



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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July 2010

Danbury Does Philly

By John Bradley

Philadelphia, PA - Mad Hatters past and present visited Philadelphia over the July 4th weekend for the Barbershop Harmony Society's 72nd Annual International Convention and Contests.

Tenor and Danbury music director, Joe Hudson, and lead, Dan Griffin, performed for New York City's Big Apple Chorus, which finished in 22nd place behind the chorus champions Westminster Chorus. The Big Apple Chorus performed "What Kind Of Fool Am I" and a comedy medley of "Coney Island Baby" and "We All Fall."

And, it was a weekend for reunions. Bass and Florida resident, Bill Manion, rejoined his former Rare Occasion mates, Fred Baran, Robert Golenbock and Jim Hopper, performing a song in one of the Pennsylvania Convention Center's massive corridors. According to Bill, "We haven't missed a beat, but I might have missed a note or two."

Former Real Chemistry tenor, Steve Horota, sang "All I Have to Do is Dream" with the Bradley brothers while walking back to the hotels from a late night pizza after the chorus contest. Bob's wife, Vikki, filled in at bass.

Other Mad Hatters spotted in the crowd of 8,000 barbershop enthusiasts included Craig Johnson and Dick Zang. According to Real Chemistry tenor, Augie D'Aurelli, the weather all weekend was perfect.

The Westminster Chorus won the chorus contest singing "It Only Takes a Moment" and "Mardi Gras March," scoring 2,932 points. Dallas's The Vocal Majority came in second at 2,913 points. Toronto's The Northern lights finished third with 2,822 points, followed by Sound of the Rockies from Denver and Alexandria, Virginia's, Alexandria Harmonizers.

The first place gold medalists for the 2010 Collegiate Quartet Championship was Swedish Match.

Continued on the next page

Chorus Performs at Country Fair

By John Bradley

Danbury, CT - It was a beautiful Saturday morning, June 26, as the Danbury Mad Hatter Chorus performed at the King Street Church of Christ Country Fair in Danbury. It was a day of sun, low humidity, strawberry shortcake, barbecue, games and contests and, of course, good music enjoyed by an enthusiastic crowd inside the old church, built in 1846.

According to Robert Golenbock, the Mad Hatter's assistant raconteur, "It was nice to see people smiling and singing with us, not the horrified looks we sometimes get when we sing."

A highlight of the performance came as Don Sutherland climbed into the "crow's nest" during "Please, Mr. Columbus." "It's moments like that when we are happy we have a doctor singing with us," said chapter president Danny Anderson.



*Don Sutherland as Luigi in the "crow's nest"
Picture by Mary Dunkle*

Special thanks to Terry Dunkle and his wife, Mary, who, as chairperson of the event, made our performance possible.



*Joe Hudson warming up the chorus
Picture by Mary Dunkle*

International

Continued from the previous page

In the chorus contest, the comedy quartet, Storm Front, took first place honors, scoring 8,220 points, singing a very funny parody of "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" and "Jukebox Saturday Night Medley."

Rounding out the top five quartets were Old School, scoring 8,163 points, Ringmasters, a quartet of young men from Sweden that scored 7,968 points, Musical Island Boys from New Zealand that accumulated 7,841 points, and The Allies at 7,829 points.

When asked how he enjoyed the convention, Mad Hatter bass, Fred Baran, replied, "I enjoyed the convention very much and was encouraged to see the many young quartets and choruses present, which is a good sign for the future of the Barbershop Harmony Society."

"Some of the best quartet singing was at the afterglow," Fred continued. "Dick Zang and I stayed up till 2:00 AM listening to some great sounds."

The Bradley Contests

Sitting through 27 choruses and what seemed like countless quartets can border on the monotonous after awhile. So, to keep my interest engaged, I decided to award my own prizes.

Ringmasters, from Stockholm, Sweden, won the most Interesting Arrangements award, causing two judge huddles. We assume the judges were discussing whether the arrangements truly represented barbershop musical style. The quartet also won the Best Hair award.



Ringmasters

The comedy quartet, Storm Front, won Worst Dressed Quartet, with their purple suits and lime shirts and ties. Southern Gateway Chorus, from Cincinnati, OH, took Worst Dressed Chorus with their grey and lime green sparkling jackets. The Pathfinder Chorus from Nebraska came in second, looking like a pack of crayons.

All three groups got this writer wondering why barbershoppers insist on dressing worse than golfers.

Forefront won the award for most beard stubble, while the Downeasters chorus from Yarmouth, Maine, won the Best Beards award.



The Downeasters

A Mighty Wind quartet won the award for the greatest height differential between baritone and tenor.



A Mighty Wind

The Mountaintown Singers from Michigan won the Why Did They Do That? award for questionable choreography. It seems a lot of choruses don't believe that moves should match what they are singing.

The best Jazz Quartet award went to the Four Freshmen, who entertained the convention during Saturday's Harmony Foundation Presents... show.

The Reading Terminal Market won for best salad bar.

Uniform color of the year: dark gray.

The Barbershop Harmony Society president, Bill Biffle, won the best MC award. He was the only one who didn't read scripted bad jokes (many of which were written down by Danbury raconteur, Bob Bradley). Bill's humor was spontaneous and genuine. He was a pleasure to listen to.

Raymond Schwarzkopf Returns to Danbury

On Tuesday evening, June 21, music judge, coach, director and "quartet guy," Raymond Schwarzkopf, made his second visit to a Mad Hatter meeting for an evening of coaching and fun.

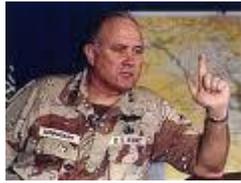
According to Schwarzkopf, "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."

The coach spent much of the Tuesday evening session working with Joe Hudson, the chorus music director, fine-tuning his directing techniques. But he also helped the chorus improve its delivery of a number of repertoire songs, and impressed individual Mad Hatters in a number of ways.

Continued on the next page

Schwarzkopf

Continued from the previous page



Raymond Schwarzkopf

When asked to comment by email on three things you could take from the coaching session, a number of chorus members replied with the following comments.

Baritone Chuck Krieger wrote that, "As a singer, by matching my facial expressions to the mood or to the emotions in the song I am singing, I will help the delivery of these moods or emotions to the audience. This will lead them to want to listen and wonder about what's coming up in the song."

Tenor, Augie D'Aurelli, wrote, "The session reinforced that you can't sing on autopilot. When I feel it, so will the audience."

Tenor Art Roberts mentioned that the session reminded him to "feel and emote the song." And, you need to "perform to amuse yourself." According to coach Schwarzkopf, the audience will experience what they want to experience.

Lead Robert Golenbock added, "He reminded me that the chorus is not a democracy. The director leads and we follow." Robert also wrote, "During a performance I should listen to the other voices, not compete with them or try to help them."

Bass Dickson DeMarche learned to "shift your stance and your weight to reflect the strength with which you want to sing."

Joe Hudson contributed, "If I cannot sing a note in my part, then I'll sing another note someone else is singing."

Bass Dick Zang wrote: "I will stride onto that stage inspired by the roar of the greasepaint and the smell of the crowd. My eyes will be on the director as I press forward to take pitch. The slight tilt of my head only enhances the anticipation of the audience as the sound of the pitch pipe fades and is replaced by that first pure barbershop tonic chord."

According to lead, Bob Bradley, "I learned that the chicken stuffed with lobster and crab meat is quite good at Rosy Tomorrow's."

At the end of the coaching session, Schwarzkopf concluded by saying, "Do what is right, not what you think the high headquarters wants or what you think will make you look good."



Quartet Corner

News from our chorus quartets

Rare Occasion – By Fred Baran

On Tuesday afternoon, June 8, we sang "Happy Birthday" to a lady who worked at an orthodontist office in Georgetown, CT. To accommodate this request and put together a quartet that was available, we sang with Dick Walter at bass, Terry Dunkle singing baritone, Jim Hopper at lead and me at tenor. While the sound was a little strange, our audience seemed to enjoy it, including the orthodontist and his patient reclining in the chair.

Later that evening, at the chorus rehearsal, we switched parts again with Terry and Jim singing bari and lead respectively, and Robert and I singing tenor and bass. For this performance, we called ourselves "Scrambled Eggs."

On Saturday, June 12, Rare Occasion sang at the Danbury Health Center on Osborne Street. This occasion marked our first official appearance with our new bass, Terry Dunkle, and judging from the audience reaction, it was a success. While it was cloudy and overcast when we started to sing outdoors, the sun came out and it turned into a beautiful afternoon. We sang to approximately 30 people who were split on either side of the courtyard. Consequently, we shuttled back and forth between the groups, singing a few songs to each.

Singing outside, as many of you know, can be quite a challenge with all the background noise and sounds. Being right across the street from Danbury Hospital, I expected to hear some sirens from emergency vehicles. But, the only distraction was a loud bus passing by.

A lady visiting one of the patients had a cute little dog on a leash, and he seemed quite enthralled with our sound, cocking his head to the side and listening intently. He must have been fascinated by the strange notes emanating from the baritone.

On Tuesday evening, June 15, we sang at the Officer's Installation Dinner for the New Milford Rotary Club at the Tivoli Restaurant at the invitation of Peter Daubner. Prior to our singing, a couple of Rotary members recognized the Rare Occasion name on our shirts, and remarked how much they enjoyed our music at the Wine Tasting Holiday Party of the New Milford Historical Society over the past few years and asked where our red sweaters (winter uniform) were.

In addition to our set of six songs, we sang for and celebrated a happy birthday and sang for another couple who were having both a birthday and an anniversary. Being an innovative quartet, we sang "Happy Annibirthday To You."

Peter's wife Elaine was our photographer and took many pictures.

Continued on the next page

Quartets

Continued from the previous page

We also had the opportunity to do a little recruiting for new members and passed out some business cards. We are hopeful that some new faces will show up at our rehearsals.

The gentlemen sitting next to Jim Hopper asked if we were in the *Music Man* at Richter Park. Jim replied that he had sung in the production and described his part in the show. The gentleman went on to tell us that his daughter appeared in the musical as well.

The world being a small place, we found out that Jim was the husband of this man's daughter in the show. The man then asked Jim, "Does that make you my son-in-law?" This brought a round of laughter from the group.

We thoroughly enjoyed performing for the group, the great meal and the gracious hospitality of Peter and Elaine Daubner, who served as our hosts.

We also had a chance to have Peter join us in singing "Over the Rainbow," during which he unleashed his hidden talent as an excellent baritone.

On Saturday, June 26, we arrived at the Church of Christ on King Street where the chorus was to perform later and had a short rehearsal for the quartet. We then went outside where the church's annual Country Fair was being held, and sang a few songs to warm up the crowd with the barbershop sound as a prelude to the Mad Hatters performance in the church.

Along with the other members of the chorus, I would like to thank Mary Dunkle, who was the chairperson for the fair, for inviting us to sing and enjoy the food, including the great strawberry shortcake that was served to all members of the Mad Hatters.

The HatterTones – By Dick Zang

The quartet helped our lead, Dan Griffin, and his fellow Brewster High School classmates celebrate their 50th reunion at a dinner dance at the Centennial Golf Club in Carmel, NY, on June 19.

It was the culmination of a weekend of activities for the mostly 68-year-old crowd, and they were in a good mood as the HatterTones presented an upbeat set of good old-fashioned barbershop tunes. But it almost didn't happen.

Our tenor, Joe Hudson, was held up in traffic for an hour and a half while approaching the George Washington Bridge and his cell phone was dead. He was returning from a gig with the Big Apple Chorus in New Jersey. Joe was not a happy camper when he finally arrived at the club over half an hour late.

Note to Dick Walter: Don't schedule any sing-outs in the Garden State for a while.

Real Chemistry – By John Bradley

On Friday, June 11, the Real Chemistry quartet sang at the Art of Caring, a gala event featuring art, entertainment and exceptional cuisine at Boehringer Ingelheim's headquarters in Ridgefield, CT. The evening is an annual fund raiser for the Western Connecticut Regional Hospice, and benefits the patients and families served by that organization.

Real Chemistry has been performing at the event for a number of years. Our original involvement was arranged by our former tenor and Boehringer employee, Steve Horota. After Steve moved to the wilds of northern Massachusetts, we continued to appear each year.

It's the only event I've experienced that allows us to entertain men suits and women in evening gowns as we all sip champagne and are served shrimp.



The Art of Caring gala at Boehringer Ingelheim

We wandered through the art show and dinner court singing our normal repertoire, ranging from our champagne and shrimp song, "Coney Island Baby," to our special dinner song, "My Wife is on a Diet."

Our performance ended with our annual tag singing in the stairwell, this year featuring our new tag, the "Mott's Apple Juice Jingle."

Baritone Deep Thought of the Month

I've never tipped a cow. Then again, one has never served me food.



Stories About Songwriters

By Fred Baran

Hoagland Howard Carmichael was born in Bloomington, Indiana, on November 22, 1899. He was an American composer, pianist, singer, actor and bandleader. He is best known for writing "Stardust," "Georgia On My Mind," "The Nearness Of You," and "Heart And Soul," which are four of the most-recorded American songs of all time.

In his early years, there was an outside chance that he might become a lawyer. Fortunately, history caught itself in time. Hoagy took a flyer and decided to become a composer of music. In addition to the immortal songs listed above, he wrote "Ole Buttermilk Sky," "Two Sleepy People," "Lazy River," "Small Fry" and about 270 other memorable classics, proving that this talented, creative keyboard genius made the right decision.

Hoagy learned to play the piano by ear, listening to his mother as she pounded out ragtime at the University of Indiana dances in Bloomington where the family lived. After several years of this osmosis-type exposure, Hoagy found he had a talent of his own and a sensitive ear for music.

At first he picked out tunes on the piano at home, but became so polished he played his way through Indiana University's law school. Hoagy had his own group, Carmichael's Collegians.

In 1924, Hoagy composed "Riverboat Shuffle" in the Negro spiritual idiom, purely as a diversion from his law studies. Bix Beiderbecke, the trumpet player of the professional musical group, The Wolverines, liked the number and recorded it.

Do You Recognize This?

Below is a venue at which the Mad Hatters sang. Do you recognize it? If you are the first to respond by email with the correct answer, you win 100 points!



Congratulations to Dickson DeMarche who correctly recognized last month's entry as Meadow Ridge in Redding, CT. Upon receiving his 100 points certificate, Dickson said, "Guys - All I can say is WOW! I can't wait to hang this up on my trophy wall. Can't thank you enough!"

A New York publisher heard the record and printed the music and Hoagy modestly reached a milestone: His first work was published. Paul Whiteman then picked up his "Washboard Blues," but even that recognition failed to convince Hoagy that he should take more than a casual interest in music.

Hoagy was graduated from the University in 1926 with a degree in law and he headed to Florida where he hung out his shingle. Fortunately, potential clients stayed away and a slightly chastened Mr. Carmichael returned to Indiana. It was touch and go between law and music for a while, but Hoagy finally joined Gene Goldkette's orchestra. It was a short-lived affair. Gene decided he didn't need the slim, athletic-looking piano player, and Hoagy returned to Indianapolis and organized an orchestra to play for dances at the posh Columbia Club on the Circle.

Hoagy felt he was ready for Hollywood, but the film town wasn't quite ready for him. They were willing to wait a few more years, so when Paul Whiteman's orchestra left Hollywood for New York, Hoagy went with them and took a job as an arranger with a music publisher on Tin Pan Alley.

In 1927, during a visit to his old college campus, the melody of "Stardust" came to him. He found an old, dusty piano with a tinny ring to it at the college hangout and wrote the song that made musical history. In 1933, Hoagy's "Lazybones," written during the depths of the depression, became another sensation. This time Hollywood was ready for the has-been lawyer.

A success with music, Hoagy tried motion pictures and in this medium demonstrated his talent for instant success. His memorable roles included the character, Cricket, in *To Have and Have Not*, and that of the eccentric cab driver in *Johnny Angel*. In *Canyon Passage*, he rode a mule, wore a top hat and sang his now famous "Ole Buttermilk Sky." This was followed by the Academy Award winning picture, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, in which he portrayed the part of Butch, the piano playing uncle of the boy who lost his hands during the war.

Hoagy collaborated with lyricist Johnny Mercer in *Here Comes the Groom*, and their joint effort won both of them an Oscar in 1951.

Composer, actor, arranger, golfer, cook, Hoagy also took up writing and painting. "The Stardust Road," written in 1946, is now a collector's item, and his autobiography, "Sometimes I Wonder," was released in 1965. He married Ruth Minardi and they had two sons, Randy, a pianist-composer/singer, and Hoagy Bix, named after Bix Beiderbecke. Hoagy Bix became a successful stock broker on Wall Street.

Some of my personal favorite songs that Hoagy wrote include: "I Get Along Without You Very Well," "The Lamp Lighter's Serenade," and "Skylark." Hoagy was inducted into the USA's Songwriters Hall Of Fame in 1971, along with Duke Ellington.

Hoagy died of heart failure in Rancho Mirage, California, on December 27, 1981.



The President's Podium

By Danny Anderson

I want to encourage the membership to make plans to attend Harmony College Northeast in August. This weekend offers the opportunity for you to learn more about our craft, sing, be entertained, and gain many new friends.

The school is set in a college atmosphere and you'll be sleeping in the dorm rooms and eating in the cafeteria. The food has always been plentiful, varied and good. The beds are hard as rocks, but you won't be spending much time in them.

Friday night begins with a general session followed by a class. After the class there is usually a hospitality room where we all enjoy food, drink and song.

Saturday features a full day of classes culminating with a concert featuring top-talent guest quartets along with the youth chorus from the weekend's Harmony Explosion camp.

And, if you go as a quartet, you'll can get a full day of coaching.

Speaking of coaching, we had a wonderful coaching session a couple of weeks ago, with Raymond Schwarzkopf. I was amazed at the improvement of the chorus as the evening progressed. I was pleased that we employed the techniques taught at the sing out the following Saturday, producing the best performance I can recall

Many chorus members attended the International Convention in Philadelphia. I eagerly await their reports of the experience.

Gentlemen, we need to work on our music throughout the week. We should be taking time daily listening to the learning CDs and memorizing the words. Too many members are not off paper on songs. The quicker we learn our music the sooner we can be polishing it. We should come to our meetings prepared to practice, not to begin learning the notes and words.

Thanks to all those who are showing up for the sing outs. As was discussed during the coaching session, the more of these a member attends the more his confidence level rises. This will assist us with our stage presence when going to competition, for we will be more comfortable standing in front of an audience.

June was another good month for attractin visitors to our meetings. Each member needs to put forth the effort to invite men to attend. Most of our members make an effort to make our guests feel welcome and help them enjoy their visit. Keep up the good work!

We have been invited to a joint meeting with the Bridgeport Chapter July 27. They supported our Interchapter night last year. I encourage all members to plan on attending this event.



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.

Hi guys. Love your bulletin. Perhaps you could help me with an argument my wife and are are having. She wants me to take up barbershop singing because she heard that singing helps cut down on snoring. I do snore a lot, but I think it's a ridiculus idea. What do you think?

Sleepy from Southbury

Sleepy, I've heard many grat reasons to become a barbershopper, but this is a first.

I did a little research and found there may be a correlation between singing and snoring less. In 2005, researchers at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital in England began research to see whether singing could help to reduce snoring. They found that you might be able to stop or reduce snoring by singing.

But you can't just sing "Heart of My Heart" once and expect to be cured. In order to stop snoring by singing, you need to keep at it. Results will not be seen for some time, just in the same way that you don't see results of getting a muscular body until you've worked out regularly for months.

According to the study, singing exercises muscles in the back of the throat, which can get flabby like other kinds of muscles. If the muscles in the back of the throat get flabby, they make vibrations by rubbing the front of the throat when you breathe deeply in your sleep. Keep those muscles tight, and there should be less nocturnal noise.

Singing also exercises the muscles in your soft palate and upper throat which may cause snoring or aggravate it. Stopping snoring by singing has to be done for at least a half hour every day for several weeks before you hear (or don't hear) any results.

There are special "Singing for Snorers" CDs and booklets available online or in health food stores that claim they help tighten and tone the muscles better than just singing anything at random.

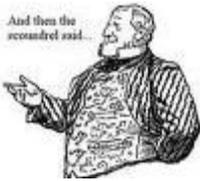
But, Sleepy, this is not guaranteed to work for everyone. I have been singing barbershop for almost 12 years and, according to Miss Tarality, I still snore like a drunken sailor.



Robert's Raconteur

Ramblings

By Bob Bradley



Philadelphia has changed a lot in the years since I was last there. I went looking for Gimbels, my former place of employment, and found it is now a parking lot.

We were able to get to see the Renoir exhibit at the Art Museum and also enjoy a large collection of Monets. This alone made the trip worth it. Add that to the Reading Market, which was full of good stuff brought in by the Amish daily such as fresh meat, vegetables, fruit, and bakery goods, and you had a great place to be.

The Philly Town Hall is the largest in the world and was right outside our hotel, the Marriott Courtyard. The Town Hall is a spectacular example of French Empire styling and is still in use. There is a 37-foot statue of William Penn on top that weights over 20 tons. Until 1987, this was the tallest building in the city.

We experienced a bomb scare at Love Park (what a great irony that is). The entire center of the city was in gridlock and sealed off. We had to walk around the bomb site to get to the museum, which we later learned was about a mile and a half away. We heard a large pop and found out that the bomb squad detonated the package which turned out to be a homeless person's belongings. The park was littered with old underwear and clothes.

The streets in Philly are very clean with no rubbish to speak of, very few pigeons, but a lot of homeless people. In New York City during a convention they at least round up the homeless. In Philly, they are left on the streets. The contrast between mostly white guys singing and people of color on the streets was an interesting study in social problems.

Now on to the contest report and musings: It was a great contest! Storm Front, our new quartet champion, was more funny than I have ever seen them. The "driving song" will become a barbershop classic. The quality of their singing and their act was beyond anything done by any other quartet. It is impossible to score them. Men in Black made the Northeastern District proud. I found a new favorite quartet in Round Midnight, four guys from New York City. The lead has one of the best voices I ever heard anywhere.

Joe Hudson was going around on a cloud because he got to sing tenor with MaxQ, and got a compliment from Jeff Oxley. We may never approach Joe as a normal human again. John, Steve and I sat with Bill Manion at the contest and it was great to see him again. Also it was a good time to meet a lot of the NED guys around the hall. I saw Joe Millet and reminded him we have not been paid yet for the district contest.

I saw a photographer who was covering the event who also covers the fund raiser for the Hospice at Boeringer, an event at which Real Chemistry recently performed.

We had breakfast with a Philly cop we met, and when he left the table Steve Jamison and his wife joined us. Steve is now located in Florida. We also met some old Mad Hatters Bill Manion knew who are now scattered around the country.

The chorus contest was great also. The NED group from Maine came in dead last, singing an old arrangement in an old arrangement way. The world seems to have passed the NED by. Maybe because we are at the edge of the country we miss out on the newer singing techniques and styles.

The Westminster Chorus shows what can be done with youth. These guys sing like angels and dance like Astaire. Also, it's interesting to note that their director and Jim Clancy, from Dallas, have never met. I am sure now that Jim Clancy is going out with a silver medal they never will. Jeff Oxley will be taking over Dallas.

We had a mega sing on Saturday, following a mega walk to the mega sing. We made the TV news on Saturday evening with the fire commissioner directing us from the top of a cherry picker as we filled Constitution Park. We then took a mega walk back to the convention center.

The Pennsylvania Convention Center is a work in progress. It was created from an old rail terminal and is huge. The society said that it was connected to the headquarters hotel, and it was, but the hall seemed to be on one side of the city and the hotel on the other, connected by a loooooong hall. We learned early that it was a lot closer to enter away from the hotel.

The place may someday be great, but right now the large columns block the view of many. The seats were created by the guys who devised the torture areas at Gitmo. For some reason, the food concessions closed when they were most needed.

The AIC show was super, the harmony show with the Four Freshman was well worth it, although many people began to leave toward the end of the show, off to catch the early bird senior specials I am sure. Even the Four Freshman on stage made a comment about it. I guess rudeness can be found anywhere these days.

The Big Apple Chorus should have scored higher. All of us disagreed with the judges on their score.

To summarize my impressions of the week

1. Philly is a great city to visit. Birthplace of American Liberty and all that stuff.
2. The music at the contest was something that everyone should experience at least once to appreciate our hobby.
3. The average age of the society is 72. The average of the contestants in both the chorus and quartet contests must be below 40. This gives us great hope for the future of our hobby.

Continued on Page 11



June Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Submitted using a stromuhr by Robert Golenbock, secretary.

Meeting called to order by Daniel “Danny the Enforcer” Anderson at 6:10 pm on June 1, 2010, and not a moment too soon. Meeting held at the Church of Christ.

SECRETARY’S REPORT was fabricated by Joe Hudson because the actual minutes had not yet been published. Nevertheless, we were able to imagine that they were really good. Report was inexplicably accepted by J. Hudson, seconded by L. LaPlante. Approved.

TREASURER’S REPORT: We have not yet received the money promised us by the District for hosting the best ever District convention. Otherwise, everything is fine. Motion to receive the minutes by R. Golenbock, seconded by D. DeMarche. Approved.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Tim Kaiser, MD, was unanimously accepted as a member subsequent to his singing evaluation last week. Paul Helfer was also approved pending his evaluation. Joe West and Nate Chester are still awaiting official membership documents from Society headquarters.

VP PUBLIC RELATIONS: The Board commends Dickson DeMarche for his superb coordination efforts on behalf of Singing for Life. The local Red Cross was glad to have us singing at their blood drive. Jimmy Hopper suggests we do it again in another town. We might offer a free singing valentine in a raffle and discounted tickets to our annual show. We should also bring our A-frame sign.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: There was no meeting this month. Approval of “Where is Love” is still pending.

OLD BUSINESS: 1. Annual Show -- The Show script committee had its first meeting. The script is beginning to be fleshed out. We discussed the possibility of doing two shows or – if we only have one show – to have it in the afternoon. While older folks might appreciate the earlier time of an afternoon show, some people are working on Saturday. An afternoon show would let us have the afterglow early, and everyone would get to go home at a regular hour.

Two shows, of course, would entail increased hourly charges from the school and the custodians as well as the talent. If we do two shows, we can’t be sure if we are just spreading our regular patrons between the two or if we will really get enough extra patrons to make the two sets worthwhile. In any case, we should have a questionnaire to hand out at the show to see what our patrons actually prefer. We would also be able to get their e-mail addresses.

We need to find out what the Honeymooners can do, and we need to arrange for a local high school chorus. We will give their school \$200 for the opportunity of singing three songs – about 15 minutes.

Finally, we should consider whether making tickets to the afterglow available to others attending the show such as area barbershoppers, would be worth the effort.

2. Inter-chapter Picnic: Bridgeport is supposed to host this year. If they can’t, should we do it? Joe and Danny will check with other area chapters.

3. Butch Ashcroft – Butch will be returning in July.

NEW BUSINESS: 1. Tuesday sing-outs – When we have sing-outs on Tuesdays many people don’t come to rehearsal afterwards. Instead let’s go somewhere fun, sing, have a pizza. We would also get ourselves out into the public eye.

2. Rehearsal script – Jimmy likes the scripted rehearsal because it keeps us from wasting time, but he feels it need not be too rigidly adhered to. We need to make sure at the very least that we have a real break and a little time for socializing.

3. Sound system – Our system didn’t sound very good at the Southbury sing-out. We need to set it up and test it with the equipment we have in various setups to find out how to maximize the sound quality. 4

4. Finale PrintMusic – A motion to buy a copy of Finale PrintMusic for Joe so he has more flexibility in sending us music changes was made by R. Golenbock, seconded by J. Hopper. The motion was approved.

MEMBERS PRESENT: C. Zlamany, D. Stoppel.

The Five Steps Necessary to Produce Quality Tone

By Bud Miller, Music VP, Cherry Hills NJ -- part 1 of 5

This is the second in a series of lessons concerning the five steps necessary to produce good tone. The first lesson was about body alignment and posture. The subject of this lesson is proper abdominal-costal (A-C) breathing.

Abdominal and Costal refer to the muscle groups mainly involved in the breathing process. The diaphragm is also involved and is very important in the process, but it is an involuntary muscle and we can exert no conscious control over it. To use A-C breathing correctly, three things must occur:

The chest must be high before you breathe (the body must be properly aligned in the ready position).

Continued on the next page

Quality Tone

Continued from the previous page

The rib cage must expand sideways.

The abdominal wall must relax as you inhale in order for the diaphragm to descend.

If you will practice with these three things in mind and master them, it is all you really need to know about breathing. Notice that number one is directly related to the first lesson in this series - body alignment and posture. If your mental imagery has been correct and the body aligned, the position of the rib cage will be correct automatically. That is why any study of voice has to start with posture. If the rib cage is not in a high position, it doesn't matter how you breathe; it will ultimately be unsuccessful. Singing with good body alignment is a plus for both singing and visual categories.

You can actually "feel" number 2 when it happens properly. The expansion should take place in the arc of the solar plexus around the lower ribs. Every time you take a breath in rehearsal or a performance, you must breathe deeply enough to expand the lower rib cage. Only in the case of the very short catch breath does the air not go deeply enough to fully expand the rib cage.

Number 3 presents the greatest challenge. Learning to relax the abdominal wall while doing breathing and even singing exercises is easy; relaxing under stress of performance is not so easy. The stress and pressure of performance causes many "untrained" singers to shallow breathe.

The automatic lifting action of the abdominal wall, particularly as it tries to support the end of a phrase, and the accompanying tightness of the muscle, creates a situation in which it is easier for the singer to allow the muscle to stay flexed rather than to allow it to relax properly when taking the next breath. This prevents the diaphragm from descending to allow the intake of as much air as usual. The result is that we are now trying to sing the same length phrases as before but with less than half the original air supply. When this happens, everything suffers - tone quality, synchronization and ultimately the overall performance. You must consciously learn to relax the abdominal wall and subsequently take the deep breath in rehearsal. It will not happen by just talking and thinking about it and then expecting it to be automatic.

Work hard to learn to execute these breathing mechanics correctly in rehearsal (at home and with the chorus). Remember, the real test comes during a live performance. Make sure you are aware of these potential problems as you rehearse. If they are present in rehearsal, you can be sure they will be a problem in performance.

Remember, to become a better singer, you must master the techniques of good quality singing one step at a time. Set personal singing goals and lay out the steps to success. You will benefit, and the entire chorus will become better because of you.



Society and District Notes



SUMMER
20 TWENTY TEN 10

Harmony College
NORTHEAST

Aug. 13-15 • Worcester State College

Learn to improve your musical,
performance, and singing
skills...and have FUN doing it!

- Cost and Registration process to be announced soon.
- The NED has created another fantastic event for you. If you've been, this will be better, if you've not been...come experience it.
- The weekend includes instruction for singers and directors of all levels and finishes with a terrific show including the staff and the harmony explosion camp.
- We will for the first time this year have classes designated for both newer barbershoppers and advanced barbershoppers. The instructor and class lists are still be finalized.

Guest Teaching quartets:

Acoustix, 1990 champs

The Nashville Singers, International qualifiers, featuring former NED's Rick Spencer and Dusty Schleier, both now of the BHS Staff

Dean and Keynote Speaker:

Rick Spencer, BHS Director of Operations

Mark Hale!! Yes, we have the multi-time Gold Medal Director of the Masters of Harmony, Gold Medal lead of Michigan Jake, and MUS judge coming in to run a Director's Master Class.

Director's (and Assistant Director's) track at HCNE this year is a single, day long session. The participants will get the music and part recordings for two songs, and will participate in a day-long chorus rehearsal / workshop led by Mark (moderated by Steve tramack).

During the day, Mark will teach rehearsal techniques by actually rehearsing the group. The participants will get to see a Gold Medal director in action, addressing common elements of the rehearsal (warm-up, pacing, teaching approaches, problem identification and solving, song prep, performance planning, interpretation, etc.). As Mark addresses key elements, we'll stop, talk about the problem and approach, and discuss its effectiveness, other approaches, etc.

A portion of the workshop will also include some hands-on time for front line directors, being coached by Mark. This is open to all current directors (front line, assistant, etc.), or anyone interested in seeing a Gold Medal Director and Quartet Man at work.

For more information:

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Directors College (DCNE) Steve Tramack stramack@gmail.com

Ye Olde Joke Boarde



Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper

Bill, a barbershop baritone, was having a really bad day on the golf course. It seems he had missed one putt too many. At the 14th green, after missing another putt, he let loose with a fairly impressive string of profanities, grabbed his putter, and stormed off toward the lake by the 15th tee.

"Uh-oh," said his caddie to one of his playing partners, "There goes that club."

"You think so?" said his partner. "I've got five bucks says he misses the water!"

...

Fresh out of business school, the young man, who was a barbershop baritone, answered a want ad for an accountant. Now he was being interviewed by a very nervous man who ran a small business that he had started himself.

"I need someone with an accounting degree," the man said. "But mainly, I'm looking for someone to do my worrying for me."
"Excuse me?" the baritone accountant said.

"I worry about a lot of things," the man said. "But I don't want to have to worry about money. Your job will be to take all the money worries off my back."

"I see," the accountant said. "And how much does the job pay?"

"I'll start you at eighty thousand."

"Eighty thousand dollars!" the baritone accountant exclaimed. "How can such a small business afford a sum like that?"

"That," the owner said, "is your first worry."

Current Mad Hatter Repertoire

Performance A

Always
Breaking Up Is Hard To Do
Cabaret
Heart
Hey, Look Me Over
How Are Things in Glocca Morra
I Feel a Song Coming On
I Found a Million Dollar Baby
I'm Always Chasing Rainbows
Over the Rainbow
Please, Mr. Columbus
Sh-Boom
Thanks For The Memory
There is Nothing Like a Dame
You Make Me Feel So Young
You're The Hangnail In My Life, And
I Can't Bite You Off

Contest Songs

Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue
I Don't Mind Being All Alone

Patriotic

Star-Spangled Banner
America the Beautiful
God Bless America

Inspirational

I Believe
Let There Be Peace on Earth
Lord's Prayer
Amazing Grace

Upcoming Songs

Give My Regards to Broadway
You'll Never Walk Alone
This Land Is Your Land
Lullaby in Ragtime
If I Loved You
On The Sunny Side of the Street
Loch Lomond
Goodnight, Sweetheart
You Stuck My Heart In a Old Tin Can
and Shot It Off a Log



"He who sings
scares away
his woes"

Miguel de Cervantes
Saavedra

The Danbury, CT Chapter SPEBSQSA

PO Box 5149

Brookfield, CT 06804-5149

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Assistant Director:	Jim Hopper
Assistant Director:	Don Sutherland
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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

July 10: Chapter Singout. Meadow Ridge Continuous Care Retirement Community, 100 Redding Rd., Redding (Georgetown), CT. Warmup 3:30 PM, sing 4:00 – 5:00 PM.

July 24: Chapter Singout. Putnam County 4-H Fair. Putnam County Fairgrounds, Gipsy Trail Road, Kent, NY. Warmup 4:30 PM (meet at Holly Real Estate), Sing 5:15 PM.

Harmony College Northeast: August 13 – 15, Worcester State College, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester, MA 01602. Details to be announced.

October 2: Mad Hatter Annual Show. Brookfield High School. Details to be announced.

October 22 – 24: 2010 Northeast District Convention, Portland, ME.

July Milestones

Birthdays:

- 2 - Paul Just
- 3 - Linda Horhota
- 14 - Carol Rosa
- 16 - Bob Bradley
- 22 - Ed Feinberg
- 27 - John Bradley
- 27 - Mary Dunkle

Wedding Anniversaries:

- 7 - Frank and Veronica Fehling
- 7 - Steve and Linda Horhota
- 14 - Terry and Mary Dunkle

Raconteur Ramblings

Continued from Page 7

4. Don't believe the society when they advertise either distance or unobstructed views.
5. Bring your own seating to contests.
6. Go with Joe Hudson to a contest. He is like a kid in a candy shop and makes everyone feel good around him.
7. There was plenty of time to schmooze and to get around the city, but in the quarterfinals, do you have to have all 51 quartets on one day? At the end of the week, all of us needed our backsides replaced.
8. This has got to be the greatest hobby devised by mankind. We are so lucky to be a part of it and to share the hobby with people of such talent and dedication, and with Joe.

