

FROM THE EDGE

*A periodic Newsletter of
the High Country Barbershop Chorus,
White Mountains Arizona Chapter*



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<http://wmhcbc.com>

February, 2010

From the President Denny Shankland

Baby its cold
outside.....

But music warms
the heart and raises
your spirits. I just
returned from the
valley where I
escaped to avoid
the big winter
storm. It was that



or be stranded for several days. While visiting
friends and family, I had the opportunity to
share some of the music I have on my laptop.
My Aunt was so excited when I downloaded
491 songs onto her new iPod, which I helped
her buy, so she would have music to pass the
4 ½ hour plane ride home. Her comment of
thanking me for sharing my music got me
thinking about our chorus and our impact on
the community and each other.

We have a pretty amazing group of guys who
have come together to make music and social
moments. To me, at the heart of it all is our
music. Eating pizza and socializing at Native
New Yorker is great, but not without the
music. The social gatherings at Doc's house,
Ron's house, Steve's house and the Mexican
restaurant in St. John's are clearly better when
you add the music.

This year, as we move forward with the "Year
of the Team," and we think about budgets,
shows, sound systems, parades and keeping
everyone involved, I think the most important
aspect of our group is when we focus on the

music and how it makes us and our audience
feel. This brings me to one of my passions,
which is being in tune.

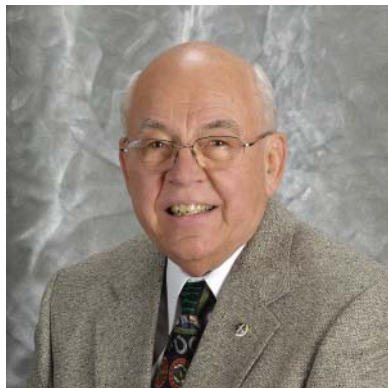
Being in tune, what does that mean? Four
notes in a chord with each note vibrating at the
precise frequency to "ring" the chord. Yes, and
matching vowels, singing in sync, looking the
part and enjoying each ones company. And how
do we achieve this state of tuning in a volunteer
chorus? Practice, practice and more practice. I
personally have sluffed off a bit this year and
have not focused my attention as well on the
learning CD as I did last year. I intend to get
my you know what in gear and do better. We
have some strong leaders in the group who are
dedicated to helping us do better singing. Our
section leaders, Everett, Steve, Ron and myself
are serious about fine "tuning" the sections.
Bob is dedicated to helping us with presentation.
Joe will keep music in our hands and CD's in
our stereos and Doc will lead us on to victory!

It all becomes worth the effort when someone
comes up to you with tears in their eyes and
thankfulness in their hearts and says, you really
did well and I appreciate getting the gift of
music. Thank you!

**Together Everyone Accomplishes More
Denny Shankland - President**

From the Director: Doc Dockendorf

When golfers go to the course, they do not go to hit bad shots, miss putts, or hit balls out of bounds, and when batters go to the plate they do not go



there to strike out. The Music Team knows that singers do not come to rehearsal to sing badly, at least we hope that is not the case, yet in many instances that is the result; in spite of having the music, learning CD's, sectional rehearsals, individual coaching, and weekly practices. So what is the problem? My belief is that each singer has the talent to sing better than they currently do - and that includes myself. Last year I challenged each of you to improve just a little bit each and every week, and at the end of the year you would have made 50 incremental improvements. Do each of you consciously think about what your biggest weaknesses are, and commit to improving them? You have all heard of the book, "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephan H. Covey. In it he outlines the seven steps to improve your effectiveness. Since seven seems to be a number that humans can handle, I thought I would create my version of the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Singers".

Habit One - Mental Readiness

The chorus has the rule that when the pitch pipe is blown, talking stops, yet how often is this simple rule not followed? Minds are

not listening to the pitch. In the words of Joe Liles, "Before the singer can begin to warm up the vocal mechanism, he must first prepare the mind, so that he is ready for the singing experience." The same holds true to begin a song. How often is a song started and half the chorus is unprepared to sing the first words and chords? Listen to the pitch; mentally prepare your starting note, and be ready to sing.

Habit Two - Physical Readiness

The first thing we do each week following "The Old Songs/Down Our Way" opening is to do some simple stretching and loosening up exercises. These are designed to prepare you as singers, to remove tension, to eliminate the thoughts and stress of the day, to get you in the mood for singing. Part of getting ready physically is to assume a singers Posture. We have talked about it often, but most of you do not automatically assume proper posture, as you prepare to sing, i.e. feet shoulder width apart, outside foot slightly ahead of the inside foot, weight balanced slightly forward, knees slightly bent, upper body in an erect and comfortable position, arms hanging loosely at your side. Do it each and every time you sing.

Habit Three - Breathing and Support

I have been focusing lately on developing improved breathing and support through our opening exercises, focusing on full breath intake, demonstrated when the lower abdomen and back are filled with air, exercising the diaphragm with puff breaths, or sustained pressure. Good singers demonstrate that breath control is the

(From the Director, cont. from page 2)

foundation for great singing. Think about proper breathing on a daily basis, practice it, and improve it. Practice breathing and supporting the breath - make it a good habit.

Habit Four - Tone Production

Good Tone production starts in the mind with a vocal image. Physically it starts with a relaxed and open throat. Bubbling gives you a chance to sing with a totally relaxed vocal apparatus, creating a lot of open space in the mouth, and moving a large amount of air through the vocal chords with no tension. Humming helps you find the resonant cavities that support the sound. Lips are closed lightly, with the tip of the tongue resting on the lower gum line, and as above, with the throat relaxed and open. Note that good tone production is enhanced by relaxation of the vocal apparatus, and destroyed by adding tension. Sing with a relaxed and open throat - make it a good habit.

Habit Five - Vowels

We have spent time each and every week on making our vowels uniformly, with corners of the mouth tucked slightly to eliminate the wide “ee”. You need to spend some time in front of the mirror at home reinforcing proper mouth shape. Do it when you shave - you can see when you are opening your mouth to form the vowels. Do it every day.

Habit Six - Intonation

Denny spends time each and every week talking about good intonation. Do you

notice that when you listen to each other the uniformity of the sound improves? Singing in tune is what gives barbershop that unique “ring”, and the overtones that we love to hear and produce. I found an interesting comment in the book, “This Is Your Brain on Music” by Daniel Levitan. He quotes a comment from The Quintina in Sardinian a cappella vocal music; “*A fifth female voice emerges from the four male voices when the harmony and timbres are performed just right (they believe the voice is that of the Virgin Mary coming to reward them if they are pious enough to sing it right)*”. The ‘female’ voice they talked about are overtones generated when the tuning is precisely sung with proper balance and placement, and I would hope that each of you would like to be *rewarded* yourself when you sing.

Habit Seven - Heartfelt Singing

Lastly, when we sing, we need to not only know the words and notes of each song we are singing, but by developing an internal visual depiction of the story we are telling. Artistry comes from believing and portraying the message of the song, both vocally and physically, with your facial expressions and supported body language. Blank faces are hardly the way you would tell your wife or girl friend that you love her. As one of the speakers said at a Motivational Seminar we attended this past week, **“If you are happy, tell your face!”**

I don’t think I could have said it better.

Doc

From the Editor: Jerry Schrunk
Singing Valentines 2010

This year I had the opportunity to see **The Pine Tones Quartet** in action at the St. Mary of the Angel's Valentines Dinner / Dance on Feb. 13.



Jane and I were enjoying dinner with fellow chorus Lead **Mick Mitchke** and his wife **Annette**, when the **Pine Tones** entered the hall, approached our table, and started singing to **Jane and Annette**. It certainly was a surprise to the ladies, but not to Mick and I, as we had ordered the Singing Valentines. Actually, **Doc's wife Jackie** was sitting at the table with us, so I am sure that Doc and the Pine Tones were singing to her as well.

Fortunately, there was a photographer present, Mr. **George Thieme**, who photographs as "**G & J Images**." We thank George for donating the photos accompanying this article.

The Pine Tones had completed their schedule after this performance, and stated that



The Pine Tones

Everett Peterson (T), Lloyd Lane (L), Doc Dockendorf (B), Denny Shankland (Bari) for Ivan

they were going to a nearby restaurant to get something to eat. Mick and Annette and Jane and I followed shortly thereafter, joining the **Pine Tones** at the restaurant. It was a big "ski weekend" and the place was jammed.

What do barbershoppers do while standing around waiting for a table? They sing. While doing so, we noticed a young lady paying particularly close attention, with a tear in her eye as the song finished. I spoke to her, and learned that she and her family had just lost her grandfather - and her grandfather loved to listen to quartets.

After the young lady, her family and friends had been seated, the **Pine Tones** went over to the table and sang some more songs, which were very appreciated (more tears). Her husband thanked the quartet profusely, and from the applause, it was apparent that the entire room full of people enjoyed the songs.

It goes to show that you never completely understand what your singing means to those who are listening. It is nice to get these hints as to what it means from time to time, however.

Jerry



I'm sure you didn't think that Mick and I could just sit and listen!

**Message from the
High Country Barbershop Chorus'
Membership Vice President -
James H. Burden**



Welcome to the New Year, barbershoppers! I am very glad you selected me for the job of membership overseer! As many of you know, I am not a politician, probably never will be, and at times I don't handle situations in a very tactful manner. But, I do try to get the job done, and that is all I can do. I do love being a barbershopper, as I know many of you do too!

So, with that said, I would like to remind everyone in the chorus, and anyone who would like to see the barbershop chorus grow, that getting new members is a cooperative effort. We all work together from the same sheet of music, if you will. Take on the task this year and take it seriously. Here is a suggestion. Look diligently for a prospect, but **DO NOT** rush in.

Try not to let the first words out of your mouth be, "Come sing...at NPC...6:30...Tuesday.... Room _____," and so on! Let them breathe a little. Get to know them. Just because they like barbershop does not mean they can sing. I learned that lesson the hard way.

Ease into to the relationship. No Pressure! Make friends, find out a little about the person. As the by-laws mention, the man must be of good character in good standing in the community. He must be able to carry a tune, stay on pitch, and to devote time to learning the music!

After that, and when you feel comfortable with inviting him to the chorus rehearsal, go for the Gold. He is then ready for the first of three visits that will most likely work him into the chorus. It is too much work and too stressful for everyone to just rush in and then have to refuse him membership. It can create some bad public relations for the chorus.

Therefore, my challenge to members of this chorus is, go forth and look for good candidates and get to know them. If the first does not work out, no foul, no harm. Find another until you have reached the goal of bringing in one member this year. Do it for the chorus. Do it for yourself. Get a Man of Note pin to wear proudly on your lapel, everywhere you go.

So come and 'Join in the Fun.' You have 11 months to work up a relationship and find a new member. I too am going to accept the same challenge. Let's make 2010 a great year for the chorus.



Singing Valentines 2010

CROOK'S TRAIL'S TALES - By Chapter Historian Larry Kennedy



This year's quota of Singing Valentines went quite smoothly for our quartet, with no panicked rushes to make an appointed time, and only a bit of slack time. We did most of our work on Friday, covering folks from Pinetop to Snowflake and back. I am sitting here trying to think of which Valentines were high points, but, you know, they were all great in their own ways!

I do remember two younger couples. In both cases, one in the morning at a single wide trailer with a couple of older cars in the driveway, and the second later in the evening at Fiesta Mexicana, it was readily apparent that there was not a whole lot of spare cash in either of their households. Both of the men probably worked hard for every nickel they had just to keep the wolf from the door, but both thought enough of their respective wives to buy them a Singing Valentine from the likes of us. Nope, there may not have been very much spare cash in either household, but, by golly, there sure was a lot of love! It was a nice thing to see.

And then came Saturday! And our second chance to sing for **Miss Bea**, this time on her 100th birthday! Knowing that she had been hospitalized with pneumonia, we showed up at the nurses' station on the second floor of the hospital, only to find out she had been released to go home that morning! Something about the best laid plans of mice and men came to mind right about then. Not to be deterred by such an insignificant problem, off we went to **Miss Bea's** home, looking perhaps a bit like the Keystone Kops with our caravan of vehicles! *Miss Bea's* body may have been tired from her bout with illness and her stay in the hospital, but her spirit most certainly was not. It was truly a great feeling to see her brighten up when we walked in. The singing went well, and **Miss Bea** joined in when we sang "Swing Down Chariot!" She is a beautiful lady who is at peace with life, the world, and most importantly, with God. With luck, and a bit of help from God, maybe Crook's Trail

will have the privilege to sing for her 101st birthday as well.

Yup, life is good.

Larry



Crook's Trail Quartet

(L-R) Bill Stephens, Tenor; Bob Cutlipp, Lead; Larry Kennedy, Bass; Rich Hall, Baritone

Singing Valentines 2010

The Knotty Pines 'Blend' Quartet

Fill the White Mountains with the sounds of love songs For the Valentines 3-day weekend

Story and photos submitted

By James H Burden

Love is in the air all over the mountains! This long Valentine's Day weekend provided a little extra time for the High Country Chorus quartets to get out and about, seeking out those near and dear to loved ones' hearts.

The Knotty Pines Blend, did just that. They greeted folks from Pinetop, Lakeside, Show Low, and all the way to Snowflake, dispensing love songs, roses and a valentine card from a loved one.

Tears were in the air, too! Singing brought tears to teachers, principals, the kids, and of course from the seniors at several rest homes. The children waiting to go out to recess at the Blue Ridge Intermediate School watched through the office windows as the Knotty Pines sang songs to the principal's secretary, **Ms. Tina!** The excitement and happiness seen on their faces will definitely help to keep the whole world singing.



But one of the most touching for the quartet was when a lunch time visit was made to Darbi's. Two women were entering Darbi's at the same time as the quartet. One lady looked at us and said, "Are you guys singing today? I just lost my honey just a few days ago. We went to one of your shows and we just loved it. Would you guys sing for me, for my honey?"

Tears started welling up in our eyes! Dan Lewis, our tenor, said, "Okay, but no crying allowed. I can't sing when I'm crying." The two ladies laughed and were seated. Of course we sang to them, of course they cried, and of course we cried, but that made the lunch visit even better.

The 3-day trek ended with visits at the Betty Webb House retirement home, and the Living Church, where the pastor and his wife were serenaded by the quartet. The customers at Grumpy Jake's restaurant were entertained when the Knotty Pines performed there before they had lunch. After the first song, one gentleman interrupted and said, "Wait a minute, I have a question! Where is this guy's beard?" He was referring to Alexander Pansulla, the youngest member of the quartet at 16 years old. Alexander quickly responded. "I left it at Walmart." Everyone had a laugh, and the group thanked the quartet for making their

Our last Valentine visit was for the manager at the Show Low Sonic. She was pleasantly surprised when we arrived to sing love songs for her from her husband of 14 years.

The quartet blend really wants to thank the White Mountains community for supporting the High Country Barbershop Chorus and its quartets with its Singing Valentines program.

Every year many hearts are brought just a little closer together by the singing quartets.

With so much turmoil in the world today, a little love expressed openly is very refreshing.

Kudos and congrats goes out to the Knotty Pines Quartet Blend for spending most of their 3-day weekend pleasing others.



Thanks to Dan Lewis, tenor, and David Wheeler, baritone, pictured left, for making the blend complete!



Thank you, left to right, Alexander Pansulla, baritone, Joe Stone, bass, James H Burden, lead, and Steve Countryman, tenor. →

James



Note from Steve Countryman:

I just wanted to drop a note of thanks to the group known as the “**Knotty Pines Blend.**” That being those all who participated in the Valentine performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. **James Burden** (who was also our driver), **Joe Stone, Dan Lewis** (who was still recovering from eye surgery), **David Wheeler, Alexander Pansulla** and myself **Steve Countryman**. We had a great time regardless who was singing when! Thanks again guys for helping make this Valentine's weekend very special for several couples, singles and groups!

Steve Countryman

Birthdays & Anniversaries

JANUARY: BIRTHDAYS

James H Burden.....1st
Warren Schluter.....15th
Steve Countryman.....28th

JANUARY: ANNIVERSARIES

FEBRUARY: BIRTHDAYS

Steve Pansulla.....6th

FEBRUARY: ANNIVERSARIES

“Judge” Willard “Will” French....1st

MARCH: BIRTHDAYS

James “Jim” Morrow.....6th
Steve Voller.....11th
John Graham.....14th
Bob Cutlipp.....29th

MARCH: ANNIVERSARIES

“Laws” (John Wagner)

Law of Location:

No matter where you go, there you are.

Law of Logical Argument:

Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about.

Brown's Law:

If the shoe fits, it's ugly.

Oliver's Law:

A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Wilson's Law:

As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it.



New Web Site and Blog

Check them out at:

<http://wmhcbc.com>

<http://wmhcbc.com/blog/>

Photos and stories are being transferred to the new site as time permits.

Previous site:

<http://spebsqsafwd.org/wmac/>

**FWD, White Mountains Arizona Chapter:
High Country Chorus
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VP Marketing & PR	Steve Voller
VP Membership	James H. Burden
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Treasurer	John Welker
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	Steve Pansulla
	Ron Monette
NPC Representative	Everett Robinson

<http://wmhcbc.com/shop/>

<http://wmhcbc.com/blog/>

<http://www.spebsqsafwd.org/wmac>

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Web Master	Jerry Schrunk
Chorus Photographer	Conrad Monroe
Chapter Historian	Larry Kennedy

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FROM THE EDGE Feb., 2010

Calendar of Events				
Date	Event	Time	Uniform	Comments / Location
Notice	Rehearsal Hall changed to NPC, Ponderosa Center, Rm. 110	6:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 110
Feb. 23, 2010	Chapter Board Meeting	5:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 106
March 9, 2010	Music Committee Meeting	5:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 106
March 13, 2010	A Night Of Barbershop Music, The Chorus & The WM Belles	7:00 PM	Class A	NPC - PAC
March 23, 2010	Chapter Board Meeting	5:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 106
April 13, 2010	Music Committee Meeting	5:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 106
April 24, 2010	FWD Convention/Contest			TBD
April 27, 2010	Chapter Board Meeting	5:30 PM		NPC - Ponderosa Center, Room 106
July 17, 2010	Annual Barbershop Show	2 & 7 PM		Show Low Auditorium
December 6, 2010	High Country Chorus in Concert	6:30 PM	Class A	Shephard of the Pines Methodist Church, Heber/Overgaard