



TOOSDAY TOONS



NASSAU MID-ISLAND CHAPTER, WESTBURY, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

Home of The Long Island Harmonizers, Maurice Debar, Chorus Director



PROBE
BARBERSHOP



VOLUME XI, NO. 2

WWW.LONGISLANDHARMONIZERS.ORG

FEBRUARY, 2013

HEARTS OF HARMONIZERS TO 'GO OUT' WITH REQUESTED SINGING VALENTINES



The mistletoe has been gone for weeks. All of the elves are enjoying well deserved rests after helping to make holiday “wish lists” come true. But the opportunities to express special affection are still very much in the air. Ask Hallmark, or better yet, check out our readiness to once again distribute “Singing Valentines” in what promises to be rewarding consequences – not only for the recipients (and the senders, too), but for the foursomes from our Chapter, as well, who will be on hand to see the delight, hear the laughter, and perhaps witness a tear or two when “Let Me Call You Sweetheart” and “Heart of My Heart” are sung on someone’s behalf.



This year’s presentations, whether in homes, offices, restaurants, store settings or else-

where, will undoubtedly produce a sense of pleasure by our Chapter quartets, reflected in “you had to be there” stories that will surely surface for us all when February 12, 13 and 14 are past.

The connect-the-dots hearts brought to bear during every “Singing Valentines” presentation are not two, but *six*. The giver, the recipient, AND the four voices that show up to sing from theirs (hearts i.e.). Rewards for the Chapter’s operating funds, will importantly result. But there will be enormous gratification for us, personally, as well. We thank this year’s program chairman, Joel Fairman, Steve Brausa, the participating quartets, Maurice, of course, and all the rest of you whose energies will be (and have been) involved.

Toosday Toons

A monthly publication of the Nassau Mid-Island Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, a nonprofit, charitable and educational society.

Chapter meetings Tuesdays at 8:00 pm at Winthrop hall, Church of the Advent, 555 Advent St, Westbury, New York.

All articles not accompanied by a byline have been written by the editor and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members nor of the officers of the Nassau Mid-Island Chapter. Opposing points of view are welcomed and encouraged.

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Chapter Census

(as of December 31st, 2012)

| | |
|------------|----|
| Life | 1 |
| Regular | 31 |
| Senior (L) | 19 |
| Senior (N) | 6 |
| Youth | 1 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Total | 58 |
|--------------|-----------|



President Jon Ayers

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

TAGS, ETC.

Early in my barbershop career the chorus met in what had been a church, and it had a kitchen just like the one at Advent. After the chorus rehearsal a bunch of guys would gather in the kitchen and sing tags, and that's where I really got hooked on the joys of ringing chords. The unwritten rules were that tags were sung by just four singers, but the make-up of the quartet kept changing, so everyone there participated. We were also encouraged to change parts, which was, as they say, instructive. We'd pick one tag and work it over several times, so each man could participate.

Some of the guys were experienced quartetters, but many, like me, were not. It really didn't matter. Some had very good voices; others less so, but again it didn't matter. We were all there for the fun, and we had a great abundance of that. I'd like to start doing it again.

Enough of the year has gone by that we've either adopted or rejected whatever resolutions we made New Year's Eve, but I'm willing to wager a small sum that none of them had anything to do with the chorus – I know mine didn't. Since we spend a significant amount of time and effort at this game, maybe we should think about what we wish for the chorus this year, and what we're willing to do to accomplish whatever that is. We don't set measurable goals, and we each have our own level of satisfaction, but I think it's safe to say that we'd all like the chorus to be better next December than it is now. If you buy into that idea, then it behooves each of us to give some thought to what we can do as individuals to turn that hope into a reality. That could mean not talking when someone's in front working with the group. It could mean stepping up to do a job that needs doing when the opportunity arises. It could mean spending more time at home learning the music. It could mean talking with your friends about how much we enjoy singing together, the vocal instruction we get, the satisfaction of performing at hospitals and nursing homes and church fairs. I believe it was Elisabeth Barret Browning who wrote, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"

Give it some thought, then act.



WELL DESERVED CONGRATULATIONS TO
KEN WUNSCH
 THE NASSAU MID-ISLAND CHAPTER'S
 BARBERSHOPPER OF THE YEAR - 2012



OUR JANUARY INSTALLATION AND AWARDS CEREMONIES

(Awards Committee - Vincent Colonna, Chairman and George Seelinger)



NEW BOARD FOR 2013



BSOY 2012
 Ken Wunsch



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MERITORIOUS SERVICE
 Wayne Lazar



Tony Leone



ON OUR RISERS
 Contributed by Bill Ruth

EUGENE CHANG

We now have a 3rd degree black belt martial arts (Aikido) in our illustrious ranks (I showed him my brown belt at the last rehearsal but he wasn't too impressed.) On weekdays, Gene resides at 1 Albert Rd in Hicksville, but on weekends he returns to his home in Lexington, Mass where he has lived for the past 20 years. (What Steve Stojowski couldn't do with those mileage slips if eligible.) Gene and his wife Janice have three children, David 24, Stephen 21 and Carolyn 18. David graduated from Cornell, Stephen and Carolyn are attending MIT while Janice works as an administrator in the school's biology department. Gene also attended MIT earning a BS and MS in computer science and electrical engineering. (Talk about a Chang dynasty at MIT.) Gene was born in Honolulu where his forbears had ar-

rived in 1865. After high school and MIT he worked at BBN where he assisted in building the ARPANET which grew up to be the Internet. His professional specialties included computer networking, security, wireless communication and software programming. (Our overall Chapter IQ just went through the roof.) He presently works at Clever Devices in Woodbury where they make electronics and software to assist in operations of municipal transportation fleets. (If we get this perfected maybe the fleets will run on time.) Gene loves to sing, having done so through grade school, high school, college, plus eight more years as an alumnus. He always wanted to try a cappella singing and found our Chapter through an Internet search. (Kudos to Bob Heim for inaugurating our website and he should get a "man of note" award.) In his business travels, Gene likes to take his martial arts uniform along to practice with and has visited 60-plus clubs around the world. (Now when he has a competition, he can sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" in barbershop style and totally confuse his opponent.) Hopefully Gene will be with us for quite a while.



THE BARBERSHOP BLUES

MAURICE DEBAR

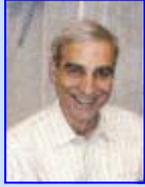
I love the blues. I love the inevitability of the chord progression, a simple succession of chords that you can instinctively intone your worries to. I'm stuck that Rap actually has a similarity. It is the modern vehicle to express the black man's troubles. Unfortunately, rap lacks the artistry and depth of emotion that the blues has always contained. It was easy for early jazz musicians to improvise around this simple three chord pattern. Even the most unskilled barbershopper can woodshed the harmony, after all you only need to find 3 notes, but it not a barbershop medium. It is monotonous and the sung blues is a soap box for the solo singer to bear his soul. Barbershop attached its tentacles to the circle of 5ths. A series of five chords that made its home during the 1950's. Even though the ballades of this period used this pattern ad invinitum, Bach also used it. Because it is predictable, it can be easily anticipated by harmony singers making up their part extemporaneously. The famous "barbershop seventh" is the heart of the pattern.

The earliest barbershop was an improvised art. A stand- up comic has a talent

that most of us lack. He often improves his lines to fit the situation, the date, the audience or just a whim that just suddenly hits him. Compound this- a group improvised comedy skit where the lines fly from one person to the next. Jazz musicians need to do this at the same instant and still make notes harmonious tones with the other musicians. Early jazz was improved to the chord progression which was either memorized by the musicians prior to performance or simply anticipated by using "ear" skills.

Barbershop was improved the same way. With the advent of chorus singing the individual singer could not make up his own part, we needed a written arrangement. These arrangements were simple and beautiful, true to the composer's intentions. Today, arrangements are colorful and inventive and sometimes far from the harmonization that the composer had in mine. These arrangements are complicated and the chords must be balanced accurately to fully create the effect intended. Slow songs are performed fast and fast songs slowly. It was become the era of the "arranger."





Your Chapter Business -- by Steve Stojowski

Steve is a CPA specializing in accounting for exempt organizations. He is the Assistant Musical Director of the **Long Island Harmonizers**, Treasurer and former Secretary of the Nassau Mid-Island Chapter, a current member of the Board of Trustees of the Nassau Mid-Island Chapter, an instructor in the Society's Leadership Academies and Harmony College East, and is now serving a second year as Chairman of the Joint Audit Committee of the Barbershop Harmony Society and Harmony Foundation.

“SCOTT-ISM_s”

Our chorus has been fortunate to have been coached by Scott Brannon, who has been able to get through to us with his unique combination of musical expertise, coaching style (including generous helpings of humor), and some memorable quotations I would like to call “Scott-isms.” Here are a couple of my favorites.

“There is no substitute for the correct notes.” This gem was no doubt uttered when the group being coached did not have all the correct notes down 100%. Well, you might ask, nobody’s perfect, so how close to 100% do we really have to be? Suppose you have 99% of the words and notes exactly correct. 99% always was an A+ when I was in school. But in barbershop, 99% of the words and notes is somewhere between a good start and mediocre. A typical song may have 300 to 400 words and notes in it. If you sing 99% of them right, you’re still singing 3 or 4 of them wrong, and each judge is likely to hear each clunker. Our audiences may not be able to identify individual clunkers as expertly as judges, but they can all tell that a 100% performance somehow sounds better than a 99% performance.

If an expectation of 100% sounds daunting, relax. If you’ve been a barbershopper for any length of time, you probably already have the words and notes for most of your repertoire down cold 100% already. If you’re brand new to barbershopping, you probably have some other songs (even Happy Birthday) mastered just as well. It does not take an infinite amount of talent and practice to achieve, but if you haven’t practiced enough to get there yet, you still have more practice repetitions ahead of you. Every singer in our chorus should hold himself to a standard of achieving 100% of the words and notes correctly. Listen and repeat any song correctly enough times, and it is inevitable. Once those repetitions are behind you, their number will have changed from “Uncountable” to “Who’s counting?” Perfection is our goal—excellence will be tolerated.

While the counting of correct words and notes may be a black and white issue, correct tuning can introduce shades of gray to the outcome. A pitch can be 100% the correct note, but still not be 100% in tune. For us, tuning perfection may be an unrealistic expectation. Tuning excellence is our goal, and superb tuning will be tolerated.

When the Director tells you a certain note needs to be higher but in your mind you think it is already correctly tuned, it can be difficult to believe him. Force yourself. Even if you believe it, it can be harder still to imagine a pitch higher than the one already embedded in your mind, and then force yourself to sing it. But you must, and once again repetitive practice is the way. Listen if you can to the notes the other parts are singing (or plunk them out on a keyboard at home), then try to imagine tuning your note ridiculously higher than you first thought and slide it in. Play the chord that way in your mind (or at home), and listen to how it now sounds. That’s probably how it is supposed to sound. Replay the chord in your head many times until this is the only tuning that sounds correct.

“Never be surprised by what comes out of your mouth.” The surprises that inspired this Scott-ism were probably the first notes of any given song, or your pick-ups, or whatever you had to sing when the Director looked straight at you and gave you a signal. Surprises happen at entrances, not in the middle or at the end.

We can look at this from several angles. It’s unlikely that you would plan to say “dog” but “cat” comes out. If you don’t know the words, you won’t be surprised when they’re not there. If you know them, most of the time they will just come. Starting pitch is another story. Are you totally focused on producing the exact first note that needs to come out, or will you catch up and blend in some time thereafter? (This time, the correct answer is number one.)

Other potential oral surprises include volume, quality, vowel matching, back in the throat vs. forward, bright vs. dark, tall vs. spread, and more. The Director has specific expectations for each of these variables. Do you?

(Continued on page 9)

Editorial Musings

(Bob Heim)



If you are seeing this issue in color, that face above *should* look green. For good reason. I AM green — with envy — over the current whereabouts of your “Toosday Toons” editor, Chiz Bell who, with wife Bess, are sunning themselves in the “Sunshine State” also known as Florida. Yes, yes, they deserve the two month respite all right, but nonetheless, they've left me (and all of us) behind to fend for ourselves, as we reach for extra layers of clothing or heavier bedcovers to fight wintry cold.

And, I admit, there’s a second solid reason for feeling green. Now that I have struggled to learn a computer publishing program from scratch, attempted to develop and construct this February issue, as relatively small as it is, I’m again envious of Chiz who has accomplished this so wonderfully, so seamlessly, for more than 25 years. I thank Chiz for his tips to me, and for the assistance of our Chapter web designer, Dan Gilmartin, who has helped me as I have traveled this new road.

Secretly, I can’t wait until the Bells come back.

THAT’S OUR BILL

Twenty years ago, the front page of the Chapter’s monthly publication edited by Chiz Bell (then called “Voice”) carried President Bill Ruth’s Inaugural Message. Said Ruth, and we quote: “My first question is, How come I didn’t have an inaugural ball just like all the other first families? Is there some impeachment process afoot?” (Suspensions that were then, and even now, the farthest from minds.)

Bill, who covered the subjects of Annual Show preparation, membership needs and finances in that piece (sound like a recurring theme?) also showed his linguistic abilities when he concluded with: “So, as the great Latin scholar Litenius, said, ‘Ex parte con singular e pluribus unum,’ which means, Ruth asserted: ‘Let’s have a lot of fun in the coming year.’” (Advice, which we all agree, he continues to supply.)



The 50/50 Raffle at our 62nd Annual Show and contribution to AHRC brought this response from its Executive Director:

“It is with gratitude that I, along with the entire AHRC Nassau Family, thank you for your very generous gift of \$850.00 (check #5572). Your contribution helps AHRC make a positive and immeasurable impact on the lives of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.”



TAKE AN EXTRA BOW

Joe Cerutti, pride of our Nassau Mid-Island Chapter and recipient of a Lifetime Chapter membership for his contributions to our musical growth, thrilled a Carnegie Hall audience (and all of us) in December when he proposed to his sweetheart from the stage prior to his conducting appearance at a No Borders Youth Chorus concert. Here’s what Joe told us in an e-mail: “Her name is Bridgette Winter, we went to Five Towns College together when I was singing with you guys (she was a piano performance major). We lost touch for a while, reconnected about 2 years ago and hit it off. She loves barbershop, but doesn’t sing much. Please say hi to all of the guys. It was so great to see you on stage at District. You all did such a great job!!!” Joe Music Director, Alexandria Harmonizers Music Director, Pride of Baltimore *Congratulations from all of us, Joe.*



KEEPING IN GOOD VOICE

From sun-splashed Florida, “Toons” Editor Chiz Bell writes (in part): “ As I did last year, I get together with the ten or so barbershoppers I met with every Monday afternoon at the clubhouse of one of the several retirement communities in Vero Beach. They have no chorus director. Consequently, they don’t sing very well, but they enjoy singing nevertheless and are have good fellowship and camaraderie. At the end of the 1 and 1/2 hour session, I led them in singing a few tags. Fortunately for me, I know about half of their repertoire songs.”



Kudos to our bass Bernie Genzer who sang in six performances of Puccini’s opera, Tosca, staged in Rockville Centre during January.



THIS MONTH, THE EYES HAVE IT

We Invite You to Take a Look

Bob Heim
 Associate Editor, "Toosday Toons"
 (And Public Relations Practitioner For Close To 60 Years)

Last month, this column's subject was "listening." Now, with your indulgence, I'd like to turn to another one of our senses -- that of sight. There are a number of ways specifically related to how we use our eyes, that can improve our barbershop rehearsal skills, preparation and on-stage performance. Let's explore a few.

The Hands of Our Conductor: It seems obvious that it all starts here, but as you'll agree, sometimes it doesn't. Musical memory is one thing; musical *mastery* is another. Closely watching the gestures of the conductor, comes with an understanding that aside from offering reminders about energized phrases, desired tempo, cutoffs and so on, those hands can often avert disaster -- over singing by a single voice or a section, pitch problems to just name two.

Our Music: When music is used in the preparation stages of learning to sing without it, don't waste valuable time by "zoning out" when other voices are going over theirs. Rather use that valuable time in studying your part, and how it interacts. A reminder: Hold your music high enough in front of you so that you have an opportunity to watch the director, *and* your music if you have to.

The Audience: Reach them with your eyes. When telling your musical story, make eye contact with the most positive people out there and connect with them as if finding a new friend. The eyes are part of a delivery that underscores a sense of, "let me share this with you, this thing I believe in, heart and soul."

There IS a Sun: Your eyes are part of a any believable "move." We have accomplished many in the past. Eyes following a point to the sun in "Under the Boardwalk;" following "The Babe's" baseball in "Do You Remember When? and so on. There will be lots more as eyes help do the "selling."

Mirror, Mirror On the Wall: Use your mirror at home to check out the shape of your mouth when singing vowels. Are you opening your mouth as you THINK you are? Are you elongating words like "man" as opposed to singing Ethel Mermanisms? Check your image while practicing to eliminate any doubt.

Thanks for the attention – and for looking.

HOW ABOUT THAT?



The "Swipe" Page

A barbershop swipe is when one or more parts change pitch while the other parts hold their pitch. Our version here? Some barbershop goodies (credited) and worth reprinting from other places.

Let's talk craft - vowel matching

Tom Raburn

Question: When does $2 + 2 = 5$? Answer: When barbershop harmony is sung correctly, creating harmonic overtones and "expanded sound."

One of the most important factors in the achievement of choral blend and expanded sound is unity of vowel sounds. Vowels are what we sing and sustain, separated by consonants to make words. When we match vowel sounds, we create like harmonics and the sound expands in intensity through reinforcement. In singing, vowels are created through the natural resonance of the human vocal tract. The tongue, lips and jaw are used to fashion the



resonators into their vowel shapes. Some basic rules to follow when forming vowel sounds are:

1. When producing all vowel sounds, the tip of the tongue should be placed gently on the lower gum ridge, with the tip barely touching the base of the lower teeth. This helps keep the throat open so the vocal chords can vibrate naturally

through the resonators (mouth, throat, and sinus cavities).

2. The jaw should be allowed to relax naturally with a swinging down and back motion.

3. The lips should leave the teeth uncovered.

4. Although the mouth must be open wide, it is not how wide it is open but the shape that is most important.

Every vowel can be sung with one of three mouth shapes: round (example—"oh"), square (example—"ih" as in sit) and oblong (example—"ah" as in pop). Refinements to form each specific vowel sound are made by the degree

to which the tongue is arched in the mouth, and the degree to which the jaw is dropped. For instance, both the "oh" sound and the "oo" (as in moon) sound are made with the round mouth shape, but the "oh" sound is made with the mouth as open as possible while the "oo" sound is made with the smallest, most rounded shape.

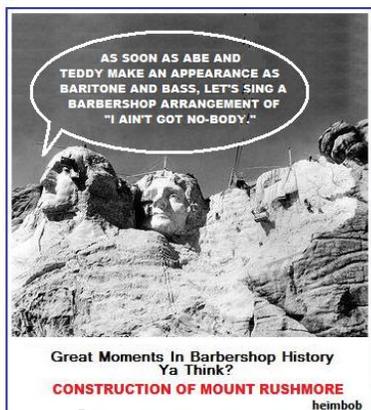


REPRINTED FROM "IN TUNE" - THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HUNTERDON (NJ) CHAPTER WITH OUR THANKS.





Left to right top row: Hal Verity (Sound Systems), Chiz Bell (Toons), Steve Brausa (2013 Show Chairman), Dan Gilmartin (Chapter Web Designer with Bob Heim, Webmaster), Sue Johnson (2013 Show Program). Bottom row: Bob Miraglia (2013 Show Program), Bill Ruth (Emcee), George Seelinger (Librarian), Joel Fairman (Valentines Chairman), Lois Verity (2013 Show Ticketing with husband Hal) and Tony Leone (Uniforms).



Stojowski Column (continued from page 5)

That's a lot to remember, and that's why the two and a half hours we re-rehearse together each week must be supplemented by additional practice on your own. Even when we think we've mastered all of these, if you're like me you can still be surprised at the first volume that may come out—sometimes a lot less and sometimes a lot more than I ordered. Execution of your volume entrance plan has a lot to do with your warm-ups. Please take them seriously, and your throat will not deal you as many surprises.

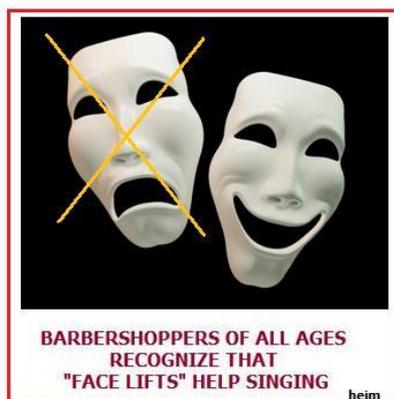
We will have other “-ism’s” in future columns. Thank you for your support.

Offer Best Wishes To Our February Birthday Celebrants:

- February 4 Elaine Glicksman
- February 6 Sally O'Connor
- February 10 Joan Rampota
- February 13 Harry Ruvolo
- February 14 Chiz Bell
- February 15 Lynda Boersma
- February 18 Agatha Ruvolo
- February 25 Nancy Massaro



With the Society's international convention in Toronto soon upon us during our organization's 75th year, and enthusiastic members streaming to that major site from all over the world, it is interesting to note that in comparison, the very first convention in June 1939 drew only 150 men from seven states and just 17 cities. Registration fee for that Tulsa gathering? Three dollars. Since then, over the years, it has been estimated that more than 250,000 men have been accepted for membership in our Society.



Ned Beatty, the American actor who has appeared in over 100 films, is quoted as once saying: "I'll tell you what I would do in a shot if I could. I would sing in the barbershop quartet in *The Music Man*." (It might be noted that before becoming an actor in 1947, Beatty took pleasure in singing in barbershop quartets in St. Matthews, Kentucky and gospel at his local church.)



CHAPTER QUARTETS

AfterGloWorms

Harold Verity, Tenor
Bob Miraglia, Lead
Steve Stojowski, Bass
Maurice Debar, Baritone

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All In A Chord

Bill Ruth, Tenor
Steve Brausa, Lead
Bernie Genzer, Bass
George Seelinger, Baritone

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Cloud 9

Jon Ayers, Tenor
Vinnie Colonna, Lead
John Brolly, Bass
George Seelinger, Baritone

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4 Gone Conclusion

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George Seelinger, Baritone

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Long Island Express

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No Treble At All

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Quatrain

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