



*The Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus*

# Hatter Chatter

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

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

March/April 2014

## Danbury Once Again Small Chorus Champs

**Also Wins Most Improved**

*By John Bradley*

Nashua, NH – The Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus once again reigns supreme in the small chorus world (at least in the Yankee Division) as it snapped up both the small chorus and most improved honors at the Northeastern District's Yankee Division contests at Nashua North High School on Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Singing "They Say It's Wonderful" and "Kentucky Babe," the Mad Hatters compiled a total score of 790, 62 points behind Manchester, the Yankee Division champions, but 62 points higher than last year's divisional scores in Voorheesville, NY.

As the chorus was leaving the stage at the end of its performance, music director, Joe Hudson, said, "At the end of 'Kentucky Babe,' you could hear a pin drop in the audience."

Even the curtain puller was mesmerized by the chorus's performance, as the singers tried to maintain their positions for what seemed an eternity waiting for the curtains to close.

"Actually," explained Bob Bradley, Danbury lead as well as contest stage manager, "I was on the risers and couldn't catch his eye to close the curtains."

Joe Hudson continued, "The chorus sang at it's best level in over 30 years. And, the music and presentation scores went up as well. It shows what hard work does."

To give a little historical perspective to the scoring, in 1998's Highland Falls, NY, divisional contest, the Mad Hatters placed second to last with a combined score of 637.

Danbury's quartet representatives, Traveling Men, also had a successful weekend, scoring a combined 757, winning the most improved quartet award for the third straight year and qualifying for the fall district contests.

## Yankee Division Quartet Contests

*By Dick Zang*

Those of us who got to Nashua the night before Saturday's chorus contest were able to watch our two favorite quartets, Traveling Men and SUREFIRE!, light up the stage with their Friday night performances in the Yankee and Mountain Divisions' Quartet Finals.

Traveling Men, from Danbury, scored 757 points (63.1 average per judge per song) to win the honors for Most Improved Quartet for the third year in a row with "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and "From the First Hello To the Last Goodbye." Surefire!, with our own Joe Hudson on tenor, led the Yankee Division with a score of 837 points (69.8) singing "What'll I Do?" and "Hello My Baby." The contest also included an International Preliminary Quartet Contest that qualified foursomes for the International Contest this July in Las Vegas. Eleven quartets from the area tried over two nights to score a minimum of 1824 points (76.0) on their four songs.

Three quartets made the cut. Men In Black topped the list, as expected, with 2013 points (83.9), Up All Night was second with 1853 points (77.2) and Downtown Crossing was third with 1830 points (76.3).

*Continued on the next page*



*Downtown Crossing – Seth Orenstein, Joey Constantine,  
Dan Costello, Ben Orenstein.*

# Quartet Contests

*Continued from the previous page*

The presence of the quartets aiming for the international prelims upped the performance level of the contest.



*Up All Night – John Ward, Cecil Brown, Joe Hunter, Dan Rowland.*

Up All Night is from the Big Apple Chorus and all four members came to our warm-up room on Saturday morning to give us a little encouragement. That and Joe Hunter’s hours of coaching were the secret to the Mad Hatter’s success on a most enjoyable weekend.

We wish all three qualifying quartets our best in Las Vegas – on stage and at the tables.

Rounding out the contests, the Footlighters are the 2014 Yankee Division Quartet champions as well as the senior champions. Artistry Before Chords won the novice title.

## Behind the Curtains

*By Bob Bradley*

For the past few years my wife, Vikki, and I have worked the NED contests from behind the curtain. It is an unusual position from which to view the contestants, but it has its advantages.



Most of the contestants, with a few notable exceptions, demonstrate all that is good about barbershoppers; they are friendly, smiling and cooperative, at least on the way in. But, we have learned over the years to avoid those who have had a bad performance, so we make ourselves scarce as they exit the stage.

Almost all of the quartets have a ritual before performing. These rituals vary from the religious to the obscene, but most involve a lot of hugging and throwbacks to football huddles. Over the years we have learned how each group behaves and how we should behave around them. The most important thing is that the contest belongs to the contestants - it is their contest.

During the recent Yankee Division chorus contest in Nashua, New Hampshire, our own Joe Hudson was upset that the curtain was not pulled immediately after the chorus finished “Kentuck Babe.” We had gone over this with the puller before the event, but, he just didn’t pull the thing when he was supposed to. This however was not the worst of the faux pas over the years.

One chorus had two mishaps. After they finished the first song, the curtains were closed. On another occasion, as they were still filing onto the risers, they were announced and the curtains began to open.

Years ago in Saratoga there was no curtain on the stage and a certain chorus from Danbury, CT, began to sing before being announced and while a judge was just returning from the mens room.

One quartet, a few years ago, was having a conversation with Vikki and were taking so much time that the contest administrator came back on stage to see what was going on. I went over to the other side of the curtain and found that they were looking for a place to plug in a portable skill saw.

One of our presenters with a bad back had me take a rocking chair used as a prop by a chorus so that he could sit on it back stage. Contest Administrators have had us move the podium and the light systems that we have had set up on stage right to stage left just minutes before starting the contest.

The Nashua contest had its own problems in that the stage was so large that we put on quite a few miles traveling from one end to the other. The sound check took over a half hour before the quartet contest and the sound was not ready for the chorus contest until just before the mic testers came on stage.

But, overall, I have found that there is no better place to be on a spring or fall weekend than listening to barbershop music from behind the curtain. Plus, we get to meet, hear and know all of the contestants and the presenters.

During the quartet contests, with the curtains closed, I can stand directly behind the contestants on the other side of the curtain and, being only a few feet away, I can hear each individual voice part. This past contest with the international prelims was a treat.

As I type this, we are getting ready for the next contest and have packed our backstage box with duct tape, masking tape, flashlights, hand counters, and all of the other supplies that we found we need. We are looking forward to another weekend in New Hampshire and another contest. Vikki has become so much a part of the society that she is a new Associate member.

## Baritone Deep Thought of the Month

**When milking a nervous goat, kid gloves should be used.**



## Quartet Corner

*News from our chorus quartets*

**SUREFIRE!** - By Joe Hudson

We had a good weekend in Nashua, New Hampshire. Even with two guys under the weather, we improved our score from the fall District contest, broke 70 in two categories and received coaching on how to improve in the third. We have already been asked to be the featured quartet at two barbershop shows and one Sweet Adeline chorus show. We also cannot wait to debut three new songs for District in October, and we are looking forward to our appearance at the Mad Hatter's annual show in May.

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

The Traveling Men competed in the Division Contest in Nashua, New Hampshire, this month, and it was there that the labor of our long practices came to fruition. We had two goals for the competition: to win the Yankee Division's "Most Improved" award, and to qualify for the District Contest. We are pleased that we met both of these goals by delivering well-received performances of "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and "From the First Hello to the Last Goodbye."

The Travelers shook off the jitters that came with going first at the contest to deliver this rousing performance. In addition, we were asked to serve as mic testers for the International Preliminary Contest on Saturday. Unburdened with the nervous energy that restricted us the previous night, we delivered a relaxed and well-received performance of "White Wings" and "Sweet and Lovely."

We expect to take several weeks off from our grueling rehearsal schedule before regrouping to prepare for the district contest in the fall.

**Real Chemistry** – By John Bradley

The quartet performed at the Home Office of the New York Life Insurance Company in Manhattan on March 13<sup>th</sup>, during the company's annual fund raising campaign, "Keep Good Going." In the past, United Way was the beneficiary of NYLC employees' generosity, but this year the company allowed each employee to raise money for the charity of their choice, and I chose the Northeastern District's Harmony Explosion Camp.

First singing in front of the cafeteria as employees entered for lunch, then later outside the elevators of the Enterprise Technology floor, we raised about \$250 in spare change and crumpled dollar bills, which was then matched by New York Life for a total of \$500, which will go to sponsoring tuition for as many kids as it will pay for.

Since our performance, I've heard endless "I didn't know you could sing" and have been recruited for the company's holiday chorus. We brought smiles and an unusual break in the routine to a bunch of people, and, I hope, a great experience to a few kids, this summer.

## 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 2008 Yankee Division Bulletin Editors Award*



Thanks so much for the Singing Valetines that you delivered to my daughters and daughter-in-law. They loved it and I so much appreciate it. It reconnected my "soul" to you and to the wonderful Mad Hatters.

Gratefully, Paul Just (former Mad Hatter lead now residing and singing in Florida).

I attended my first barbershop contest in Nashua. What do the judges judge and how?

Betty from Bridgeport.

*That's a good question, Betty, and one I've wondered about for a long time. I found the following information on the Barbershop Harmony Society's web site. It's a brief overview, but if you or anyone else is interested, the site has guidelines and handbooks and lots of other information.*

*The performance of each song is judged by three categories: Music, Presentation and Singing. Each category judge will determine a single quality rating or score, on a scale of 1 to 100. The judge will determine whether the level of the performance is excellent (A-level, from 81-100), good (B-level, from 61- 80), fair (C-level, from 41-60), or poor (D-level, from 1-40), and award an exact score based upon an evaluation of all the elements in the performance that have an impact on his category. If no quality rating is appropriate, owing to an unequivocal and definite violation of the rules, the judge will forfeit his score by awarding a zero.*

*There is no appropriate formula for weighting the various elements in a category; rather, it is up to the judge to view the total performance from his particular orientation, and evaluate the elements of the performance on a song-by-song basis.*



*Real Chemistry performs "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B."*



## The President's Podium

By Danny Anderson

What a wonderful weekend the chorus had at the Division contest. The results of the long practices, the work done on vowel matching and the work on presentation paid off. It was good to hear the judges' comments on the positive aspects of our performance and the suggestions they made to improve our overall production. The judges' comments and evaluations were very helpful and we should act upon them to score even higher at the next competition.

Now our attention has turned to the Annual Show. We need to put in the time to improve on the songs selected for this performance, using the suggestions given to us at competition. I encourage all the members to strive to be present for each practice. We need to build upon each week's work and remember what we did the week before.

I want to thank the chorus members and wives who came up Friday for the quartet competition. Traveling Men were concerned about going on first, fearing that there would not be an audience to perform for. But when we heard the cheers as we went on stage, we knew that we had supporters cheering us on, which removed those concerns.

One of the goals ahead of the chorus is to improve our show each year. For this year we have engaged one of the premier quartets as our guest quartet. Vocal Spectrum will give a great performance.

We need a "full house" for this show. We did a good job inviting people to attend our Christmas show so we need to duplicate that effort for the annual show. As has been announced during our business meeting and in last month's HATTER CHATTER, there is a discount if you pre-purchase tickets. So go ahead and purchase several tickets and sell them to your friends and family. Use every opportunity to talk to people about the show and find places to display a show flyer.

The financial commitment for this show is greater than previous shows. This is due to the performance fee and travel expenses we will have for the guest quartet. The cost for the venue is a little higher, but the venue is a better one. A goal is to sell enough program ads to cover the show expenses. We have had training sessions on how to sell the ads and have provided a listing of businesses who purchased ads before. We need to visit all these business, ask for a new ad and invite them to attend the show.

We have a number of possible sing-outs coming up before the Annual show. These will be opportunities to have a "dress rehearsal." The more we are before an audience to more comfortable we become and the better we perform.

The encouragement I leave with you is to practice your music, sell tickets, sell ads, and invite people to come to the show.

## Repertoire Notes

"Happy Together" is a 1967 song from The Turtles' album of the same name. Released in February 1967, the song knocked The Beatles' "Penny Lane" out of the number one slot for three weeks on the *Billboard* Hot 100. It was the group's only chart-topper.

"Happy Together" reached #12 on the UK Singles Chart in April 1967. The song was written by Garry Bonner and Alan Gordon, former members of a band known as The Magicians. The song had been rejected a dozen times before it was offered to The Turtles, and the demo acetate was worn out.

When performing the song on television, Mark Volman commonly "played" a different instrument not present in the song for each appearance. On Ed Sullivan he "played" a trumpet, on the Smothers Brothers a piano, and on others a French horn. This could be seen as a wink to the audience that they were lip-syncing, a common practice for 1960s television.

In 1999, BMI named "Happy Together", with approximately five million performances on American radio, the forty-fourth most-performed song in the USA of the 20th century, placing it in the same league as "Yesterday" by The Beatles and "Mrs. Robinson" by Simon and Garfunkel.

The song has been featured in many movies and, in television, the song has been used in many episodes of *The Simpsons* including "The Way We Weren't" and "Trilogy of Error", and in episodes of *That '70s Show* *The Muppet Show*.

"Happy Together" has been covered by artists as diverse as Weezer, Petula Clark, The Captain and Tennille, Jason Donovan, The Nylons, Simple Plan, Caterina Valente, The Dollyrots, Blue Meanies, Donny Osmond, T.G Sheppard (who would take his version into the country Top 10 in early 1979), Tahiti 80, Filter, MStar, Buck Wild, Flobots and Tally Hall, whose version samples the original. There is also a Spanish cover, sung by Roberto Jordan, called "Juntos y Felices"

## Interesting Musical Fact

The song "Happy Birthday To You" is not a public-domain composition. The publishing rights are owned by a subsidiary of Warner Communications, and a performance fee must be paid every time it is used for commercial purposes.





## March Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting called to order by Danny "Faith and Begorrah" Anderson at 6:13pm on 3/4/2014 at the Church of Christ.

Secretary's Report: sent out. Report received on a motion by Joseph Hudson, seconded by Art Cilley.

Treasurer's report: From Dickson DeMarche did not reflect funding for contest donations and singing Valentines. Additional expenses for summer shirtings are pending. The report was received on a motion by Andy Bayer, seconded by Art Roberts.

Membership report: We have a pending member who is earning our repertoire. Andy Bayer is working with Al Paparesta on membership/marketing.

VP Public Relations: We made more than \$1000 profit for singing Valentines. The Stop and Shop meet and greet was successful in putting our name out to the public and produced two singing Valentines.

Music Committee: The decision for our 2015 Annual Show is to sing songs from the era when our chorus started. We are looking at songs from the '50's and '60's. We have a list that includes Doowop, Motown, the Beatles, The Everly Brothers, Elvis, and other great songs from that era. We are also inviting all former members to sing and have all former directors to participate. Our intention is for all songs to be very familiar to the audience. We are also planning to evaluate the quartets that responded to be on the 2014 show so far: Blue Moon, Traveling Men, Loco Fedora and Real Chemistry.

Old Business: Joe is working on the DVD. We have a trifold. We'll need a folder to hold the material that has our logo, picture, e-mail, and website. Discussion of the position of Business Manager was tabled. Andy reported on the progress of the Annual show. We are working on group sales for tickets. The To Do List for the show is being checked off. The Afterglow will be held at Nick's Restaurant. Five hundred flyers are printed and 250 postcard flyers will be put out at the competition. There will also be an ad in the program brochure.

New Business: Al Paparesta has created a directory of libraries for Dick Walter. He has also suggested printing generic road signs that say "Danbury Mad Hatters finest in a cappella singing". The signs would also need a website. Twenty-five signs are \$250. Danny Anderson recommended Facebook ads as more effective. Joe Hudson is presently in talks with Facebook. Al also suggested a table at A Taste of Danbury. Joe reminded us that we used to have a free notice in the News-Times. Al again brought up suggestion about giving back to the community that might also give us some favorable publicity. One suggestion was to sing at Saturday night Mass at his church when there is no choir.

Also the Dorothy Day House may want us to sing and serve food. The News-Times may do a human interest story. Joe Hudson in his position as Youth in Harmony Vice President announced that the Ansonia High School chorus teacher wants us to demonstrate Barbershop. We would also hand out Harmony Explosion Camp literature.

Members Present : Carl Zlamany, Bucky Dent.

Officers Present: Joseph "Two Monkeys" Hudson. Robert "The Wheel Man" Golenbock, Danny "Chief of Staff" Anderson, Art "Highball" Cilley, Andy "Spreadsheet" Bayer, Peter "Subluxation" Daubner, Wynn "W." Wilcox, Al "I Left My Heart in Brooklyn" Paparesta.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12pm. Next meeting April 1.

## What is Rubato?

It sounds like some interesting vegetable, but it's actually a musical term. I came across it a few nights ago when, during an excursion through the Internet, I found a document by Shirley Kout of the Sweet Adelines titled "Singing in the Barbershop Style." In it, she listed several skills important to barbershopping including:

- Balance: cone-shaped sound (tenor, lead, baritone, bass).
- Bass sing louder than other three parts (producing bass-unit sound).
- Director directs vocal line.
- Down beat vowel.
- Forward placement: hard palate focus.
- Rubato style delivery for ballads.

I stopped after that last one. Wonder what Rubato is, I asked myself.

Turns out, **Tempo rubato** (free in the presentation, Italian for: *stolen time*) is a musical term referring to expressive and rhythmic freedom by a slight speeding up and then slowing down of the tempo of a piece at the discretion of the soloist or director. Rubato is an expressive shaping of music that is a part of phrasing.

Basically, It describes the practice of playing or singing with expressive and rhythmic freedom. Specifically in "tempo rubato," some time is "robbed" from one passage or group of notes and given to another. Classical performers frequently use rubato for emotional expressiveness in all kinds of works.

Rubato, is often used by singers intuitively to let the tempo of the melody expressively shift slightly and freely above that of the accompaniment. This intuitive shifting leads to rubato's main effect: to make music sound expressive and natural.

In our recent coaching, the Mad Hatters have been told to be more physically expressive with their faces and bodies, and that fits with the rubatic and not robotic effect barbershop music should have.



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Yours in Harmony,

*Lee Daum*

## Three Things

After each coaching session, the Mad Hatters are asked to contribute three things they would like to share from the coaching experience. Here is the list from the last coaching session with Joe Hunter on March 5<sup>th</sup>.



- When Joe is facing the audience, we face the audience, smile and bask in the sound of the applause. When Joe turns back to face the chorus, face Joe.
- When Joe Hunter said to make appropriate, subtle movements with our hands below the waist to show involvement he didn't mean that those in the back rows had to raise their hands higher so they can be seen.
- It's easier to achieve Full Body Involvement if you're in the chorus position: feet shoulder-width apart at a 45-degree angle with outside foot slightly in front and pointing to the director. (This stance gives you better balance - remember it the next time you're in a sword fight or MMA cage battle)
- The emphasis on the repeated IN EVERY WAY before the tag is on the word EVERY, as opposed to WAY on the previous phrase,
- Leads sing using HEAD TONE as much as possible, to keep the notes light and high.
- Start strong from pitch and keep it flowing through song,
- Try to get crisp notes and finish phrases.
- Have fun with the songs.
- Basses need to sing like leads, keeping the tone light and resonant, especially on the low notes.
- On "Kentucky Babe," sing whole phrases as if you were playing a violin without raising the bow.
- Practice where you will catch a breath BEFORE critical endings so you don't run out of air.
- Check the chords in the first line of "Wonderful" on the words "start" and "heart". Make sure they are tuned.
- Clean up stops and starts of every line. Watch Joe carefully.

## New England Harmony Brigade

The Deadline for New England Harmony Brigades' 2014 Rally is April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. If you haven't signed up yet and want to get music on time, please do it by then!

If you are a quartet man and love singing in a quartet, and would love the challenge of learning 12 gold medal charts in about five months, then NEHB is for you!

Slots are rapidly filling up, but we could especially use more tenors and more baritones. Unlike a chorus, we have to have exactly even numbers of tenors, basses, leads, and baritones (or at least as close as we can make it), so the part with the fewest attendees limits the number of attendees we can take from other parts.

But we are still accepting applications in all parts, and will continue to do so (subject to balance of parts) until we reach 120 people, which is the maximum we can accommodate.

For more information, or to apply, please go to [www.nehb.net](http://www.nehb.net). Or you can write me at [president@nehb.net](mailto:president@nehb.net).

If you have not experienced a brigade rally, and love to sing in quartets, and appreciate the hard work that it takes to become note and word perfect, then I encourage you to apply. You'll

# Ye Olde Joke Boarde



*Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper*

A baritone, a lead and a bass were all lost in the desert. They found a lamp and rubbed it. A genie popped out and granted them each one wish.

The lead wished to be back home. Poof! He was back home. The bass wished to be at home with his family. Poof! He was back home with his family.

The baritone said, "Awwww, I wish my quartet mates were back here."

• • •

Two baritones fell down a hole. One said, "It's dark in here isn't it?" The other replied, "I don't know; I can't see."

• • •

Waiting for the barbershop contest to get started, a baritone was bragging about his knowledge of the state capitals of the United States. He proudly announced, "go ahead, ask me any of the capitals, I know all of them." A tenor walked over and said, "O.K., what's the capital of Wyoming?"

The baritone replied, "Oh, that's easy, 'W'."

• • •

A policeman pulled a barbershop baritone over after he'd been driving the wrong way on a one-way street. The cop asked, "Do you know where you were going?"

The bartone replied, "No, but wherever it is, it must be really bad because all the cars are leaving."

• • •

I've always pictured myself taking selfies.

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## Current Mad Hatter Repertoire

### ***Regular Repertoire***

Almost Like Being In Love  
Breaking Up Is Hard To Do  
I Don't Know Why (I Just Do)  
It's Only A Paper Moon  
Keep The Whole World Singing  
Kentucky Babe  
On The Sunny Side Of The Street  
Over The Rainbow  
Shenandoah  
Whacko Jacko Steals the Elephant  
Man's Bones  
There Is Nothing Like A Dame

### ***Patriotic/Inspirational***

Amazing Grace  
Armed Forces Salute  
God Bless America  
I Believe  
Impossible Dream  
Lord's Prayer  
Star-Spangled Banner  
This Land Is Your Land/America The  
Beautiful

### ***Coming Soon***

They Say It's Wonderful  
Beach Boys Medley  
Blue Skies  
Come Go With Me  
Crazy Little Thing Called Love  
Happy Together  
How Deep Is The Ocean  
Moonlight Brings Memories  
Tennis Must Be Your Racket 'Cause  
Love Means Nothin' To You



## The Danbury, CT Chapter SPEBSQSA

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Manager:	Robert Golenbock

### *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



Mad Hatters take the stage at Nashua High School North

## Mark Your Calendars



### *Annual Show*

*Almost Like Being In Love*,  
Saturday May 17, 2014.

Western Connecticut State University Ives Concert Hall, 181 White St., Danbury CT. Appearing: Hatter Chorus and its quartets, a local high school group, 2013 Yankee Division Quartet Champions, SUREFIRE!, and the 2006 International Champions, VOCAL SPECTRUM. Set-up/Warm-up at 4:45 pm, Perform, 7:00 pm

### *Performance*

Sunday May 25, 2014, Richter Park (100 Aunt Hack Road, Danbury, CT). Warm-up at 2:00 pm, perform at 2:30 pm.

### *Harmony College Northeast*

Friday, August 8 – Sunday, August 10. Worcester State University. Worcester, MA. Details to be announced.

## March/April Milestones

### *March Birthdays*

13 - Pete Huester  
15 - Terry Dunkle  
22 - Vera Baran  
25 - Nick Godano

### *Wedding Anniversaries*

No anniversaries in March.

### *April Birthdays*

4 – Patricia Griffin  
11 - Robert Golenbock  
12 – Carl Zlamany  
15 – Bill Keenan  
16 – Vivien Cheeseman  
27 – Alex Zobler  
27 – Ronnie Fehling  
28 – Don Sutherland

### *April Wedding Anniversaries*

14 – Fred and Vera Baran  
16 – Diane and Craig Johnson

