



*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  
*To thrill ever-larger audiences with the wonder of barbershop music*

Volume 20 Number 1

[www.madhatterchorus.org](http://www.madhatterchorus.org)

January 2013

## Chorus Celebrates First Night 2013

*By John Bradley*

Danbury, CT – On Monday evening, December 31st, at St. James' Church on West Street, the Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus joined stilt walkers, giant puppets, storytellers, a comic opera, gospel singing, a Chinese puppet theatre, salsa dance classes, and many more acts as part of the city's 22<sup>nd</sup> New Year's Eve celebration.

First Night has been a regular stop for the chorus for several years and St. James its venue for the last two.

As in past years, the chorus sang to a good-sized crowd during its 45-minute performance, most of whom smiled and sang along as the Hatters harmonized to "Auld Lang Syne." A few tears were also shed as the chorus dedicated its performance of "Over the Rainbow" to the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting.

All of the Mad Hatter quartets took part, except for a last minute scratch by Real Chemistry, whose baritone was still suffering effects from the flu.

"This is a wonderful way to say good bye to last year and bring in the new," said musical director, Joe Hudson.



*The Danbury Mad Hatters at St. James' Church.  
Picture by Eileen Paparesta.*

## Hungry Hatters Install Officers

*By John Bradley*

Danbury, CT – On Tuesday evening, January 15<sup>th</sup>, the Danbury Mad Hatters took over the back room of Outback Steakhouse for a fun evening of song, food and drink, offering thanks to the wives and significant others who supported the chorus in 2012, and best wishes to its officers for 2013.



*Joe Hudson swears in 2013 board members.  
Picture by August D'Aurelli.*

Several members were cited for duty above and beyond typical service. Wynn Wilcox won the Outstanding Service Award. The Above and Beyond Award was given to Daryl Bornstein. Al Paparesta was named Mad Hatter of the Year. And the entire chorus shared Most Improved.

"This was a wonderful turnout tonight," said chapter president, Danny Anderson. "We even had to bring in extra chairs."

Of course, the highlight of the evening was the singing with several songs performed by the chorus and short sets by Loco Fedora, the Traveling Men and Real Chemistry.

Here's a toast to a successful evening and a great new year.



*The 2013 Mad Hatter Chorus Board of Directors.  
Picture by John Bradley*



*Al Paparesta receives Mad Hatter of the Year award from Joe Hudson. Picture by John Bradley.*

## **Chorus Visits New Venue**

*By Dick Zang*

On Saturday, January 19th, the chorus entertained at a new retirement community (at least to us), Brookdale Place of Wilton. It was a long drive for many of us to their facility on the Norwalk border, but well worth it to have the pleasure of meeting new fans of barbershop harmony. Our group of sixteen sang well and looks forward to regular concerts for this appreciative audience.

## **Manchester Show**

*By Dick Zang*

Jim Hopper, Robert Golenbock and I rushed from the Saturday performance in Wilton up to Manchester for the Silk City Chorus' Annual Show. Their shows, always held in January, feature the top quartets from the Society and this year they were Masterpiece, the 2012 International Bronze Medalists, and Ringmasters, the 2012 Quartet Champions. These two quartets are outstanding entertainers and deserved winners. No one was disappointed in their performances. We also were treated to a set by the Manchester High School Roundtable Singers – a high-quality group of about 40 students. All in all a terrific show. Congratulations to the Silk City Chorus on their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **Prendergast Holiday Sing**

*By Dick Zang and Robert Bradley*

Ansonia, CT - Once again, in late December, the Danbury Mad Hatters, filled with holiday cheer, traveled down to Ansonia, CT, to sing for Joe Hudson's elementary school year-end assembly.

The twelve chorus members who were available for the weekday gig were joined in singing our usual repertoire of carols by a most enthusiastic group of youngsters. Whether or not they were more excited by our singing or the anticipation of having the next week off from school didn't matter – the kids sang their hearts out on "Rudolph," Jingle Bells" and "Feliz Navidad." We now know the thrill of singing with a hundred man chorus.

The response was wonderful and we decided no matter where we sing, we have to bring these kids with us as an audience. We met Joe's new principal, who did not feed us pizza, and the kids we sang for were older than the groups in the past.

The chorus decided before the kids arrived that we would add instrumentation to "Felice Navidad" and it was a great hit. We had a conga drum, sticks and maracca's along with our usual fine voices.

We did our holiday set, bid a merry Christmas to all and left full of the spirit of the holidays and happy to have been able to once again sing for the great kids of Ansonia.

## **Prendergast's Frozen Fund Raiser**

Ansonia, CT – On Tuesday evening, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 17 Mad Hatters once again traveled south to the banks of the Naugatuck River to help Prendergast Elementary School raise money for its new playground equipment.

The temperature had dropped to under 20 degrees as the audience of eight crowded into the school's gym to enjoy the show. Although the group was small, they were enthusiastic and enjoyed the performance, even the interesting three key version of "Paper Moon."

One of our members, Daryl Bornstein, sat in the audience unable to join us because his tux was ruined on the way to the venue in an unfortunate boating accident.



*The Mad Hatters performing at the Prendergast Elementary School. Picture by John Bradley*

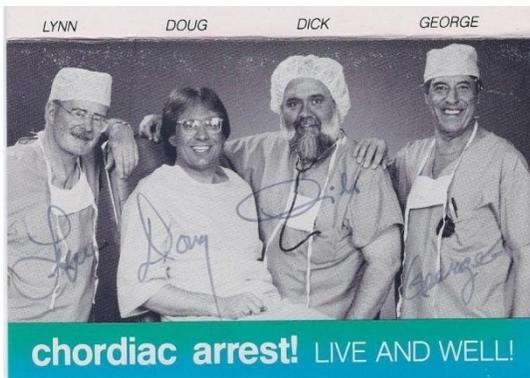
# Chordiac Arrest

By Dick Zang

Chordiac Arrest was one of the great comedy quartets in the society. Their hospital skits and airline pilot parodies were priceless.

Recently, a friend loaned me a copy of an autographed cassette. If you had seen them perform, you might not recognize Doug from the cover photo –on stage he sang tenor while flat on his back on a gurney as the “doctors” sang songs like “I See Bones” and “In My Neat Little Hospital Gown.”

I saw them on stage at the International Convention in Hartford in 1987 when they placed ninth. They finished fifth in the next two Internationals. They are hilarious – check them out by googling Chordiac Arrest. You won’t be disappointed.



## Quartet Corner

News from our chorus quartets

**Rare Occasion** – By Fred Baran.

On Thursday evening, December 13<sup>th</sup>, Rare Occasion presented several songs to Dr. Mahalingam Satchi at his office in Danbury. Our appearance was arranged by his wife, Dr. Raj Satchi, to mark the celebration of their wedding anniversary.

Both Drs. Satchi and one of their daughters listened and took photos while we sang “Happy Anniversary,” “Always” and “Lullabye in Ragtime” to mark the occasion.

They then adjourned to a local restaurant to continue celebrating their anniversary. They must really enjoy our music as this was the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> time we have sung for this wonderful couple from Sri Lanka.

As they are both obstetricians, we first sang a Singing Valentine for them outside of the Delivery Room at Danbury Hospital several years ago.

Filling in at baritone was Wynn Wilcox and we extend our thanks for his help.

Effective with the New Year, the Rare Occasion quartet has decided to retire as an active performing quartet. We thank everyone who has encouraged and supported us over the years.

Rare Occasion was formed in early 2000 with Bill Manion at bass, Paul Just the lead, Jim Hopper at baritone and me as tenor. Bill and Paul retired and moved to Florida where they now sing with the Hernando Harmonizers who meet in Weeki-Wachee. In 2006, Robert Golenbock replaced Paul as lead, and four years later, Terry Dunkle replaced Bill at bass.

Including Singing Valentines, shows, singouts, restaurants, Harmony College, hospitals and many private parties and other events, we estimate that Rare Occasion has entertained between 600-700 audiences over the 13 years that we performed as an organized, registered quartet within the Barbershop Harmony Society. We have shared many wonderful moments and memories of our times singing together and the great songs that brought many laughs and smiles, a few tears and much appreciation from our audiences.

**Traveling Men** – By Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox

Traveling Men went on hiatus this December after experimenting with different lineups following the departure of Baritone Daryl Bornstein from the group. The group worked with Chuck Krieger doing an able job filling in as bass, and have worked as a trio. Currently, Art Cilley is filling in on tenor as we continue to look for a permanent fourth member. Stay tuned!

**Real Chemistry** – By John Bradley

Real Chemistry is undergoing an alteration for 2013. Due to work loads and other interferences to a life of barbershopping, we have added tenor, Joel Perkins, as backup for our first-string high voice, Auggie D’Aurelli.

Joel is a music teacher at Bedford Hills Elementary School in Bedford Hills, NY. He is also a fifth generation fiddler, specializing in Irish music. Looks like we’ll be adding an instrumental bridge to “Irish Blessing.”

This is not the first time Real Chemistry has padded its bench. When I first joining the quartet it was as backup baritone to Art Roberts. Dick Orange was second string tenor while Steve Horhota was designing drugs and drinking beer in Germany.

Maybe in a year or two we’ll be competing as a VLQ!



## Emails to the Editors



Please e-mail your questions and comments to either the Hatter editor, John Bradley, at [jbrad1313@earthlink.net](mailto:jbrad1313@earthlink.net), or the Chatter editor, Dick Zang, at [jezang@charter.net](mailto:jezang@charter.net). If your e-mail appears, you will receive an autographed picture of our 2007 Yankee Division Bulletin Editors Award

My forty-year-old son has been paying a psychiatrist \$150 an hour every week for two- and-a-half years. He must be crazy. Would joining a barbershop group help him?  
Shirley from Southbury.

Shirley, I am not a mental health expert, but I do know there has been a lot of research that has proved an unequivocal link between singing and well-being, both physical and psychological. The ten top health benefits of singing are:

- lower blood pressure
- greater lung capacity
- more energy
- relief from asthma
- elevated mood
- improved memory
- increased concentration
- better posture
- stronger stomach muscles
- toned facial muscles

Research at the University of Frankfurt points to immune system benefits as well. The U.S. Journal of Behavioral Medicine reported that blood samples taken from choir members, before and after they sang Mozart's Requiem, found raised levels of immunoglobulin A and cortisol. Their blood composition was unaffected when the singers simply listened to the same music.

I have not seen any research done specifically for barbershop singing, but I do know I've come to our chorus' weekly rehearsals in a pretty bad mood after a tough day at work, and have left a couple of hours later feeling pretty good. And the chapter dues are much less expensive than seeing a shrink.

## Baritone Deep Thought Of the Month

**If all the cars in the United States were placed end-to-end, it would probably be Labor Day weekend.**

## Repertoire Notes



"(You're the Flower of My Heart,) Sweet Adeline" is a ballad best known as a barbershop standard. It was first published in 1903 with lyrics by Richard H. Gerard and music by Harry Armstrong. Harry wrote the tune in 1896 at the age of 18.

According to a 1928 newspaper story, the lyrics were inspired by a girl who worked at the music counter of a New York department store. After failing to find a publisher with the initial title, "You're the Flower of My Heart, Sweet Rosalie," the song's two writers decided a new title was in order and were inspired by a poster advertising the farewell tour of opera singer, Adelina Patti. It did not become a hit until it was performed in 1904 by the group The Quaker City Four.

John F. Fitzgerald, who served as mayor of Boston, represented Massachusetts in Congress and was the maternal grandfather of President John F. Kennedy, made "Sweet Adeline" his theme song in 1909. Over the next four decades, he personally sang it at countless political and social events and on the radio.

A piece of "Sweet Adeline" was featured in *Broadway Folly*, a 1930 Oswald the Lucky Rabbit cartoon.

The song was performed by The Marx Brothers in their 1931 film *Monkey Business*.

The song was covered by jam band Phish in several live performances.

The Seekers used the song as a regular part of their live act in the 1960s. Lead vocalist, Judith Durham, would sit out the song while Athol Guy, Keith Potger and Bruce Woodley performed the song as a barbershop trio. The song was included on their 1968 album, *The Seekers Live at the Talk of the Town*.

Country music pioneer Jimmie Rodgers references "Sweet Adeline" in his song "My Old Pal."



Mickey Mouse serenades Minnie Mouse with "Sweet Adeline" in the 1929 short *The Carnival Kid*.



## The President's Podium

*By Danny Anderson*

I want to begin by wishing everyone a happy new year, my wishes for a safe and prosperous year to all.

The year of 2012 was a good year for the Danbury Chapter. The Board started the year off with a great planning session. During this session we established several goals for the chapter, many of these have been accomplished and other we will be working on this year.

We delivered over 50 Singing Valentines.

We became the Yankee Division Small Chorus champions.

We are singing at a higher level, on a consistent basis.

We maintained our membership level. Each section obtained new members who are strong singers, thus making each section better.

We received coaching in singing and presentation which has improved our level of singing.

Our rehearsals are well planned. We receive information beforehand of the plans for each practice, which allows us to come prepared for the evening.

We found opportunities to sing at different venues. Not all the sing outs were paid events, but were at venues where we could expose more men to barbershop.

We took part in a fund raiser for the Danbury Westerner Baseball team.

We sang the national anthem for the Danbury Whalers.

We took part in Macy's "Friends and Family Day," and revisited Macy's a few weeks later to present our Christmas music

Loco Fedora represented the chapter at the District quartet competition. It has been several years since we had a chapter quartet at this level of competition.

The month of January will be a busy one for the Chapter. By the time this is published we will have had the installation dinner for the new Board of Directors. We welcome Peter and Al to the Board as a Member at Larger and VP of Marketing respectively.

Dick Walter has found a new nursing home venue, Brookdale, in the Wilton area. We sang there on January 19.

We sang at the Pendergrass School in Ansonia for their playground fund raiser. We have sung Christmas/ holiday songs for the students for several years - a fun event for the chorus and the students.

Our first coaching session of the year will be January 29<sup>th</sup>. The coach for this session will be Butch Ashdown. It has been almost a year since we had Butch with us as a coach. Butch is an excellent coach who finds areas which we can improve upon. He has an encouraging and contagious personality. Mark you calendar for being present for this rehearsal.

The Board is asking each member to be involved in the booking of Singing Valentines. We ask that each member book at least one (1) Singing Valentine.

We ask that you each place a yard sign and a flyer in high traffic locations (just don't distract the traffic).

We plan to return to the competition stage in April. We will be defending our best small chorus title. It would be wonderful to bring home the trophy again.

Our Annual Show is scheduled for May 18<sup>th</sup>. The show will be centered around a couple celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on a cruise. Joe has developed the first draft of the show and has begun working on the publicity for the show. A couple of our best ad salesmen have left the chorus, so we need everyone to sell more ads this year. There is a goal of each member selling either \$300 of ads, tickets or a combination thereof.

As discussed above, we have a busy year ahead of us, and I am convinced that we will have a great year and that we will have fun while working hard.

Have a great year.



## January Board of Directors Meeting

*Submitted by Robert "New Grand Daddy" Golenbock*

Meeting called to order by Danny "Grandpa" Anderson on Saturday, January 5, 2013, at the Church of Christ, at 10:10 am.

SECRETARY'S REPORT was handed out and received by unanimous vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Expense Summary of 2012 showed a profit of \$300 for the year. The report was received on a motion by Robert Golenbock, seconded by Art Roberts.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: tabled for extraordinary session.

VP PUBLIC RELATIONS: tabled for extraordinary session.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: tabled for extraordinary session.

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# Board Meeting

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OLD BUSINESS: tabled for extraordinary session.

NEW BUSINESS: One of our long-standing members is now in poor health and in difficult financial circumstances. On a recommendation by Jimmy Hopper, the Mad Hatters are collecting donations to send a check on behalf of the chapter. Dickson DeMarche collected checks made out to the Danbury Mad Hatters chapter of BHS with the name of the member we are collecting for on the memo line. {Secretary's note: We have already collected over \$2000}.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nick Godano, Daryl Bornstein, Dick Zang, Tino Martinez.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Dickson DeMarche, Jim Hopper, Al Paparesta, Wynn Wilcox, Art Roberts, Danny Anderson, Joe Hudson, Andy Bayer, Robert Golenbock, Peter Daubner, Bob Bradley, Ed Koch.

The Board Meeting proper concluded so that we could begin the main reason for our meeting on a Saturday morning:

## The Second Annual Extraordinary Session of the Danbury Mad Hatters Chorus

First on our agenda was the decision to evaluate our mission statement, mission, slogan, and logo. The mission statement – “To thrill ever-larger audiences with the wonder of (barbershop) music” – was approved. The mission – “The promotion of a cappella singing, singing for an audience, having fun, fellowship, and improvement of our craft” – was approved. Our slogan – “Spreading joy and harmony” – was approved. Our logo, a top hat with musical notes coming out of it – was approved. We also agreed we need to use our slogan in our advertising and on our logo.

Our next topic was to identify what we did well last year. Here are some of the comments:

- We improved quality of singing and attitude of continued improvement.
- We defined ourselves as an a cappella chorus.
- We did great publicity.
- We took advantage of coaching.
- We made a good decision to skip the district contest.
- We reaped the benefits of reducing the number of arrangements we worked on so we could do a few songs well.
- We improved our awareness of performing, not just singing.
- We improved our method of learning.
- We have learned to accept that we will drop songs the chorus doesn't enjoy singing.
- We are taking advantage of Groupanizer more.
- We did some non-paid activities that expanded our audience.

In general, we have made the chorus an inviting place for members. There are choruses with much more negativity. We are supportive and open and welcoming. In the opinion of Bob Bradley, we are unique in that respect in the Northeast District.

What needs improvement? As always, membership recruitment and retention.

An alternative way of looking at this issue -- which is essentially unsolvable -- is that the numbers may not be increasing, but the quality is.

We need to attract good singers, not just warm bodies. Traditional methods of membership recruitment don't really work. Joe Hudson has been doing a great job maintaining communication with former members and guests.

Our level of focus and seriousness needs to be improved. Our break needs to be no more than 10 minutes.

We need a firm commitment to work outside of rehearsal.

The chorus needs to target potential candidates. We are not always performing in front of the right people or our level of performance is not good enough to entice good singers to join us.

Our annual show needs more visual elements, including scenery and costumes. And we need to perform more at schools and places of worship. To that end we might develop a quartet that can perform during the day and on Sundays. Jimmy Hopper volunteered to work on a “daytime” quartet.

We need to hold members accountable by practicing the new program of only allowing prepared members to sing on the risers. At this time we do not have standards or metrics for singing outside of our contest qualifications. By creating specific goals such as we do when we prepare for contest we can better motivate members. For example, by being asked to sing in a quartet from time to time, our members can more easily learn what they're doing wrong so they can improve.

What are our goals and what are the benchmarks for achieving those goals? We did not reach our membership goal. Perhaps we should avoid a numeric goal. Presently we have twenty-three active members. We do need a larger chorus for both musical and non-musical reasons.

We do not wish to increase our dues, which are extremely low compared to other chapters. And, we are committed to sending our dues to Harmony Foundation anyway. But we would like to increase our income to put on a bigger show, buy new risers, etc.

Many of our members are members for sentimental reasons even though they are not living in the area.

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# Board Meeting

*Continued from the following page*

But unfortunately our chorus classification in contest is related to our total numbers, not the number of men on risers or our ability level. Just as we must make each member responsible for his own performance and for his assistance with membership, we must make each member responsible for a certain amount of ticket sales, ad sales, and Valentine sales.

The formula for determining the total monetary contribution of each member remains to be determined, and naturally there would be dispensation for those financially unable to meet their commitment. Donations and grants for the Arts are probably available if we look hard enough.

We need to have a higher quality of singing in order to draw in a larger audience and a high quality of committed new members. We need to sing every song at the same high level. The issue of quality is very important. The chorus is capable of singing new music at a high level. Joe (Hudson) and Daryl Bornstein can determine which of our songs are good enough to be performed in public. Those songs which are not sung well can be worked on or cut.

We may have too many songs in our active repertoire. Right now, including patriotic and religious songs, we are responsible for about 20 arrangements.

Our goal is to set a minimum standard that every member singing in a public venue knows the words, notes, and rhythms, and can sing with the chorus in tune. We cannot improve performance, vowel matching, phrasing and dynamics without this minimum standard. This minimum standard requires work at home and consistent attendance.

We ask for this commitment from all our members and in return offer specific training by planning more sectionals. To change the paradigm of the chorus, we must change the procedure, that is to say, the rehearsal structure. The Music Committee can come up with a plan. Daryl remarked how well we sang at the last installation dinner and asked the key question: How do we capture the spirit of performance that occurs when we sing for ourselves?

We identified specific techniques for achieving our membership goals. Joe has letters to recruit church choir members. We once again planned to take a quality quartet to sing at church services, schools, malls, and restaurants.

We might also develop a coaching program for high school singers. We can sponsor a co-ed youth harmony workshop which, while not resulting in immediate membership growth, will maintain interest in barbershop music among the next generation. Inviting two or three high school choruses for a four hour program during school hours would certainly improve our visibility.

We might try to work with the Parallel Fifths (the Westconn a cappella group) once a month. We need to reach out to

corporations and business and charitable organizations and in general to recruit new venues to increase our visibility beyond the world of nursing homes and assisted living places.

Al Paparesta offered to become the business manager to go after these non-traditional venues. In addition, members of the chorus will act as town liaisons to help him. Dick Zang volunteered to be the Newtown liaison, and Peter Daubner chose New Milford, while Al will start with Brookfield.

Other suggestions for the future included contacting amateur choruses that we could invite to our rehearsals and attending the Bridal Expo.

Finally, we discussed making a CD with one or two songs from the chorus and one or two songs from a quartet. The CD could be presented with an updated business card.

This year's Annual Show will be chaired by the indefatigable Al Paparesta. The show will take place on a cruise ship where a couple celebrates a fiftieth anniversary and the best man at their wedding tells their life story. There will be as well performances by the Parallel Fifths, NorthShore, Timely Gents (NED College quartet champs), and Joe's new group, SUREFIRE!

The plan for the finale is to have 100 men on the risers to sing three songs. Men from the CT and NY area have been invited to join us. We will be sending out both learning tracks and sheet music to anyone who wishes to join us.

We will be reserving the Ives Concert Hall from 3 pm to 10 pm to accommodate the rehearsal time and sound checks necessary. The performance begins at 7 pm. We will have tickets for the afterglow to minimize people not paying for their guests. The date of the show is May 18<sup>th</sup>.

We did not decide definitively about going to the spring competition, which takes place April 12<sup>th</sup> (quartets) and April 13<sup>th</sup> (choruses). We will determine if the chorus has attained the minimum standards by the first rehearsal in March. The decision was to prepare "It's Only a Paper Moon" and "Over the Rainbow" for this year's contest on a provisional basis.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 5, 2013.



# In Defense of Imperfection

*Posted by DekeSharon on 01/15/2013*

When I started this Mr. Toad's Wild Ride of a career in a cappella 21 years ago, there is one statement I thought I'd never hear myself say: "People in a cappella have become too concerned with tuning."

It's easy to get people to agree with this statement nowadays, with so much pitch correction in recordings, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about too much focus on tuning during live performances. And I'm not talking about the use of live pitch correction.

I think I just heard most of you jump off the bandwagon. Let me explain.

A cappella is the oldest music, and throughout history has incorporated musical styles, both secular and popular. Most recently, that which we currently term "contemporary a cappella" is incorporating an ever-widening variety of musical traditions and styles - bluegrass, jazz, pop, R&B, hip hop, soul, reggae, gospel... you name it.

None of these put a particular emphasis on tuning to the extent that it alters the style and presentation of the music. You can argue that it's easier to tune when you have a keyboard or fretted guitar in the mix, but as soon as you get one string out of tune, mix in a fiddle or trombone, anything can happen. It only takes one note for a chord to be askew.

Perhaps it's the prevalence of pitch correction in recordings and pop music, but groups seem ever-concerned with their pitch, and moreover judge other groups as if tuning is the point. It has never been the point. Wanna know what happens if you make it the point?

## Exhibit A: Barbershop

Backstory: Over a century ago, "barbershop" (which didn't yet have that name) was largely improvised. In fact, it was created by and initially popularized by African Americans. Some guys standing around, jamming on the pop tunes of the day. Same as now, right? Yup. And, for the record, so was doo-wop, circa 1950. Same as it ever was.

Much later, in 1938, when OC Cash formed [SPEBSQSA](#) (now the Barbershop Harmony Society), he was trying to revitalize a musical style that had come and gone. It would be as if someone started the Doo Wop Harmony Society fifty years later... so, now. A noble act which has immortalized him in the annals of vocal harmony. As well it should.

However, over time, the music shifted. Changed. It went from guys hanging out with friends and singing the old songs in the old way to a codified form with guidelines and rules, perhaps in large part due to the increasing importance of the organization's annual competitions. Groups were judged, and judges needed criteria. This makes sense, as the organization's historical mission couldn't allow unlimited flexibility in all

musical choices (lest the P in SPEBSQSA - preservation - be discarded).

However now, over 100 years later, our barbershop has become its own style, with a litany of rules for acceptable chords and chord voicings, with the emphasis during performance on "ringing" chord after chord. Tuning.

Judges are trained to judge like each other, and coaches "teach to the test" when working with groups, all aiming at a specific aesthetic, with tuning a significant (albeit not only) priority. The music has gone from loose to tight, the sound from improvisatory to highly scripted, and the performances from natural to highly stylized. And, perhaps as a result, the organization has been shrinking rather significantly for the past 20 years... even as a cappella in general has exploded in popularity.

Now, I wasn't around in 1890, so I'm just surmising, but my instinct tells me the music was more loose, less concerned with overtones. Music is communication, not some kind of olympic sport, and all that should matter is how you make the audience feel.

You don't agree with me? Modern social science does.

Take, for instance, the fact that people do not make decisions with their minds. They make them with their hearts, and then they justify them intellectually. That's been proven time and again, and is at the core of everything from political campaigns to grocery store product placement.

To bring it closer to home, do you remember when Ben Folds said to the Beelzebubs in Season One: "there were some tuning issues, but I didn't care!" That's exactly what I'm talking about.

Do you know who else doesn't care? You don't care. Do you hate all Motown music? Most likely not. But the vocals are well outside what would be considered "in tune" nowadays. And they're beautiful. And real.

Moreover, if you're focusing primarily on tuning on stage, you're not performing and you're not communicating. You're manufacturing sound.

People love it when the House Jacks perform and we improvise a pop song. They don't care if it's perfect. And think of your own shows - sometimes the screeching high notes and rumbling low notes that made the audience go nuts were not in perfect tune, but they got a much bigger response than that delicate passage you worked hours on.

To be clear: I'm not chastising anyone, perhaps the Real Group, for their excellent tuning. It's a wonderful thing. But neither am I going to dock the Persuasions for having a wider bandwidth.

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# Imperfection

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There's not only room for both, we need both. And, in both cases, the groups have a lot of heart in their music. That's what connects with people, most of all.

Which all brings it back to you:

- Are you a studio editor, making a living "cleaning" tracks? First of all, don't tune everything. Some things sound better raw and untuned. Secondly, when you are tuning leads, back way off. Let the notes take a little time before they lock in, and leave some moments imperfect. Far more emotional impact in many cases.

- Are you a singer? Yes, work on your pitch, but don't go out on stage thinking about it. If you're thinking about tuning while performing then you're giving the audience a very cold, calculated performance. Channel the emotion and trust your training. When you're saying something, SAY something, and don't worry about your pronunciation.

- Are you a music director? Drill fundamentals in rehearsal, and make performing about the big picture. Get your singers into an emotive space instead of a perfectionistic one before they march on stage, and if you're conducting do everything in your power to keep their focus on the song's message and not worrying if you're going to chastise them on Monday at rehearsal.

- Are you a judge, perhaps of competitions, or recordings? Don't get caught up in the idea that the more precise group is the better group. It isn't. The better group is the one that makes you leap out of your seat. The audience favorite. They might be the most technically accomplished, but they might not. Please don't reinforce the notion that technical proficiency equals excellence, because groups will chase that trophy all the way down whichever path you open.

- Are you an arranger? I've said it once, I'll say it again: arrangements are roadmaps to help singers communicate with an audience. Every time you choose something that's technically difficult for a student group, it had better be in service of the singer's emotional delivery, because if you're just showing off, you're selfishly making the arrangement about yourself and are in effect forcing the group to focus on their technique rather than the mood, and it often backfires.

Stretch them in a way that pushes them to higher emotional impact. Oh, and stack your chords ala the harmonic series (big gaps on the bottom, smaller ones on top) to make it easier for them to tune, so they can spend less time worrying about locking chords.

\* Are you an a cappella insider? I'm guessing the answer is "yes" if you're reading this. OK, let me level with you, because I'm one of you. We like our 13th chords, and we love to hate the same ol' songs sung the same ol' way. And we should be pushing our own to pioneer, with original

arrangements, original sounds, original songs. But we also need to lose any snobbery we have toward groups that are less than perfectly polished. There is only one Bobby McFerrin, and the rest of us are at least 3 solo albums and a minor 11th behind him. There is no perfect. Ever. And if that's what you're striving for, or what you look for in groups, you're missing the point. There are things a cappella does extremely well - like intimate, honest audience-performer connection. And there are ways in which a cappella has a harder time, and tuning is high on that list.

Recent articles have been written about individuals and success, trying to find the best way to maximize both happiness and productivity in the workplace. Our parents were taught to strive to be good at everything, and to spend their time working on the subjects in which they had the most difficulty. Modern studies have found exactly the opposite to be a far more effective path: focus your time and energy on your strengths, and let people who are good in other ways help you. So, don't worry about being "pitch perfect." Instead, focus on kicking ass.

\*A note to my barbershoppin' friends... those that remain after the paragraphs above: I love barbershop music, and started my first quartet as a barberpole cat back in High School. I think the tradition is superlative, and there is much that all styles of a cappella can and should learn from you and yours. But maybe you should loosen some of the regulations and minutia, and instead create some different criteria: Who can create the most viral video?



## Celebrate the Society's 75th Anniversary in Toronto!

Convention Details

### Registration & Harmony Marketplace:

The Westin Harbour Castle

1 Harbour Square, Toronto, Ontario M5J 1A6

<http://www.westinharbourcastleontario.com/>

### Chorditoriums / Afterglows:

The Fairmont Royal York

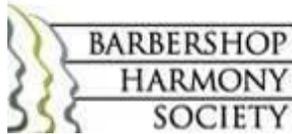
100 Front Street W, Toronto, Ontario M5J1E3

<http://www.fairmont.com/royalyork/>

### Contest Venue:

Air Canada Centre 40 Bay Street, Toronto Ontario M5J 2X2

<http://www.theaircanadacentre.com/>



## Society and District Notes



### New England Harmony Brigade Rally

The Second New England Harmony Brigade Rally will take place on September 20-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 at the Marriott in Marlborough MA. A brigade is a "by invitation" group of quartet singers that get together once a year for fellowship, great singing, and most of all..great quartetting!

It's a weekend of wall-to-wall quartet singing for well qualified singers. Singers have five months to learn 12 Gold Medal arrangements and are given support by way of learning CD's and run-throughs, but by the time they arrive at the Brigade (usually held at a conveniently located hotel), they are supposed to be one hundred percent prepared. They then sing their hearts out in a "Dance Card" style in as many combinations as possible and then participate in a "randomly chosen" contest on Friday and Saturday night, (all for fun, of course). Lastly there is a Saturday night show held at a nearby venue that is open to the public.

Everyone who comes has to demonstrate that they have the intestinal fortitude to learn 12 songs and to be totally prepared. Run-throughs are held to help everyone get that last 10% that you cannot learn from a CD-ROM.

Brigades have sprung up all over the country, because they are a great way to meet new potential quartet mates and to get to know like minded people who are in the area. Because everyone is prepared, we all get right down to business and have a lot of fun. And we all come away having learned 12 great songs!

The cost is modest.we get good room rates and meal rates. And it includes all music and professionally made learning CD-ROMs.

Last year's inaugural brigade was a runaway success. We had close to one hundred men in attendance.

This is what you can do:

1). Reply to me to let me know if you would like to join our e-list. I will not put you on unless I hear from you, so please let me know.

2). Spread the word! Pass this letter along to anyone that you know who loves quartetting, who is talented, and who might enjoy an event like this. Our web site is

[www.nehb.net](http://www.nehb.net)

There is an application form there. But if you are not sure about filling out the web application, please reply to me directly or send mail to [president@nehb.net](mailto:president@nehb.net).

Lastly, you can call me at 781-643-7468.

3). Apply early. Otherwise you might have to be wait-listed in your part. Some of our attendees come from other brigades out-of-district but we hope to have as many well qualified singers there as possible.

So, we'll need to have your completed application and deposit by mid February in order to check your references and extend you an invitation in a timely fashion.

If you have any questions at all, please drop me a note.

Yours in Harmony,  
Lee Daum

### CALLING ALL MALE SINGERS IN CT and NY (or anywhere in New England)

Did you sing in a choir in high school or college and are looking for that opportunity to sing again? Do you currently sing in a choir in high school or college and are looking for another venue to sing at? Do you get a thrill from singing in a large ensemble before a huge crowd? Do you want to sing in a friendly environment?

The Mad Hatters Chorus of Danbury, CT, issues an open invitation to all male singers to come and join us for three songs on our Annual Show. No obligation to join, just an opportunity to sing on stage with 75+ other men in a grand finale.

You will receive the music ahead of time to learn on your own (or stop by a rehearsal to practice it with us if you want), show up in the afternoon to rehearse at the venue, enjoy the show, and then come up on stage for the finale consisting of the following songs:

“SHENANDOAH”  
“IMPOSSIBLE DREAM”  
“GOD BLESS AMERICA”

If you are interested in singing in a 100-man chorus for three songs on May 18, 2013, please email me your name, location and voice part (TENOR, LEAD, BARITONE or BASS).

*Continued on the next page*

# Notes

*Continued from the previous page*

[jphudson2006@yahoo.com](mailto:jphudson2006@yahoo.com)

I will send you a link to the sheet music and learning tracks.

I look forward to hearing from you AND singing with you.

Yours in joy and harmony,  
Joseph P. Hudson

## NED Shed

I will be taking orders for the NED SHED for the Eastern Regional/Spring Prelims at Chelmsford Middle School, Chelmsford, MA, March 15-16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and Western Regional Contest at Voorheesville Middle School, Voorheesville, NY, April 12-13<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

When you order from the NED SHED, you will be getting the same items from Harmony Marketplace without the cost of the shipping and handling charges that you would normally have.

If your Chapter or quartet or individual member needs anything please consider ordering from the NED SHED as you will be also supporting the NED.

You can order Music, DVDs, CDs, Membership supplies, quartet supplies, BOTY Supplies (BOTY Pins, Plaques), or anything else from the Harmony Marketplace Catalog.

When submitting order please submit the following items:  
Your name

- Phone number
- Email
- Chapter name (chapter orders only)
- Item #
- Quantity  
Item name
- Which contest you will be picking the items up - Eastern Regional or Western Regional,

When the order is received you will receive an invoice from the NED Shed for the total amount.

All orders MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEB 13th.

## WANTED: Email Marketing Solutions Provider

The NED is currently seeking someone in our area who has experience working with and who has provided development and solutions in the area of Email Marketing for any organization, profit or nonprofit. More specifically, we are looking for folks with experience using any of the current email marketing providers: Constant Contact, MailChimp, iContact, VerticalResponse, MyEmma, ExactTarget - or

others. Candidates may very well already work in the areas of corporate or small business communications, marketing, advertising, information technology, web marketing, social media and other areas related to communications. Singers preferred, but not necessary!

If you, or someone you know, has such experience - and would be willing to advise, consult with, and possibly assist in driving, the NED in the direction of improving communications - beginning NOW - please reply ASAP to Steve Salamin. Any questions, please contact me as well.

Now developing NED communications TEAM(s) - and we need YOU now!

[NEDmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:NEDmarketing@gmail.com)

or

[sc.salamin@ne.rr.com](mailto:sc.salamin@ne.rr.com)

or

(603) 355-8004

In harmony,

Steve Salamin, District VP - Marketing & Public Relations  
2012/2013 Northeastern District of the Barbershop Harmony Society

## Publish a Tribute to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Your Society

This is a GREAT opportunity to be a part of barbershop history! Create and publish a tribute to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of your Society!

A special 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of *The Harmonizer* is currently underway, and right now there is an opportunity for your chapter, chorus or quartet to make tribute to the Society and its mission in this hallmark year! This January/February 2013 issue will be an over-sized, archive-quality keepsake issue, printed on thicker, glossier paper. Loosely based on *The Harmonizer's* 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue, this will be even bigger and better. Don't miss this chance to be part of history!

Your Northeastern District has committed to placing a full-page tribute ad, a District ad, honoring, at the least, the great accomplishments and contributions to the Society by your District and this amazing milestone in our history. YOU can be a part of the effort to create that page!

I am looking for YOUR ideas and suggestions for the contents of that page. Please reply today and let me know what you think we should include! Please be specific and please be willing to assist with your idea! Maybe YOU know exactly what we should say! I invite you to reply to me today with your brainstorming ideas and suggestions. Please!

For more information - for your chapter, chorus or quartet to make tribute ad:

<http://www.nedistrict.org/uploads/2013-TributesAds-75thAnniversary.pdf>

## Ye Olde Joke Boarde



*Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper*

I was walking down the street the other day when I saw my buddy Matt, the lead in our barbershop quartet. I, a baritone, walked up to him and mentioned that I had the most bizarre dream the night before last. Matt listened intently as I told him that the dream consisted of one thing and one thing only, a huge glowing number "5." It was made of gold and sparkled with diamonds. Matt's curiosity was piqued. I went on to say that the first thing that I did in the morning was to grab the daily racing digest and look up the fifth race.

Matt raised an eyebrow. So I told him that the Number 5 horse in the fifth race was named "The Fifth Element." Matt started grinning. Then I told Matt point-by-point what I did that day. I ate five bowls of cereal for breakfast and drank five cups of coffee. I went for a five mile jog to clear my head. I took a five minute shower. I dressed in the fifth suit I found in my closet. I sat in my car for five minutes before starting it up. I drove to the racetrack and parked in the fifth stall in the fifth row. I entered through the fifth admissions gate. I bought five programs. I went to the fifth betting window and bet \$555 on the fifth horse in the fifth race. I went and sat in the fifth row of the bleachers making sure there were five people sitting on either side of me. I settled in and waited for the race to start.

"Well," said Matt. "Did the horse win?" I frowned at Matt and said, "Stupid horse came in fifth."



Jesus was wandering around Jerusalem when he decided he really needed a new robe. After looking around, he saw a sign for "Finkelstein, the Tailor." He went in and Finkelstein prepared a new robe for him, which was a perfect fit. When he asked how much he owed, Finkelstein brushed him off.

"No, no, no, for the Son of God? There's no charge. However, may I ask a small favor? Maybe whenever you give a sermon you could just mention a little something about how your nice new robe was made by Finkelstein the Tailor." Jesus readily agreed and, as promised, plugged Finkelstein's robes every time he preached. Some months later, Jesus was walking through Jerusalem and happened by Finkelstein's shop. There was a huge line of people waiting for Finkelstein's robes. He pushed his way through the crowd to speak to Finkelstein.

"Jesus! Jesus!! Look what a marvel you've been for business!" gushed Finkelstein. "Would you consider a partnership?"  
"Sure, sure," replies Jesus. "Jesus & Finkelstein it is."

"Oh, no, no," says Finkelstein. "Finkelstein & Jesus. After all, I am the craftsman." The two of them debated this for some time. Their discussion was long and spirited, but ultimately fruitful. Finally, they came up with a mutually acceptable compromise. A few days later, the new sign went up over Finkelstein's shop: "LORD & TAYLOR."

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## Current Mad Hatter Repertoire

### **Performance**

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do  
Can You Feel the Love Tonight  
From The First Hello  
Give My Regards To Broadway  
It's Only a Paper Moon  
On The Sunny Side Of The Street  
Over The Rainbow  
River Of No Return  
Shenandoah  
Somewhere Out There  
Ten Feet Off The Ground

There Is Nothing Like A Dame  
When You And I Were Young,  
Maggie

### **Patriotic/Inspirational**

Amazing Grace  
Armed Forces Medley  
God Bless America  
I Believe  
Lord's Prayer  
Star-Spangled Banner  
This Land Is Your Land Medley



### **Contest**

My Uncle Used To Love Me But She  
Died  
If You Can't Bite, Don't Growl

### **In Progress/Upcoming**

Almost Like being In Love  
Kentucky Babe  
Sentimental Gentleman From Georgia  
Come Go With me  
Moonlight Brings  
Memories.  
Beach Boys Medley

## The Danbury, CT Chapter SPEBSQSA

PO Box 5149  
Brookfield, CT 06804-5149

President:	Danny Anderson
Musical Director:	Joseph Hudson
Assistant Director:	Jim Hopper
Assistant Director:	Don Sutherland
Membership VP:	Andy Bayer
Public Relations VP:	Al Paparesta
Music VP:	Jim Hopper
Secretary:	Robert Golenbock
Treasurer:	Dickson DeMarche
Program VP	Vacant
Member at Large:	Peter Daubner
Member at Large:	Art Roberts
Member at Large:	Wynn Wilcox
Immediate Past President	Robert Bradley
Uniform Chairman:	Andy Bayer
Harmony Foundation Chairman:	Danny Anderson
Music Librarian:	Lyle LaPlante
Sunshine Chairman:	Don Smith
Package Show Chairman:	Dick Walter
Chorus Manager:	Robert Golenbock

## The Hatter Chatter

Serving the Mad Hatter community since last Tuesday

John Bradley, Hatter editor 39 Beekman Drive Lake Carmel, NY 10512 <a href="mailto:Jbrad1313@earthlink.net">Jbrad1313@earthlink.net</a>	Dick Zang, Chatter editor 2 Camelot Crest Sandy Hook, CT 06482 <a href="mailto:jezang@charter.net">jezang@charter.net</a>
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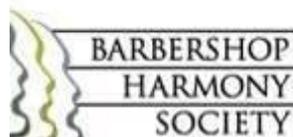
Proofreader: Miss Taralily

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

## January Milestones

### Birthdays:

1 - Andy Bayer  
4 - Pat Sutherland  
4 - Craig Johnson  
6 - Charlie Rosa  
6 - Don Smith  
15 - Lee Smeriglio  
29 - Linda Anderson  
30 - Chuck Kreiger



### Wedding Anniversaries:

14 - Bill and Gloria Keenan

## Mark Your Calendars

**Special Rehearsal: Coaching with Butch Ashdown:** Tuesday, January 29, 7:30 pm, Church of Christ.

**Chapter Singout:** Sunday, February 17. Warm-up 2:00 pm, sing 2:30 pm. Maplewood of Danbury, 22 Hospital Ave, Danbury, CT.

**Special Rehearsal: Coaching with Joe Hunter:** Tuesday, February 19, 7:30 pm, Church of Christ.

**Saturday, April 13, Yankee Division Chorus Contest.** Voorheesville Middle School, 432 New Salem Road, Voorheesville, NY. 10:00 am.

**Saturday, May 18. Chapter Annual Show.** With performances by the Parallel Fifths, NorthShore, Timely Gents (NED College quartet champs), and, Surefire! Ives Concert Hall, 181 White St., Danbury, CT. Show begins 7:00 pm. Warmup time to be announced.

**August 8-11: Harmony College Northeast and Harmony Explosion Camp.** Worcester State University, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester, MA. Details to be announced.



Nothing thrills like a Singing Valentine  
Send your sweetie a rose, a card and a wonderful memory.

February 12: Noon to 9  
February 13: Noon to 9  
February 14: 9 to 9

Dick at 203-438-8154  
Bob at 845-225-4919