



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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May 2010

Crowd Greets Chorus at Common

On Sunday afternoon, April 11, the Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus entertained at the Village at Brookfield Common, appearing during a celebration for families of the residents as well as for the center's staff. Over 100 people attended the performance.



*Village at Brookfield Commons audience
greeting the Mad Hatters*

"Outside of contests and our annual shows, this was the largest audience we have ever sung to," said Danny Anderson, the Mad Hatter president.

"They were really into it," said bass and chapter treasurer, Dick Walter. "It seemed like everyone was really enjoying the music."

Unfortunately, only 14 Mad Hatters showed-up for the singout. "All the parts were represented," Danny Anderson explained, "but the balance was off, although you wouldn't know it by the audience's reaction."

Assistant director, Jim Hopper, pulled double-duty as both director and raconteur.

The Village at Brookfield Common has been a regular venue for the Mad Hatters for a number of years. It offers assisted living, the Lighthouse Club for mild cognitive impairment, and the Harbor Program, which provides specialized care for those with Alzheimer's disease and other memory impairments.

Mad Hatters to Take Part in Singing for Life Program

A special day awaits the Danbury Mad Hatter Barbershop Chorus on May 18, when they take part in the Barbershop Harmony Society's Singing for Life Program.

The chorus will be appearing in support of the Red Cross Blood Donor Program at the Ridgefield Recreation Center off Route 35 in Ridgefield, CT, entertaining donors as they give blood. The program begins at about 1:45 pm and runs until 7:00 pm. Other a capella singing groups are being encouraged to take part.

The Singing for Life Program started a number of years ago when Society officials noticed that chapters had been active in teaming up with blood donor agencies to promote blood drives. Stories of those efforts showed up occasionally in the Society's bi-monthly publication, *The Harmonizer*.

Then, one of the Society's top performance coaches was diagnosed with a medical issue, requiring many blood transfusions.

After several pitched ideas and thorough discussions, the Society decided to link its chapters with local blood donor agencies across North America.

The Society's Marketing and Public Relations committee met with executives from the four major blood donation organizations in North America: American Blood Centers (ABC), American Red Cross (ARC), Canadian Blood Services (CBS), and Hema-Quebec, and everyone agreed that Singing For Life was a great idea. The event was slated originally for May 15, but since that limited some chapters and created complications, it now includes the entire month of May, traditionally a month of blood shortages.

To date, approximately 25% of the Society's chapters have participated, and well over 4,500 units of blood have been collected; potentially 13,500 lives saved!

We hope you will join the Mad Hatters in supporting this important program.

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 last month's winner, chorus music director Joe Hudson, who wrote: "The location is the Galleria on Main Street, Danbury, where we sang during First Night for two years."

And sang while competing against the PA system, with no rest rooms or warm up area...

Singing with the Learning Quartet

By Dick Zang

While singing with the Manhattan Chapter years ago, I became aware of a legendary Monday night informal singing group that met in one member's apartment with a large file cabinet filled with multiple copies of great barbershop arrangements. Copies of a song selected at random were passed around to the dozen or so invitees and, since each singer was an accomplished sight reader, the songs had to be sung only once or twice to get the maximum enjoyment out of each arrangement.

I was never invited to those sessions, but I'm getting the same sort of vibe when singing with the learning quartet. Joe, Robert, Jimmy and I, with a little individual prep beforehand, are usually able to get a good feel for an arrangement in short order. Our purpose as part of the Music Committee is to screen candidates for new chorus songs. Once we find an arrangement we think appropriate and the Music Committee approves, we record the learning tracks. This is how the chorus was introduced to "The Way You Look Tonight" and "This Land Is Your Land."

The learning quartet, also known as the teaching quartet or Loco Fedora when we competed recently, doesn't get a lot of rehearsal time, so we usually hang around after chorus meetings to try a few things. Lately, we've had other members join in or just listen, and I'm sure they're beginning to understand how much fun it can be to sight read with a small group. In recent weeks, Chuck Kreiger had a good time singing both bari and bass to "Goodnight Sweetheart," an upcoming chorus song.

The message is clear: If you want to get more enjoyment out of our hobby, put a little extra time into learning new songs quickly and exercise those vocal chords every chance you get. We should have more pick-up quartets singing new songs and keeping alive some of the old ones dropped from the chorus repertoire. There are other things you can do to become a better singer – ask Joe Hudson about private lessons in his home and register for the sight reading classes at Harmony College this summer. Who knows, maybe someday soon we'll have a learning VLQ.



Quartet Corner

News from our chorus quartets

Real Chemistry – By John Bradley

I've been a barbershop singer for over 11 years and never once have I sung in a barbershop. But that changed on two Saturdays in April when Real Chemistry entertained at the grand opening of Kennedy's All-American Barber Club, located at 105 Danbury Road (Route 35) in Ridgefield, just south of Cops Hill Common.

"This is quite a place," said tenor Augie D'Auelli as he lined-up a pool shot in the shop's club room.

Yes, a pool table in the club room of a barbershop.

Kennedy's All American Barber Club, a national franchise, seeks to combine the atmosphere of "your father's barbershop" with grooming services for the modern gentleman and offer them together with a lounge and conference room where members can enjoy the refined relaxation of an old English gentlemen's club: fireplace, pool table, red leather wing chairs, and dark wood paneling. There is also "wi-fi" connectivity and a flat-screen TV.

According to franchise partner, Jarrod Manfro, "Kennedy's aspires to a kind of late Victorian atmosphere that suggests a simpler, unhurried world."

According to the franchise's website, the term "Kennedy," in its lesser-known state, is a synonym for The Ultimate Gentleman. "It is a philosophy and an unspoken fraternity among the finest gentlemen throughout the ages."

On the morning of April 10, Real Chemistry opened the festivities with its Saturday morning haircut and shave song, "Coney Island Baby." We then shivered and sang for the next two hours.

Realizing cold spring mornings may not be the best time to harmonize, we returned the following Saturday, this time in the rain.

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Quartets

Continued from the previous page

Although the inclement weather forced the postponement of the ribbon-cutting opening ceremony to April 22, the quartet did have fun, made a little money and brought our music to customers, staff and drivers on Route 35.

And we learned that Dick “The Stick” Walter is a pretty good pool player.

Rare Occasion – By Fred Baran

On Saturday, April 10, with Dick Zang singing bass, Rare Occasion participated in an a cappella concert at Shepaug Valley High School in Washington, CT. The program was part of the Senior Project of Alison Carini, a student at the school.

Shepaug's Senior Project Program is a year long student-driven project that all seniors complete before graduation. Its goal is to prepare students for the challenges they will face after high school, establishing student competencies based on life skills that must be completed.

Alison became involved in putting together a complete two and one-half hour concert, including lining-up performers, staging, lighting and sound. She had assistance from other students in producing, directing and serving as emcee for the concert.

It was a very enjoyable afternoon, and in addition to singing on the program, we had the pleasure of listening to five other a cappella groups with a variety of singing styles.

It is our hope that members of the audience and other performers might share our unique musical style and perhaps consider becoming new members.

Our repertoire for the afternoon included “Sitting On Top Of The World,” “Lone Prairie,” “You Make Me Feel So Young,” “Lullaby In Ragtime,” “I Don't Know Why” and “There Is Nothing Like A Dame.”

Also on the program were Play It By Ear, a mixed vocal group of 14 singers from Western Connecticut State University, whose selections ranged from the Beach Boys to Rockapella and some original improvisation.

They were followed by the Conn-Men, an eleven-voice male group from the University of Connecticut, whose selections included Sam Cooke and The Beatles.

The Coastal Chordsman, the Bridgeport Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, directed by our friend Chris Andrade, did a variety of familiar Barbershop songs plus their unique version of “Zombie Jamboree.”

The Connecticut Choral Society Chamber singers did about 10 songs including traditional, a few spirituals and a musical poem by Robert Burns.

Another barbershop quartet representing the Valley Chordsmen, from Waterbury, closed out the program with a mix of barbershop classics and modern standards. We joined them in singing “Keep The Whole World Singing” to close the concert.

We were pleased to be a part of this concert and again extend our thanks to Dick Zang, for filling in to make it possible.



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

We are just starting a barbershop quartet and I'm wondering if there is any specific order the parts stand in. In other words, should it go baritone, bass, lead and tenor? Is it OK if the baritone stands next to the tenor?

Tommy from Torrington.

Tommy, there is no set order to how the parts should stand. It's all depends upon how the quartet sounds. If the more traditional placement you mentioned makes you guys sound better, then stand that way. If the quartet sounds better with the tenor next to the baritone, then do it. If your lead, for example, hears better with one ear, have that ear to the rest of the group. Our quartet usually sounds better when the baritone has his back to the audience.

We've had coaching sessions in which the coach spent a good half hour repositioning us until he found what he thought was the perfect blend. Then another coach completely rearranged us.

We had a problem when we performed in contest with our new arrangement, not realizing our first coach was a judge. We don't know how much the new alignment affected our score, but we do know the first judge gave us the lowest numbers of the panel.

Quartets often change position based on the song they are performing. If one part is featured, that person might stand slightly in front of the others. For our doo-wop songs we place the lead and bass outside since those parts are dominant.

So, I guess the short answer is find someone whose ear you can trust and let him or her listen while you switch positions. Stop when you find the best sound and when all four of you feel the most comfortable.



Stories About Songwriters

By Fred Baran

George Gershwin was an American composer, whose compositions mark the entrance of America into the serious international classical music world. His musicals and popular songs are among the finest in those genres, and his art-music compositions are infused with jazz and popular music.

George Gershwin's parents emigrated from Russia to the U.S. in 1891. He was born Jacob Gershowitz in Brooklyn, New York, on September 26, 1898. Early on he excelled at street sports in his poor lower east side Manhattan neighborhood and had no early musical contact.

His first musical exposure came when a piano was brought to the Gershowitz home for his brother, Ira. George (age 12) took an immediate interest in the instrument and began to play a popular song he had memorized from a neighbor's player piano. His parents invested in lessons for George beginning at age 13. He studied with American composers Rubin Goldmark, Henry Cowell and Wallingford Riegger, and with Russian-born composer and theorist Joseph Sillinger.

At the age of 15, Gershwin quit school and was a pianist and "song plugger" for a Tin Pan Alley music-publishing firm, Jerome H. Remick & Company, earning \$15 a week.

On Saturdays, to supplement his income, Gershwin recorded piano rolls under various pseudonyms. For his efforts he received \$35 for six rolls. He was a great admirer of the comedian Ed Wynn and it is at this time, in honor of him, that Gershwin changed the end of his last name.

Gershwin's first song to be published was "When You Want 'Em, You Don't Get 'Em, When You Get 'Em, You Don't Want 'Em" in 1916. It was the success, in 1918, of his song, "Swanee," that brought him fame, established him as a composer, and marked the end of his systemic study of music.

"Swanee" was originally written for a revue at the newly opened Capitol Theatre. It was not successful on that outing, but when presented by Al Jolson in *Sinbad*, it became the greatest hit of Gershwin's entire career.

Gershwin was one of the first to introduce into popular songs the rhythms and melodic twists of jazz. Among his best-known songs are "The Man I Love," "I Got Rhythm," and "Someone To Watch Over Me."

The lyrics for nearly all of his songs were written by his brother, Ira, who was also his collaborator in a series of revues and musical comedies that included George White's *Scandals* (1920-1924), *Lady Be Good* (1924); *Funny Face* (1927) and the political satire, *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), the first musical comedy to win a Pulitzer Prize.

At the invitation of the bandleader, Paul Whiteman, Gershwin wrote, in less than three weeks, his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) for piano and jazz band. The speed of writing was due in part to George having forgotten about the commission. It was when Ira read in the newspaper of the upcoming concert that George's memory was jogged.

Much of the inspiration for the work came to him during a train journey to Boston, "with its steely rhythms, its rattley – bang... I suddenly heard and even saw on paper the complete construction of the rhapsody from beginning to end. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness." The actual music was written in a week on his return to New York.

The well-known clarinet glissando, which begins the work, was not originally conceived by Gershwin. Rather the clarinet soloist played it as a joke. Gershwin liked it and thus it became part of the score.

The night of the premiere at the Aeolian Hall, New York, George himself was the piano soloist.

The American composer Ferde Grofe, then a pianist and orchestrator for Paul Whiteman's Orchestra, orchestrated *Rhapsody in Blue*.

The success of *Rhapsody in Blue* led Gershwin to write more pieces for piano and orchestra including *The Concert in F* (1925). His very evocative tone poem, *An American in Paris* (1928) takes the listener to the streets of Paris in the 1920's and calls for four car horns to reflect the traffic noise of the time. Gershwin had traveled to Paris in the hopes of studying with the great teacher, Nadia Boulanger, but she refused him saying he was fine the way he was. Although he composed the sketches of the work in Paris, it was completed on a farm in Connecticut.

Gershwin also sought to study with Igor Stravinsky. When he approached the composer at a party, Stravinsky surprised him with the question, "How much money do you make a year?" On hearing the answer, Stravinsky said, "Perhaps I should study with you, Mr. Gershwin."

His song, "The Man I Love," was composed for the musical *Lady Be Good* in 1924. Gershwin found the verse more pleasing, so he changed it to the chorus and wrote a new verse for the song. "The Man I Loved" was dropped from the show before it opened in New York. Three years later it was included in *Strike Up The Band*, but the entire show closed during tryouts. Once again it was to be included in *Rosalie* (1928) but vanished. The popularity of "The Man I Love" was assured when the torch singer, Helen Morgan, put it in her nightclub act.

An American in Paris was inspired by a trip that the Gershwins took in Europe in the spring of 1928.

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Songwriters

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George wished to capture not only the spirit of the city the work is named for, but also the carefree attitudes of his fellow Americans on vacation. To add authentic color to the work, Gershwin visited Parisian garages and purchased used taxi horns that he incorporated into the score.

The piece premiered at Carnegie Hall on December 13, 1928 and almost immediately transferred from the concert hall to the musical stage as it was incorporated into *Show Girl* as the ballet scene.

Girl Crazy (1930) was the last, and greatest, of the lighthearted Gershwin musicals. Despite a ridiculous plot, it was a momentous production with an incredible line up of songs.

Ginger Rogers was the star of the show, Ethel Merman made her stage debut in the show, and in the pit were such musicians as Benny Goodman, Jack Teagarden, Glenn Miller, Jimmy Dorsey and Gene Krupa.

In 1932, Gershwin's musical *Of Thee I Sing* was the first musical to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize. Since this is an award for writing, the prize was awarded to George S. Kaufman, Morrie Ryskind and Ira Gershwin. For his music, George Gershwin was awarded the Pulitzer Prize posthumously to mark the centenary of his birth.

While most of his compositions met with success and he was considered one of the great composers of his day, Gershwin did not find initial success with his 1935 opera, *Porgy and Bess*. Based on the novel **Porgy** by American writer DuBose Heyward, and set among the poor of the South, *Porgy and Bess* was Gershwin's greatest undertaking.

It was revived on Broadway in 1942 and 1953, and made into a motion picture in 1959. Today we consider the opera a work of unique character that is Gershwin's masterpiece.

In 1926, Gershwin began to collect contemporary art and the following year began to draw and paint as a hobby, a pastime that would become increasingly important to him.

Gershwin's life came to an early and tragic end at just 38 years old and at the height of his career. While working on the score of *The Golden Follies*, he collapsed into a coma, and later died, in Beverly Hills, California, on July 11, 1937 from a brain tumor.

Gershwin's music has been used in numerous films and was reprised to great success in the musicals *My One and Only* (1983) and *Crazy for You* (1992)

Among his notable songs not previously mentioned, are "Nice Work if You Can Get It," "Foggy Day," "Fascinating Rhythm," "S'Wonderful," "Our Love is Here to Stay" and "Embraceable You."

Repertoire Ramblings

By John Bradley

Miss Taralily and I recently attended "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine," a Woody Guthrie "legacy concert" at the Tarrytown Music Hall. We were curious about the title, since Woody did not write "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine." We also were curious that a Klezmer band, the Klezmatics, was a featured act. I never associated Woody Guthrie with Yiddish music.

The next day I did a little online research and found a really interesting connection between Guthrie and Jewish folk music. But that is not the subject of these ramblings, nor is the title of the concert.

What is the subject is some equally interesting information I found out about a Guthrie song the chorus is currently learning, "This Land is Your Land."

Have you ever heard a song so often on the radio you begin to dislike it? Seems Woody had that problem in the winter of 1940. He was getting increasingly tired of the radio overplaying Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" (also one of the chorus's repertoire songs). He thought the lyrics were unrealistic and complacent. Partly inspired by his experiences during a cross-country trip and his distaste for "God Bless America," he penned his most famous song, "This Land is Your Land."

It was originally subtitled "God Blessed America." The melody is based on the gospel song, "Oh My Loving Brother," best-known as "Little Darling, Pal of Mine," sung by the country group, The Carter Family.

Guthrie signed the manuscript with the comment, "All you can write is what you see, Woody G., N.Y., N.Y., N.Y." He protested against class inequality in the final verses, which are rarely published or sung with the song today:

*In the squares of the city, In the shadow of a steeple;
By the relief office, I'd seen my people.
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking,
Is this land made for you and me?*

*As I went walking, I saw a sign there,
And on the sign there, It said "no trespassing."
But on the other side, it didn't say nothing!
That side was made for you and me.*

Although the song was written in 1940, it was four years before he recorded it for Moses Asch in April 1944, and even longer until sheet music was produced and circulated.



George Gershwin



Woody Guthrie



The President's Podium

By Danny Anderson

Just think, 75 years ago Barbershop Harmony as we know it began in Tulsa, OK, on April 11. The event started as small group but has continued to grow into a large, world-wide society. Don Sutherland has been a member of that society for 50 + of those 75 years.

To celebrate the Barbershop Harmony Society's birthday, 14 members of this chapter sang at The Village at Brookfield Common. We have performed there on several previous occasions.

The number of singers present for the performance was small, all voice parts were present, but the balance was off. We were well received and the applause was large and long. Members of the audience sang along with us, thoroughly enjoying our songs. Our performance at Brookfield Common led to our being booked at another venue.

Thanks to Jim Hopper for directing the chorus in Joe's absence. We, as a chapter, are blessed with men of many talents. I for one am thankful that so many members unselfishly volunteer in so many ways to improve the chapter.

The event was a family day celebration for the Brookfield Common, with over 100 people in the audience. On this day, the center had invited friends and family members of the residents to a day of celebration. A luncheon was provided for the guests. They were entertained with a piano concert. This was followed by a drawing for gift baskets which were prepared by employees of the Brookfield Common, then our performance.

We owe a big "shout out" to Dick Walter, for his continued work at booking our sing outs, along with his duties as chapter treasurer. He is in continuous contact with activity directors of the different venues where we have sung before. I encourage each member to tell Dick of prospective opportunities where we can perform.

Joe Hudson is to be heralded for his work as VP of Youth and Harmony, along with other duties with this chapter. He is working hard at getting the word out about barbershopping. Recent activities to recruit members were in Hartford during the Connecticut musical conference, where he set up a booth and spoke to both educators and students.

At present, we are polling the chorus concerning its desire to compete in October. The board will be reviewing the data and reporting to the membership soon.

The chapter is planning to participate in "Singing for Life." this year. Singing for life is done in conjunction with an American Red Cross blood drive. We will be singing at the blood drive on May 18 in Ridgefield, CT. Dickson, Our VP of Public Relations, is coordinating our activities for this event.

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March Board of Directors



Meeting Minutes

*Submitted, remitted,
committed, and admitted by
Robert Golenbock, Secretary*

Meeting called to order by Danny "Kiss My Grits" Anderson at 6:01PM on 04/06/2010 at the Church of Christ.

SECRETARY'S REPORT by Fred Baran was gratefully acknowledged by R. Golenbock, who moved acceptance, second by J. Hudson. Approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: We did 30 Singing Valentines and bested last year's net by more than \$20. We have yet to receive the \$500 promised us by the Northeastern District (NED) for hosting the competition. Motion to receive the report made by F. Baran, second by D. DeMarche. Approved.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Joe West and Nate Chester are enrolled. Joe Hudson called WestConn Music Department to offer to do a master class with their choir – date and time to be determined.

We are considering doing an a cappella festival. We would identify a charity, invite groups from the area including school groups, but ask the charity to arrange the venue and advertising. Two charities under consideration are TBICO, a group Rare Occasion sang for, and the Association of Religious Communities, which would allow us access to multiple religious organizations' singing groups.

VP PUBLIC RELATIONS: We plan to sing at a Blood Drive on May 18. The Blood Drive is 1PM to 7PM. On Saturday, April 10, Rare Occasion (with Dick Zang) is singing at an a cappella festival at Shepaug High School.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: The last four songs for the year chosen by the Committee are "On the Sunny Side of the Street," "Goodnight Sweetheart," "Where Is Love?", and "Loch Lomond."

The Committee recommends to the Board that we order all the learning tracks and music immediately so the chorus can more easily familiarize itself with the tracks throughout the year. That way we will have 10 new songs for the next show.

A motion to purchase learning tracks for those songs and "If I Loved You" and "Lullaby in Ragtime" at a cost of \$356 was made by J. Hudson, second by R. Golenbock. Approved.

OLD BUSINESS: NED officials reported that our division contest was "the best run contest in years." They may ask us to do next year's district contest as well, but a number of board members have noted that the distraction of running the contest can affect our performance and also that it would be best to spread the responsibility around the district more evenly.

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Board Meeting

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We have discussed hiring a coach from the Big Apple Chorus, where Joe Hudson is currently singing tenor. Joe recommends continuing with Butch as our primary singing coach but also recommends bringing in Joe Hunter (the Society's Presentation category specialist) for presentation coaching on an occasional basis.

NEW BUSINESS: We are working on this fall's annual show. The Committee will mostly work through e-mail discussions for the early part of the writing. The Honeymooners are being contacted so we can integrate their song list into our show. The date for the show is October 2, 2010.

The District Contest will be held in Portland, Maine, on October 22 and 23. Because of the need to make a firm commitment to our presentation and the cost of getting to Maine and staying overnight for 2 nights, we will need to poll the membership as to their willingness to participate.

OFFICERS PRESENT: L. LaPlante, D. DeMarche, R. WaLter, D. AnDerson, , F. BaRan, R. GoLenbock, J. HuDson.

We adjourned at 7:18PM to watch the DVD of the competition (which we are definitely NOT illegally reproducing).

Next meeting: May 4, 2010 at 6PM.

Podium

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He will be looking to each member to participate in this activity.

Mark your calendars for our annual Memorial Day sing-out in Southbury. Charlie Rosa has once again arranged for the chapter to perform at the town picnic. Times will soon be announced.

I would encourage your attendance at Harmony College scheduled for early August. It is a great time of learning, singing and fellowship with fellow barbershoppers from all over New England. The climax of the school is the show on Saturday night where those attending the Youth in Harmony camp, guest quartets and the featured quartets perform.



Happy Birthday BHS

72 Years Ago, It All Started with 26 Men on a Roof

By Grady Kerr – Society Historian

Some say it was an accident, some say it was fate. Either way (or perhaps both) the movement we now enjoy as the Barbershop Harmony Society (aka. Society for The Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA) can be credited to a meeting in Tulsa organized by Owen Clifton Cash on April 11, 1938.

Cash was really only interested in getting a few guys together to sing. There was no grand plan, no grand scheme. He and acquaintance Rupert Hall had a chance meeting in Kansas City several weeks before and discussed forming a Song Fest. On his return to Tulsa, Cash drafted an invitation and mailed it to the 14 singers he knew might show up and encouraged them to bring guests.

The Tulsa Club was a high class place and popular destination for special dinners, weddings and meetings. Special accommodations were made for the exclusive members, mostly rich Tulsa oil men. Rupe was a member and arranged for the location. The management decided to place the "singers" on the roof (in open air - under the stars) so as to not disturb the clientele.



The Tulsa Club

It was a fine, warm spring day. OC Cash, Rupert Hall, Donnie O'Donovan, Elmer Lawyer and "Puny" Blevens were the first to arrive. Rupe went off to arrange for the food leaving the other four to ask, "What Are We Waiting For?" They decided to try to woodshed the song "Down Mobile".

Cash states that he had invited 14 men and 26 "crashed the party". They sang and harmonized to some old songs for several hours with several breaking off into quartets as well.

Apparently some Tulsa club members on the floors below complained of the "noise," so the next week, April 18, they met at the Hotel Tulsa. 70 men showed up at this second meeting, showing there was interest in this idea and maybe an early indication of the group's future growth.

By the end of May, the newly formed group began meeting at the Alvin Plaza Hotel, hosting 75 to 150 men each week. What would later be known as the Tulsa # 1 Chapter, would continue to meet at the Alvin for 37 years.

So, when you harmonize this month, ring a four part chord in tribute to these 26 close harmony lovers.

Robert's Raconteuring

By Robert Bradley

Where's Waldo, you ask? Or, in this case, Where's Robert?

I appreciate those of you who have noticed my absence and commented upon it.

My brother has fielded most of the questions and has come up with some good reasons why I have not been at rehearsal. The real reason is that I am tired, worn out and run down. There comes a time in every barbershopper's life when he needs to take a slight break and regroup. This is mine. Teachers take sabbaticals to stay sharp. Sometimes, to appreciate something, you need to step back for a while.

I have still been singing, and Real Chemistry is back up and making chords better than ever. We have been doing some gigs and have a busy spring and summer ahead of us. So the vocal cords are still working.

During my sabbatical I have seen Joe and have been keeping up with what is going on in the chorus. I have been an officer and your president for over 14 years. After the contest, I found that in the run up to it, I fell behind on other parts of my life. I have to catch up on the art center in town, my business, my grandson and my life in general.

This break also gives Danny time to establish himself without my being around. I think it is important for a new administration to get its own identity without having the old one's shadow over everything.

All of the reasons given for my absence are correct. I have been in Boston, I do have a bad back, etc. But the fundamental reason is, as stated above, I'm tired, worn out, run down.

I will be at International, and I will be back with the chorus. Thanks for noticing I have been gone. Keep up the good singing and the good fellowship.

Random April Rehearsal Notes

The Mad Hatter's meeting of April 28 saw the revival of the Danbury Quartet Festival. This is when the program committee chairman, Lyle LaPlante, pick three quartets out of "the hat." Each quartet gets a week to prepare a song to sing to the chorus.

Dick Zang (bass), Pete Daubner (baritone), Dr. Bob Golenbock (lead) and Joe Hudson (tenor) led off the festival with a rousing version of "Heart."

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The Director's Den

By Joe Hudson

Youth Activities Around Danbury

First, I would like to say thank you to the following gentlemen: Peter Daubner, Andy Bayer and Danny Anderson, for coming to the Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) Choral Concert at White Hall. They can attest that the concert was excellent. There were over 50 young men singing! Imagine what a sound the Mad Hatters could have with that much youth!

Next, I did not forget him, Jimmy Hopper not only attended the choral concert, but was my help and right-hand man at the CMEA Conference in Hartford, where we sang with and spoke to over 50 different teachers and students about Youth in Harmony in the State of Connecticut. What a thrill that day was.

It all started a little slow, with no electricity. Then, after the lights came on and we got the DVD player working, a few teachers stopped to see us. When the choir took a break, we were fortunate to be visited by all four members of the high school quartet from the Hartford Chapter, *Timely Gents*. Once you get people singing live, others listen.

We were then joined by a teacher from Sacred Heart Academy who was also the director of HX Camp a few years ago. We sang awhile with him and our former director and music teacher in Seymour, Joel Knecht. Later in the day, we were joined in our singing by Steve Holtz, former Rare Occasion bass and current member of the Manchester chapter.

All in all, we had over 20 teachers and 10 students sign up for more information on Youth in Harmony and the HX Camp.

On Friday, I was standing there alone. After a while, I got to talking with two students who are going to WCSU in the fall. They said they were interested and took further information on our chorus!

The last gentleman I spoke with before I left was a former barbershopper during college. He is currently the band director at Brookfield High School (which is why he has no time to join us...right now!)

So, all in all, the past two months have been the beginning of expanding barbershop to the younger generations around Danbury! Always remember that the best way to get people to know us, is to be somewhere they can see us - concerts, plays, etc.



Rehearsal Notes

Continued from the previous page

John Bradley (baritone), Danny Anderson (lead), Fred Baran (tenor) and Andy Bayer (bass) sang second, and after a shaky start delivered a solid performance of "Hey, Look Me Over."

Finishing up was Art Roberts (tenor), Don Sutherland (baritone), Doyle Stoppel (lead) and Dick Zang (bass, filling-in for a late arriving Dick Walter) singing an interesting arrangement of "Always."

The results of the festival? We need more work on quarteting and learning our songs.

Membership renewals: Joe Hudson, eight years, Lyle LaPlate, five years, Dick Walter, 32 years, Frank Fehling, lots of years.

The chorus has been trying some new things during its weekly repertoire review. One or two rows will take to the risers and sing to the rest of the chorus. Those sitting can then listening and comment on energy, vowel matching, phrase connection, sound and, of course, smiles.

The more ears the merrier!

Retired Songs

Jim Hopper, music VP, announced at the Mad Hatter's April 27 meeting that "The Way You Look Tonight" will be dropped from the chorus's current repertoire.

"We just aren't making progress with the song after a number of months working on it," Jim explained. "Sometimes there just isn't a match between chorus or quartet and a song."

As the chorus introduces its new songs, other, older songs, will be replaced in the regular repertoire. As soon as "You Never Walk Alone" is performance-ready, "Let There be Peace on Earth" will be dropped.

"But if you like a song that is no longer in the performance repertoire," Jim Hopper said, "you can continue to sing it in pick-up quartets during our rehearsals."



Be Alert to Credit Card Fraud

According to its web site, The Barbershop Harmony Society has received reports of credit card fraud from a small number of its members.

It has coordinated efforts with the authorities and with the credit card companies to address security concerns, and is continuing steps to ensure the ongoing safety and privacy of all personal and financial Membership information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Society CFO Heather Verble directly

Baritone Deep Thought of the Month

Stuffed deer heads on walls are bad enough, but it's worse when they are wearing dark glasses and have streamers in their antlers, because then you know they were enjoying themselves at a party when they were shot

The Very Best Vocal Coach

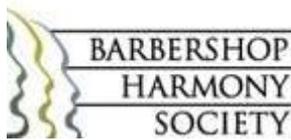
By Carol Johnson, Director, Manahawkin Chapter

I will remember the first time I heard myself on a tape recorder. It didn't sound anything like me! My friend sounded exactly like herself, but that strange voice singing with her just wasn't mine. I was shocked to realize that it was indeed me. I suddenly know that the "wonderful voice" I have lived with all of my life isn't the same voice that everyone else hears.

For months, I taped myself singing in the chorus. I listened in amazement to this awful voice - it sang wrong notes, wrong words, bad vowels, made funny sounds, scooped, and even went flat! I became very aware of pitch and went right to work to produce a better voice.

Little by little, I improved myself as a singer under the cold truth of this heartless coach, my tape recorder. Yes, your tape recorder is the best coach you'll ever find! It gives you the opportunity to hear the voice that everyone else hears.

Remember that the only person who hears the voice in your head is you! Any time you are serious about good singing, the truth is there for you to hear. Just press the button.



Society and District Notes



Bass River Barbershop Bash

Weekend of 25 Sept 2010

- Woodshedding, hanging out with old friends and meeting
- new ones
- Fishing for stripers via kayak in the river
- Eating clam chowder, baked stuffed quohogs, etc.
- Show Saturday night for the public at a local venue
- Bring nothing except your vocal cords - unless there are
- special things you like to eat and drink

Contact Ross "Tagger" McCurdy for more info

First Annual Rhode Island Barbershop Harmony Jamboree

Sunday, July 18, 2010 10:00AM - 6:00PM. Goddard State Park, Carousel Performing Arts Building. All BHS, SAI and HI Chapters in New England are invited - Family and Friends too!

- There will be an All-You-Can-Eat BBQ plus refreshments
- and dessert.
- There will be plenty of singing in the Park. Everyone gets to
- sing.
- There will be a show at 3:00PM that the public is invited to
- attend, featuring all Rhode Island based BHS, SAI and HI Choruses plus their Quartets.

Cost: \$10 per person

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Make your check payable to:

Mail to: **Steve Isherwood**

179 Ontario St. Providence, RI 02907

For more info: Email - SingNBC@aol.com

or call 401-941-1978

NED Fall District Convention Dates Now Set

We are pleased to announce the "official" dates for the upcoming District Convention. Mark your calendars for October 22-24, 2010. There may be some confusion over dates in September. That is not correct. We briefly thought about moving the convention into September, but it won't work. So the District Convention/Contest will be in October as originally planned. Sorry if there is any confusion.

The location of this year's District Convention will be Portland, ME.

Music Director Sought

The Nashua, N.H. Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society is seeking a Musical Director for The Granite Statesmen Chorus.

Late in 2008, our long-time director, Steve Tramack, stepped down after twelve years directing the chorus to pursue other interests within the Society. The chapter was fortunate to have a qualified candidate within our ranks who was hired to fill the position. Prior to his hiring, the chapter Board of Directors pledged to the membership to conduct a formal director search once the chapter rebuilding process had been settled. The time is at hand.

A formal Director Search Committee has been formed to develop selective criteria for a director that best fits the current chapter model and growth goals. The ideal candidate would be a current, recently idled, or former director with strong vocal production, showmanship and leadership skills.

Please email: president@granitestatesmen.org if you're interested.



Thursday-Sunday, August 12-15, 2010

Worcester State College

486 Chandler Street

Worcester, MA 01602

This year's HX Camp is shaping up to be the best yet. We will have a weekend camp for both boys and girls. Our conductors for the kids are skilled barbershoppers and musicians. All we need are two things very important to the success of this camp: volunteers to be counselors for the students and to help us run the camp headquarters, and MONEY. This camp will not run without the support of the members of the Northeastern District.

If you are interested in supporting us as a volunteer or donor, please e-mail: Christopher Andrade, HX Camp 2010 Coordinator, mteacher@optonline.net or Joseph Hudson, VP Youth in Harmony 2010, danburybbs@yahoo.com.

Ye Olde Joke Boarde



Submitted by the Unknown Barbershopper

Ever wonder how baritones remember their passwords?

During a recent password audit, it was found that a barbershop baritone was using the following password:

MickeyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofy

When asked why such a big password, he said, "I was told it had to be at least eight characters long.

•••

Sitting by the window of her convent, Sister Barbara opened a letter from home one evening. Inside the letter was a \$100 bill her parents had sent. Sister Barbara smiled at the gesture. As she read the letter by the window, she noticed a shabbily dressed stranger leaning against the lamp post below.

Quickly, she wrote, "Don't despair. Sister Barbara," on a piece of paper, wrapped the \$100 bill in it, got the man's attention and tossed it out the window to him.

The stranger, who was a barbershop baritone obviously down on his luck, picked it up, and, with a puzzled expression and a tip of his hat, went off down the street.

The next day, Sister Barbara was told that a man was at her door, insisting on seeing her. She went down, and found the baritone waiting. Without a word, he handed her a huge wad of \$100 bills.

"What's this?" she asked.

"That's the \$8,000 you have coming Sister," he replied. "Don't Despair paid 80-to-1."

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

How Are Things in Glocca Morra
Over the Rainbow
Please, Mr. Columbus

Patriotic

Star-Spangled Banner
America the Beautiful
God Bless America

Inspirational

Nobody Knows the Trouble I Have
Seeing
I Believe
Let There Be Peace on Earth
Lord's Prayer

Amazing Grace
Just a Slower Walk with Thee

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

President:	Danny Anderson
Musical Director:	Joseph Hudson
Assistant Director:	Jim Hopper
Assistant Director:	Don Sutherland
Membership VP:	Andy Bayer
Public Relations VP:	Dickson DeMarche
Music VP:	Jim Hopper
Secretary:	Robert Golenbock
Treasurer:	Dick Walter
Member at Large:	Fred Baran
Member at Large:	Art Roberts
Member at Large:	Charlie Rosa
Program Committee	
Chairman	Lyle LaPlante
Uniform Chairman:	Andy Bayer
Harmony Foundation	
Chairman:	Danny Anderson
Music Librarian:	Lyle LaPlante
Sunshine Chairman:	Don Smith
Package Show Chairman:	Dick Walter
Chorus Manager:	Robert Golenbock

The Hatter Chatter

Serving the Mad Hatter community since last Tuesday

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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

May 18: Chapter Event, Singing for Life. Ridgefield Recreation Center off Route 35 in Ridgefield, CT. 1:30 PM – 7PM. Fifteen to twenty minute intervals each hour.

May 31: Chapter Singout. Southbury Annual Memorial Day Parade and Picnic, Ballantine Park, Southbury, CT. Warmup 12:00 PM, Sing 12:30 – 1:45 PM.

June 8: Chapter Singout. Meadow Ridge Independent Living Center, 100 Redding Rd. (left at the top of the hill), Redding (Georgetown), CT. Warmup 7:00 PM, sing 7:30.

July 24: Chapter Singout. Meadow Ridge Continuous Care Retirement Community, 100 Redding Rd. (right at the top of the hill), Redding (Georgetown), CT. Warmup 3:30 PM, sing 4:00 – 5:00 PM.

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

Bridgeport Coastal Chordsmen. Annual show, Saturday, May 1, 7:30 PM, Tomlinson Middle School, Fairfield, CT. featuring international champion comedy quartet, FRED.

Big Apple Chorus Annual show, May 8th, 7:00PM. "Together Again," Reprising an epic favorite: *West Side Story.*" Salvation Army Centennial Theater, 120 West 14th Street between 6th & 7th Avenue, NYC. kjmoriarty@verizon.net

Poughkeepsie New Yorkers, Annual show, "Just Plain Barbershop!" Saturday, May 22, 2:00 and 7:00 PM. Cuneen-Hackett Arts Center, 12 Vassar St., Poughkeepsie, NY. events@newyorkerschorus.org.

May Milestones

Birthdays:

7 - Dan Griffin
12 - Joel Knecht
12 - Janet Just
12 - Dessain Terry
14 - Gloria Keenan
17 - Doyle Stoppel
22 - Fred Baran

Wedding Anniversaries:

1 - August and Roseann D'Aureli
3 - John and Claudia Downey
5 - Bill and Annellen Gleissner
8 - Bob and Vikki Bradley
12 - Pete and Jane Huester
28 - Lyle and Patricia LaPlante
29 - Danny and Linda Anderson
30 - Doyle and Doris Stoppel