



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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June 2010

Mad Hatters Sing for Life In Ridgefield

By Dickson DeMarche

Ridgefield, CT - As part of the nationwide Singing for Life program, the Mad Hatters joined with the Connecticut chapter of the American Red Cross on May 18 to provide entertainment and diversion for blood donors at the Ridgefield Recreation Center. By all accounts, the event was a success.

Chorus members, performing in a building about the size of six cargo hangars, commented on having fun while singing for people lying on their backs with tubes hanging out of their arms. (The applause was very light that day!). Donors walked up after their donations and commented on how nice it was to have music and wasn't it nice of us to give our time for a worthy cause.

One blood donor was recognized as a barbershopper when he started singing along while waiting to donate. He even came up and joined us for a couple of Polecat numbers.

Red Cross staff and volunteers said that our singing made their day more enjoyable and they wished we could do it for all of their drives.

John Bradley, Mad Hatter baritone, said, "This was definitely one of the best events the chorus has supported in the 12 years I have been a member. I wish I had gotten to the donor room sooner, but I got lost somewhere between the Rec Center's NASCAR track and the luge run."

The Chapter Board of Directors is contemplating another similar event on our own, not waiting for next May and the Society's nationwide Singing for Life program.

This thinking was prompted by a realization that the event introduced a number of people to barbershop harmony and this increased awareness could be good for recruiting new members and also improving attendance at our shows.

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Danbury Chorus Celebrates Memorial Day in Southbury

By John Bradley

Southbury, CT – The Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus celebrated Memorial Day as guests of the Southbury Parks and Recreation Department at their annual community picnic.

Under a cloudless blue sky at Ballentine Park, the chorus sang as kids, adults and a few dogs enjoyed moonwalks, face painting, music and food that included hot dogs, hamburgers, cotton candy, sno-cones and drinks sold by Boy Scout Troop 1607.

Thanks to chorus Board of Directors member and Parks and Recreation Commission chairman, Charlie Rosa, this has become a regular event for the chorus, and one most members look forward to each year.

"The weather could not have been better, and the crowd looked like it was enjoying the day," said tenor, Augie D'Aurelli.



Picture by John Bradley

*The Mad Hatters warming up
before their Memorial Day performance*

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Blood Drive

Continued from the previous page

If we do another this year we would try to work directly with the local Red Cross personnel, who were much more helpful and cooperative than the designated State representative. We might also see if there are blood drives on Saturdays so that we could have a better showing of chorus members than is possible on a work day.

Publicity needs to go out weeks ahead of the event and without waiting for the Red Cross to participate. And, we need to have some identifying poster or banner at the venue to let people know who we are and why we are there.

I would like to express my thanks to all who participated on May 18th and especially to John Cheeseman and Dick Walter for their help beforehand. You all were great!

Even with the hurdles and shortcomings of this particular event, the positive public relations and the “do-good” feeling we experienced bear out the validity of the Society’s concept. Now that we know what is involved, it should be easier and even better next time.



Donors waiting to give blood at the Ridgefield Recreation Center

Baritone Deep Thought of the Month

I used to have a fear of hurdles, but I got over it.



Memorial Day

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“The only glitch was with the sound system,” said chorus music director, Joe Hudson. “The wind was causing a good deal of excess noise from the speakers.”

“There’s a gentle breeze out there,” assistant raconteur, Robert Golenbock, told the audience, “but there’s a hurricane inside this tent.”

But thanks to the chorus’s Crack Engineering Crew, the interference was limited and the chorus went on to give its audience a fun 60 minutes.



Picture by Terry Dunkle

Above: The Crack Engineering Crew tackles sound system setup. Below: An ingenious solution for sheltering the microphone from the wind. Step aside, Army Corps of Engineers



Picture by John Bradley

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!



Quartet Corner

News from our chorus quartets

Rare Occasion – By Fred Baran

On Saturday May 22, we were invited to sing at a "House Concert" at a beautiful, spacious home on King Street in Danbury. Our invitation came via Terry Dunkle, a friend and neighbor of the hosts, Annie Kelly, a singer-songwriter and publicist who lives with her husband, Paul, a film editor. They are well connected with local musicians from jazz, bluegrass, doo-wop and rock.

The party is an annual opportunity for these musicians and singers to get together and perform in an informal setting. It also presented an opportunity for Rare Occasion to perform, network and become more well known in the local area.

Since three of us had previous commitments for the evening, we appeared in the late afternoon and kicked-off the musical agenda with a set of four tunes from our repertoire. We had positive feed-back from a number of people in the audience and sang a couple more songs before we had to leave.

Terry and his wife Mary stayed till around 11:00 PM, and the party was still going strong with a crowd of about 70 people.

Terry reports, "The music ran the gamut from rock to folk to jazz. Most of the performers also frequent the weekly jam sessions at Pizzeria Laurentano in Bethel. I don't know all their names, but without exception they were first-rate."

We heard half-a-dozen singers (including singer-songwriter Annie Kelly and Steely Dan backup vocalist, Leslie Miller), several keyboardists, an amazingly accomplished fiddler, two mandolinists, a flutist, three or four drummers, several guitarists, at least one bass player, and numerous players of tambourines, maracas, and other percussion instruments.

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Emails to the Editors



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

I noticed at a recent Mad Hatter singout that the director held up one, two or three fingers when he wanted the chorus to sing louder or softer. My Australian wife, who used to sing with the Sweet Adelaides, says this is common in aboriginal cultures. I always thought barbershop was a purely American artform. Is it possible that stories about O. C. Cash and hotel rooftops in Oklahoma are myths, like Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, passed down to hide a more sinister beginning and purpose. I began to worry when the leaders of your organization hurriedly left Kenosha and set up camp in a cave near Nashville. What did the initials SPEBSQSA really stand for and what are your plans for mankind?

Keith in Kent

You ask some very interesting questions, Keith. Let me answer them one at a time. First, Joe holds up the fingers to let us know how loud he wants us to sing. One finger is for soft, two for medium and three for loud. Barbershop is an original American artform, although the Harmony Society does have chapters "Down Under." Any comparison to aboriginal cultures is, I am sure, purely coincidental. Speaking of the Society, I do have some questions concerning our "founding fathers" and the stories surrounding how a small group of amateur singers grew into the world's largest male singing organization.

It reminds me of a similar tale of how a small band of European knights rose to great riches and power as the guardians of the Crusades. It is believed that the Knights Templar flourished due to secrets the Roman Church never wanted disclosed.

Could there be a connection? The Templars left the Holy Land for seclusion in European cities and countrysides. The Harmony Society escaped Kenosha for Nashville. It is believed the Holy Grail really refers to secrets that the Vatican has kept silenced for centuries. Could SPEBSQSA really be an acronym for a deep secret our leaders dare not disclose?

Keith, I promise to investigate this further when I am in Philadelphia at our International Convention in July.

The six-hour Mad Hatter "appearance" in support of the "Singing for Life" blood drive at the Ridgefield Recreation Center added a pleasant distraction for donors, prompted smiles from many, one-handed applause from some, and tested the chorus's endurance.

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New Members Make for a Merry Month of May

By Andy Bayer

The Danbury Madhatters were (nay----are) overjoyed to report that the month of May brought two new members to our chorus: Tim Kaiser and Paul Helfer.

Tim, who lives in Bethel, CT, is a tenor (by Tuesday night) and an ENT specialist (by day). He is not new to singing in the barbershop style, having adopted this as a hobby roughly 40 years ago. We are really pleased that Tim has returned to the Society fold after a brief lapse of eight years. We look forward to hearing Tim's voice adding depth and manpower to our tenor section. Be sure to strike up a conversation with Tim about coffee and ask him how he became fluent in Spanish.

We also welcome our second new member of the month, Paul Helfer, who hails from Croton Falls, NY. He is a lead who used to sing with the Westchester Chordsmen and is excited to find a closer "home away from home" with the Mad Hatters. You can easily spot Paul in his red "Mr. Satellite" van. He is the expert to whom you can turn if you are not getting a good "feed". Paul's voice will help to round out our lead section, and we look forward to his participation for many years to come!

Remember that every Tuesday night is a guest night, and we are always ready to welcome new voices into our chorus.

Emails

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This was especially a test since the normal Tuesday night, two-and-one-half hour rehearsal at the church fell immediately thereafter. It was a rewarding "moment" for this Mad Hatter. The following morning, however, was a bit of a challenge---just getting out of bed.

John Cheeseman

John, I guess none of us are as young as we used to be.

So, how *are* things in Glocca Morra?
Terry from Teaneck

Terry, it's good to hear from you. It has been a while.

Our readers might not be aware that the Glocca Morra, referred to in the song, "How Are Things in Glocca Morra," does not exist in Ireland. There is, however, a Glockamara, which is pronounced the same way.

So, how are things in Glockamara? At this writing, according to the Weather Channel, it is fair skies, 48 degrees, with wind from the north at one mile per hour.

Quartets

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Heard earlier in the evening was Dr. Bob speaking Portuguese with a Brazilian family, who were surprised to find their pediatrician playing a baby grand in their neighbor's house.

Other guests included a retired FBI agent, a Hungarian countess, a toy entrepreneur, a historian of the American Revolution, and lots of people who either heard or heard about the barbershop quartet that had performed earlier. Their comments reinforced my impression that our genre is universally enjoyed.

While we passed out our business cards, I spoke to a fellow named Sal Salgado, who grew up in Bethel, was given a music contract at age 16 and went out to Hollywood. He was involved with a band called Jay and the Americans who still appear today [remember "This Magic Moment"?]. Sal was interested in a cappella music and said he might stop in at one of our rehearsals.

Annie Kelly does an e-mail newsletter publicizing events, and our connection with her, through Terry, could be a great benefit for both the quartet and chorus in the future.

The HatterTones – By Dick Zang

Did you know we had a famous alumnus in our midst? Joe Hudson was a guest star at the Franklin Elementary School in Stratford, CT, at their Centennial Celebration on May 16. After he was introduced to thunderous applause, he brought out the three other guys who, with Joe, comprise the HatterTones. We sang a few songs as part of the two shows for alumni and current school families.

The show, which took the audience through every decade in the last 100 year, was organized by Joe's former and still second grade teacher, Joy Massicotte.

The Franklin Family is certainly a spirited group and it seemed as if every performer from kindergarten to sixth grade is destined to make it big on Broadway.



The HatterTones at Franklin Elementary School



Stories About Songwriters

By Fred Baran

Irving Berlin - By Fred Baran

"Irving Berlin has no place in American music; he is American music!" This evaluation of the versatile composer - lyricist comes from another illustrious American Music Maker, Jerome Kern.

How, indeed, could one say less of the man who has provided the theme songs for so many national occasions? Many of Berlin's songs have become standards in the whole American way of life: "White Christmas," "Easter Parade," "Alexander's Ragtime Band." He even wrote the song that has justly been called the second national anthem, "God Bless America."

If genius thrives on hardship, Irving Berlin has a solid claim to the compliment. Born in Temun, Russia, in 1888, he was the youngest of eight children. His name was Israel Baline, and his father was a cantor in the synagogue. When the boy was just three years of age, the brutal purge of Jews by the Cossacks devastated the family home and forced them to leave Russia. They ultimately took up residence, like so many Jewish refugees, in the squalor of New York City's Lower East Side.

Once again, the senior Baline was cantor for the neighborhood synagogue. Between services, he taught his son, along with some neighborhood pals, how to sing. They were mostly religious songs, with an occasional Russian folk ballad thrown in.

Berlin's memory of his childhood is remarkably free of bitterness: "There were ten of us in four rooms and in the summer some of us slept on the fire escape or on the roof. I was a boy with poor parents, but I didn't starve; I wasn't cold or hungry. There was always bread and butter and hot tea. I guess I never felt poverty because I'd never known anything else."

His father died when Irving was eight years old. Six years later, to ease the financial strain on his mother, the boy left home to earn his own keep at the ripe age of 14. He naturally gravitated to work that was somehow related to music. The year by now was 1902, and the New York outside the Lower East Side was in a mood for fun.

Irving managed to get a job as a singing waiter in the fashionable Pelham Cafe in Chinatown. It was here, having been introduced to the possibilities of a piano, that Irving Berlin wrote his first song, "Marie From Sunny Italy." It was an Italian dialect frivolity and the Pelham patrons were charmed with it.

He even managed to get the song published, and though the royalties amounted to a fast 35 cents, it did serve to give its young composer the measure of self-confidence he needed to consider song writing as a career.

He submitted a few new numbers to a music publisher named Ted Snyder, who was impressed with Berlin's facility for writing lyrics, and while the songs, when published, were of inconsequential popularity, Snyder decided to hire the boy as a staff writer at the impressive salary of \$25 a week.

A few minor successes followed. Then, in 1911, Berlin wrote the music and lyrics to a song that catapulted him to national fame almost overnight, "Alexander's Ragtime Band,".

It's difficult, in retrospect, to appreciate the sensational innovation that this song represented. The only truly American musical idiom of the day was the jazz sound that was winning considerable favor in New Orleans. Berlin used this form in a strictly popular rendition and the effect was tumultuous. Americans were ready for the sound and Irving Berlin gave it to them. It was as simple as that.

Berlin's forte has always been the invention of melodies of simple charm with lyrics of equal charm and deceptive simplicity. He brings to his task no scholastic background - his formal education ended in second grade. His instinct however, like his taste, is utterly uncanny.

"Alexander's Ragtime Band" was enough to get Berlin onto the roster of the other Tin Pan Alley regulars of the day. Still, by 1914, Berlin had written only minor songs for inclusion in various shows. In that year, however, Broadway was treated to its first all-Berlin score, *Watch Your Step*. This smash success was followed in 1915 with *Stop, Look and Listen*.

Some of Berlin's most memorable ballads were composed during the Twenties, such as "Always" and "The Song Is Ended." His famous "Easter Parade" was written in 1932 for the show, *As Thousands Cheer*. By 1935, Hollywood was clamoring for Berlin's talent. RKO finally convinced him to come west and handle the score for *Top Hat*. The film was a spectacular musical which introduced two talented song-and-dance stars, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. It was an outstanding success and Berlin went on to write several musicals for these two stars.

World War II was not long under way before Berlin decided to write an all-soldier show, *This is the Army*. In this production, Berlin not only composed the music, he literally wrote the entire show, supervised the staging and even appeared in it. Memorable from the production are the title song and "I Left My Heart At The Stage Door Canteen."

Probably Berlin's most famous achievement has been his score for the Broadway musical *Annie Get Your Gun*, which he wrote in 1946 and included "The Girl That I Marry," "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "I Got The Sun In The Morning." This show was followed on Broadway by *Miss Liberty* in 1949, *Call Me Madam* in 1951, and *Mister President* in 1962.

Returning to the earlier years, in his personal life, Berlin had met and married Dorothy Goetz in 1912.

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Songwriters

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He was 24 and she was 20. He suffered a tragedy of nightmarish proportions when he and the new Mrs. Berlin went on their honeymoon to Cuba. Dorothy contracted typhoid fever on their honeymoon and died soon after their return. Devastated, Berlin turned to his music and wrote some of his more heartfelt and poignant love songs. Driven by his loss, he wrote "When I Lost You" that same year.

After World War I, Berlin began to spread his wings and embrace other aspects of the music business. He formed his own publishing house, Irving Berlin, Inc. In 1902 when publishing his first song "Marie Of Sunny Italy," a printer's error on the cover gave him the name Irving Berlin. Not one to tempt fate, the newly named Berlin stuck with the name for the rest of his life.

He also began performing in vaudeville, performing his songs in some of the top theaters on the circuit. In 1921 Berlin and Sam Harris built a theater, The Music Box on 45th Street, as a venue for his own music as well as for other shows, and it is still in existence.

The mid-twenties produced a number of terrific hit songs. It was at this time that he met a socialite, Ellin Mackay, the daughter of Clarence Mackay, the CEO of Postal Telegraph, a very wealthy man. At that time, any songwriter, even one of Berlin's stature, was considered beneath the social status of such a high born woman, and religious differences only compounded the matter. Mackay tried for months to prevent a marriage between the two.

At one point, he sent the hapless Ellin to Europe to place her out of reach. It was during this absence that Berlin wrote some of his most beautiful love ballads, including "Always," "What'll I Do," "All Alone" and "Remember." When Berlin was questioned as to whether these songs were an expression of his feelings at being away from Ellin, he denied it. Love triumphed, and when Ellin returned to New York from Europe, they were secretly married at City Hall on January 4, 1926.

The years from 1927 to 1932 were especially trying and he was unable to create much of anything that was salable and the financial depression in the US compounded things. In 1932, the popular singer, Rudy Vallee, put Berlin back on track by singing a number of his songs and put him back in the consciousness of the public.

1938 brought the clouds of World War over Europe, and Americans began to understand and appreciate the freedoms we enjoy. The result was the beginning of a patriotic surge that would continue for the next eight years. Berlin was one of the first composers to recognize the need for a new patriotism and dusted off an old discarded tune from the 1918 show, *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*. He wrote new lyrics and republished it as "God Bless America".

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The President's Podium

By Danny Anderson

The month of May has flown by. We have had only one sing-out this month, as of this writing, but it was a good one.

Thanks to Dickson for arranging our participation in "Singing for Life" with the Red Cross in Ridgefield. He, along with John Cheeseman, found ways to promote our participation. Lyle LaPlante set up the song listing for the different hours of singing.

Dickson had some difficulty making contact with the proper person from the Red Cross. He patiently continued to call and email until he got to the right person.

The chorus was greeted warmly, although the person from the Red Cross seemed a little unsure of what to expect from us. However, after our first set, the regional director came over and asked if we could appear for all of their blood drives.

Around 3:00 PM, the Ridgefield Press came with a reporter and photographer to cover the event. We sang for them as well.

During the day, we found a couple of men who had sung barbershop before. They joined us in singing some Polecats. They were encouraged to come to a practice. It was fun to watch people sing along with us as they were giving blood. Many business cards and Chorus information sheets were distributed throughout the event. More than 20 chorus members participated in this event at various times, which speaks well of our members.

May has been a good month for visitors to our meetings. We have had three men of which two have submitted applications for membership. Tim has sung barbershop since he was nine; he sings a great tenor. Paul sings lead and he has sung with the Westchester chorus in the past.

We will be singing on Memorial Day in Southbury once again. A big thank you to Charlie Rosa for arranging this event for the chorus. Remember to show up early to be prepared to sing at 12:30.

A salute to John Bradley and Dick Zang for their continued work publishing the *Hatter Chatter* each month. This is a quality newsletter, which we should all be proud of. Print off extra copies and leave at the doctor's office or other places people might be looking for something to read while waiting. *The Hatter Chatter* is colorful and will gain their attention. Who knows, it might lead to a sing out opportunity or even a new member.

Once again, I want to encourage the membership to make plans to attend this year's Harmony College. It is time to learn, sing, enjoy good fellowship and be entertained.

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Podium

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The venue is a college campus where we will sleep in the dorms. The food is plentiful and very good.

Begin now to plan and participate in our annual show. Start talking to your friends and neighbors about the show. Begin thinking about what business you will contact to sell advertisements. There will be more details forthcoming.

Songwriters

Continued from the previous page

Kate Smith introduced the song on her long running radio show (started in 1931) and as we often say, the rest is history.

If ever a song defined patriotism, "God Bless America" must be counted as the single most defining patriotic song of all time. Used time after time in America's crises, it again enjoyed a tremendous resurgence after the fateful and horrible attacks on America in September of 2001. The song sold millions of copies, won numerous awards and earned huge royalties.

In a selfless act of his own patriotism, Berlin donated the entire royalties from the song to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls, saying he refused to capitalize on patriotism.

While Irving Berlin was not a trained musician and could only play the piano in the key of F#, primarily only the black keys, he was able to write a broad range of songs in different styles while developing a unique musical style and harmony that becomes almost instantly recognizable when a song of his is heard. It is estimated that he wrote approximately 1,500 songs over his lifetime.

Among the many awards and honors he received was an Academy Award in 1942 for "White Christmas," and on February 18, 1955 President Eisenhower presented him with a Gold Medal in recognition of his service and for composing patriotic songs for the country.

He celebrated his 100th birthday at a huge party in Carnegie Hall in 1988 and died in New York of natural causes, one year later at age 101.



March Board of Directors Meeting Minutes



Expediently Submitted by Robert Golenbock, secretary

Meeting called to order by Danny "Portland or Bust" Anderson at 6:06 pm on 05/04/10 at the Church of Christ

SECRETARY'S REPORT: A correction was made. Andy Bayer was in fact in attendance last month. Perhaps it was the camouflage suit that confused me. Motion by L. LaPlante, seconded by F. Baran. The report was accepted as amended.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Expenses for the next month will be higher as we've been ordering all of our songs and learning tracks for the year. Motion by J. Hudson, seconded by R. Golenbock. Report accepted.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: No report.

VP PUBLIC RELATIONS: A contact for Singing for Life is now available to help us arrange the performance. Dickson DeMarche will send out PSA's to the Danbury and Ridgefield press. Joe reported that the Bridgeport chapter had a quartet on TV station WTNH on the noon newscast to promote their annual show and Valentine's Day fundraiser. We need to get our faces on TV and on the Internet. We also need to send a flyer to the Chamber of Commerce and to the men's clubs. A recommendation was made to pay a high school chorus to sing on the show, teach them the finale, and go to their class. Newtown High School was suggested. Finally we plan to contact Concerts on the Green. We could share a slot with Joe West and his band, Creative Force.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: Six new songs are in the works. We hope having music ahead of time allows chorus members to learn their parts more rapidly. As a new song is learned, an old song will be removed.

OLD BUSINESS: Joe Hudson spoke to a member of the Portland, ME, chapter about how they went from 13th to 1st. They divided their rehearsal time, doing two hours of regular rehearsal, then one hour of competition chorus on the risers. The competition chorus had different rules including qualifications, different (non-repertoire) songs, and a formalized process with an atmosphere that encouraged individual improvement. Andy Bayer suggested that if we follow this paradigm, we should review our decision after a month or so to see if it's working for us. Art Roberts suggested we start next year. Fred Baran felt that such a process could tear the chorus apart. Jim Hopper said that while he enjoys competing, he is not interested in being in a gung-ho competition chorus. The more structured the meeting gets, he said, the less fun it is for him.

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Board Meeting

Continued from the previous page

Dick Walter did not want to "groom himself" for competition twelve months a year. The Board agreed to continue discussions.

Meanwhile, we need to decide if we will in fact go to Portland. Until we decide, we will assume we are going.

The Board authorized a down payment on the afterglow at Stony Hill Inn. for our annual show We also agreed to do a free performance for a fundraiser at the King Street United Church of Christ on Saturday, June 26.

NEW BUSINESS: Everything old is new again.

MEMBERS PRESENT: C. Zlamany, D. Stoppel, J. Cheeseman.

OFFICERS PRESENT: A. Bayer, D. Anderson, B. Huntley, J. Hudson, F. Baran, A. Roberts, R. Golenbock, D. Walter, L. LaPlante, J. Hopper, D. DeMarche, A. Bayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm. Next meeting June 1.

From the Program Chairman

By Lyle LaPlante

Gentlemen, we are looking for ideas for special "just for fun" activities. The tags are fun. We have continued with the Polecat tags, the duelling choruses, the Quartet Festival, but I would really like to try any other ideas and suggestions you guys have.

I've gone through the Society program book, but a lot of their suggestions don't seem to fit.

How about it? Your suggested activity should normally be about 10-20 minutes, but if it sounds like fun, we don't have to restrict the time that tightly.

Let me hear your thoughts.



Don Sutherland Directing. Picture by Terry Dunkle

The Five Steps Necessary to Produce Quality Tone

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

There are five basic areas that require attention if a singer is to have a chance to produce the best tone possible, relative to his natural talent. They are:

1. Body alignment, or posture
2. Proper abdominal-costal breathing.
3. Singing on the breath, or attack.
4. Singing tone that has sustaining length.
5. Release of tone.

In this first lesson, we are going to deal with number 1, body alignment. If body alignment is not the most important of the five areas, it is at least one we have to deal with first, simply because without the ability or the will to do it correctly, the other areas are impossible to master.

To attain proper body alignment, we are searching for a dynamic relationship or coordination between the body parts that allow for a freer and more efficient use of the body. We have always been taught that "good posture" for singers is a standing posture, with the body erect, the head straight, the chest slightly forward and the shoulders low and relaxed, feet shoulder-width apart with the weight slightly on the balls of the feet, heels touching the floor. This posture does not imply, however, a rigidity in positioning the body, as in a "military way". In most of us there is lacking a natural chest poise and body poise, a power of relaxing certain parts of the muscular system while a due control is exercised over other parts. If we control some parts, we seem to want to control them all.

We are now going to develop a concept of a "preparatory set" which we will use at all times when singing. These are the physical and mental adjustments a singer makes when he is preparing himself to start a vocal phrase, because it is at this particular moment, at the intake of air and the attack, that excessive tensions in the vocal apparatus are built up. To promote poise under the stress of performance, the mind must take control, and make appropriate choices. Many factors are anticipated such as pitch, tone quality (consonant, vowel, and volume), and the ensuing interpretation. Everything in singing is mental. The formation of mental images, during which time we anticipate what we are going to do, "compels our sound-producing mechanism to adjust in a most minute and delicate manner; it sets in motion a most complex series of muscular contractions balanced to a remarkable degree of precision which results in the imagined sound". In other words, what we cannot conceive in our minds, we will not execute vocally.

Physically, we mentally anticipate what we are going to sing. We want to:

- a. Let the neck be free - head forward and up, not down or back.

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Alignment

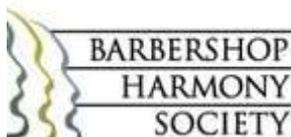
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- b. Allow the body to lengthen up and widen out - this results in a high chest and an expanded rib cage. It is very important to remember that this position of the chest must be maintained throughout each song. Do not let it collapse at any time.
- c. Allow the shoulders to relax down and back a little.
- d. Allow the hips and pelvis to tuck under and forward.
- e. Allow the knees to flex slightly.

As you free yourself from excessive rigidity and tenseness you will find that the verbs chosen above are correct. You do not

hold your neck free. You release the tensions and allow it to be free. You do not force the hips and pelvis under and forward, you let the body elongate by releasing tension. As the body elongates, the hips naturally tuck under slightly and come forward a bit, thus aligning the body.

We live in a society filled with tension, stress and all the accompanying problems of a complex, tough world. Nothing could be more detrimental to relaxation and good singing. Rather than working so hard physically to execute the fundamentals of good singing, we must learn to engage and activate the mind and put the body on cruise control. Let us get control of our mental images and thereby learn the ultimate control we own over our physical and vocal apparatus



Society and District Notes



Take Me Out To The Ball Game!

We are just over 2 weeks away from the 6th Annual Baseball, Barbershop, BBQ Fundraiser for the Portland Downesters on Saturday, June 12th, 3:00pm at McCoy Stadium in Pawtucket, RI. The Ocean State Chorus is proud to be your host for this years event.

Tickets need to be purchased in advance for this event. Adults \$15, Kids \$10.

Please make your check payable to: Ocean State Chorus and mail to: 179 Ontario Street, Providence, RI 02907

3:00PM - 5:00PM BBQ in the parking lot of McCoy Stadium.
6:00PM - Sing the National Anthem on the field. Please wear a solid red, solid white or solid blue shirt. All profits from this event will go to the Portland Downesters Travel Fund to help them get to Philadelphia to represent the NED. The Downesters really appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you at the Ball Game on June 12th.

Downesters, Men In Black, Blend Tech, & SnapShot!

The International Contest is coming up this July and The Northeastern District will be well represented.

Last October, The Downeaster Chorus from Portland, ME, qualified to represent us in the International Chorus contest. Those of you that attended the Eastern Regional Convention were able to see that the members of this Chorus has been polishing up their act, and you are going to be very proud of what they put on stage in Philadelphia.

On April 30th, in Peoria, IL Men in Black qualified to represent the NE district in the International Quartet Competition.

Their score is what I believe to be their highest score ever, an 83.6, which currently has them ranked 5th of all qualifying quartets.

Last year, Men In Black ranked 9th in the world. Blend Tech (Drew Wheaton of QC, Dan Allison of MA, Josh Berwick of PA, and Mark Bachiochi of CT) is singing better than ever. In the Yankee Division contest, they posted a 74 plus score and won the Yankee Division Championship. While this score was just shy of qualifying Blend Tech for the International Competition, they have been invited to participate because of their score.

THIS MEANS THAT NED WILL HAVE TWO QUARTETS IN THE INTERNATIONAL QUARTET COMPETITION

Equally exciting is the fact for that for the 1st time, the NED will be sending TWO quartets to the International Collegiate Competition. Since Blend Tech members are still under 25, they will be able to compete in the Collegiate Competition as well.

The second quartet will be SnapShot! (Ed Forman, Alex Kuen, Antonio Lombardi and Joey Constantine). In their first time on competition stage together, they won the Patriot Division Novice Championship, the Patriot Division Quartet Championship, and qualified for an International appearance. Ed, Alex, and Antonio sing for Providence, and Joey sing for Lowell. Both of these quartets will also be helping to raise the bar by competing in the District Quartet contest! Start planning for Portland now !

All these groups appreciate your support, both financial and emotional, so please reach out and let know your excitement for their accomplishments. Do yourself a favor and spend some time at this year's International Convention. It won't be this close to us (especially for stateside members) for some time to come.



Ye Olde Joke Boarde

Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper

A barbershop baritone wasn't feeling well and asked one of his co-workers to recommend a physician.

"I know a great one in the city, but he is very expensive. Five hundred dollars for the first visit, and one hundred dollars for each one after that."

The baritone went to the doctor's office and, trying to save a little money, cheerily announced, "I'm back!"

Not fooled for a second, the doctor quickly examined him and said, "Very good. Just continue the treatment I prescribed on your last visit."

"Anyone with 'needs' to be prayed over, come forward to the front at the altar," the preacher said.

Larry, a barbershop baritone, got in line, and when it was his turn, the preacher asked, "Larry, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Larry replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for help with my hearing."

The preacher put one finger in Larry's ear, and he placed the other hand on top of Larry's head and prayed and prayed and prayed. The whole congregation joined in with enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Larry, how is your hearing now?"

Larry said, "I don't know, reverend, it ain't 'til next Wednesday."

Current Mad Hatter Repertoire

Performance A

Always
I Feel a Song Coming On
The Way You Look Tonight
You Make Me Feel So Young
Cabaret
Heart
Hey, Look Me Over
There is Nothing Like a Dame

Performance B

I Found a Million Dollar Baby
I'm Always Chasing Rainbows
Sh-Boom
Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

Contest Songs

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

How Are Things in Glocca Morra
Over the Rainbow
Please, Mr. Columbus
I Put My Dog in the Back Of My
Truck and God, How I'll Miss You
Down by the River

Patriotic

Star-Spangled Banner
America the Beautiful
God Bless America

Inspirational

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

Amazing Grace
You Done Stomped on my Heart and
Mashed That Sucker Flat

Upcoming Songs

Give My Regards to Broadway
You'll Never Walk Alone
This Land Is Your Land
Lullaby in Ragtime
If I Loved You



"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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Chairman:	Danny Anderson
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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



Headquarters Hotel: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
Contest Venue: Pennsylvania Convention Center

Mark Your Calendars

June 26: Chapter Singout. United Church of Christ, King Street, Danbury, CT. Warmup 11:00 AM, Sing 11:30 Am.

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.

June Milestones

Birthdays:

6 - Annellen Gleissner
9 - Steve Horhota
9 - Dick Zang
10 - Harriet Feinberg
15 - Stephanie Terry
20 - John Cheeseman
29 - Miss Taralily

Wedding Anniversaries:

7 - Dessain and Stephanie Terry
19 - Ray and Carolyn Wixted
28 - Bob and Jane Golenbock
29 - Bob and Sophie (Sam) Connolley



*Picture by Terry Dunkle
Joe Hudson, the hairdresser.*