants, no tie. Formal uniform: Black shirt, black pants, different color ties. Holiday uniform: white shirt, black pants, red or green ties. Tie distribution: Tenors—blue. Leads—orange. Baritones—violet. Basses—green.

Danny filled out the Healthy Chapter Survey and sent it out to BHS.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Keith Korb, Allen Konigsberg, Alphonso d' Abruzzo.

OFFICERS PRESENT: D. Anderson,, D. Demarche, R. Golenbock, Jim Hopper, P. Daubner, W. Gadkar-Wilcox.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm. Next meeting is January 2, 2018.

a Holiday-ish Show

SILK CITY CHORUS
Manchester, CT

Saturday, January 13, 2018

Matinee: 1:30 | Evening: 7:30

Manchester High School
134 Middle Turnpike East, Manchester, CT 06040

Afterglow at *Pastrami on Wry*
291 E Center St, Manchester, CT 06040

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Ye Olde Joke Boarde

Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper

A barbershop baritone, wanting to earn some money, decided to hire himself out as a handyman-type and started canvassing a wealthy neighborhood. He went to the front door of the first house and asked the owner if he had any jobs for her to do. "Well, you can paint my porch. How much will you charge?" The baritone said, "How about 50 dollars?" The man agreed and told him that the paint and ladders that he might need were in the garage.

The man's wife, inside the house, heard the conversation and said to her husband, "Does he realize that the porch goes all the way around the house?" The man replied, "He should. He was standing on it."

A short time later, the baritone came to the door to collect his money. "You're finished already?" the man asked. "Yes," the baritone answered, "and I had paint left over, so I gave it two coats." Impressed, the man reached in his pocket for the \$50. "And by the way," the baritone added, "that's not a Porch, it's a Ferrari."

...

"May I take your order?" the barbershop baritone waiter asked. "Yes, how do you prepare your chickens?" "Nothing special sir," he replied, "we just tell them straight out that they're going to die."

The Danbury, CT Chapter SPEBSQSA

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203-744-9480

President:	Danny Anderson
Executive VP	Andrew Bayer
Musical Director:	Joseph Hudson
Assistant Director:	Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox
Assistant Director:	Scott Colman
Membership VP:	Jim Hopper
Public Relations VP:	Art Cilley
Music VP:	Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox
Secretary:	Robert Golenbock
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Immediate Past President	Robert Bradley
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Harmony Foundation	
Chairman:	Danny Anderson
Music Librarian:	Peter Daubner
Sunshine Chairman:	Vacant
Booking Agent:	Walter Barlow

The Hatter Chatter

Serving the Mad Hatter community since last Tuesday

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The editors of the Hatter Chatter welcome submissions from all chapter members and friends of the Mad Hatters. E-mail, mail, paper airplane us your thoughts, observations, opinions, singing tips and whatever, and we'll turn them into Pulitzer Prize copy

Mark Your Calendars



Performance: Orange Health Care
Friday, January 5. Warm-up 2:30 PM. Sing 3:00 PM
225 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT.

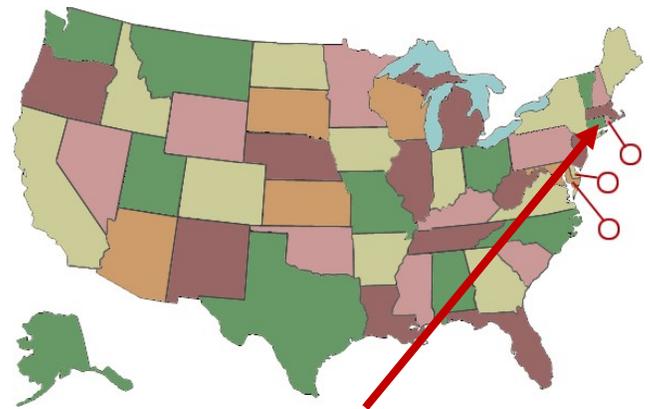
Installation Dinner
Tuesday, January 23. 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
The Meetinghouse Pub, 37 Stony Hill Rd., Bethel, CT.

Performance: Central American Barbershop Convention and Contests.
February 9 – 11. Quinta Real Acapulco, Paseo La Quinta 6, Acapulco, Mexico. Details to be announced.

Performance: Yankee Division Contest
Saturday, May 5. 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Lake George Junior-Senior High School, 381 Canada Street, Lake George, NY 12845.

Baritone Quiz

Can you find Connecticut?



(Hint)

Current Mad Hatter Repertoire

Regular Repertoire

After You've Gone
Breaking Up Is Hard To Do
For All We Know
I'm Sittin' On Top Of The World
It's A Brand New Day
Shenandoah
So Many Voices Sing America's Song
You'll Never Walk Alone
If You Leave Me, Can I Come Too?

Patriotic/Inspirational

Star-Spangled Banner
This Land Is Your Land/America The
 Beautiful
I Believe
Lord's Prayer



Coming Soon

Cabaret
You Stuck My Heart In a Old Tin Can
 and Shot It Off a Log
Once Upon a Time
Yesterday I Heard The Rain
50's Rock and Roll Medley
How Deep is the Ocean
Loch Lomond
Moonlight Brings Memories
Send in the Clowns