

FROM THE EDGE

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



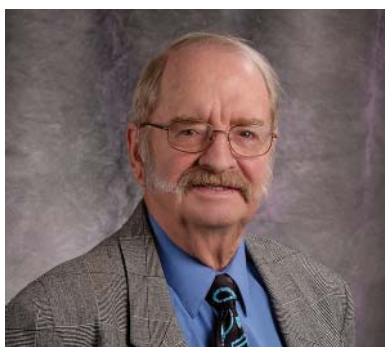
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May, 2006

From the President: **Bob Koons**

Well Gang, we met our first objective in Phoenix which was to have a good time. We missed our second objective, to bring back the "Most Improved" trophy.



I'm a bit confused regarding the Judges scoring system and I only heard the A&R on "presentation." However, if the judges had been selected from the congregation at Desert Cross Lutheran church, we would be Division Champs! I had many compliments after the service

followed by phone calls and e-mails. I never heard the word "awesome" so many times in one day. I attended another church function Sunday evening and one lady approached me and said "you can bring those guys back anytime!"

We obviously have some things to work on for next year but, right now, we need to concentrate on the show. We have about 12 regular rehearsals between now and curtain time. And we have not even looked at the script. We must get "off the paper" quickly so we can concentrate on script and choreography. Get ready for the next fun season of barbershopping!

Bob



Photo by:
www.warrenwong.photorelect.com

From the Director: Doc Dockendorf



First, I want to thank; **Bob Koons** for inviting us to sing at his church in Tempe on Sunday following the Convention, and for those of you that participated.

It was the highlight of the weekend. **Jackie and I** have not enjoyed a church service like that in years. The people were so very friendly, and the musical theme of the service was outstanding. The chorus was well received, and I am sure gave the finest performance we have ever given to any audience. You were marvelous!

I know that you were disappointed, as I was, with the results from the convention, but remember, "Behind every cloud, there is a silver lining". While it is not our intention, it seems that every other year we have posted a low score, and the next year we win the "Most Improved Chorus Award". All

I can say is that we are poised to do that again. We had excellent comments from the judging community as to how we can improve our performances and singing (see article elsewhere in this issue). Each chorus reacts differently to adversity, and I personally felt that the delay impacted us more than just a little. We never regained our energy after leaving the photo risers, and standing around waiting to go on the stage. That is a tough thing to do. I believe each of us sincerely believes that the audience did not see and hear us at our best. Wait until next year.

Now, we have to increase our focus on getting our annual show music learned and into performance mode. Let's go out and prepare for another outstanding show, which I know you can deliver.

Thank you for supporting me, and I look forward to helping this chorus achieve a new higher level in our performances.

DOC

The Pine Tones
On stage at the FWD Convention
Quartet Contest
at Moon Valley High School
April 22, 2006



Thanks to Jim Dye, chorus member, for the photo.



Notes of note:

Larry Kennedy



We here in the White Mountains High Country Chorus recently became another year older, having celebrated our 6th birthday on 18 April. It was on that day in the year 2000 that the first

meeting of our group was held. Looking around during practice, it occurs to me that we must have been “rode hard and put away wet.” To have aged so much in a mere six years! But I digress, which is not an unusual occurrence when I set out to write something.

As you may recall, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America was formed on 11 April, 1938 by O.C. Cash, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Guess that makes the Society a tad over 68 years old. As you will also recall, the name of the society, and its alphabet soup acronym, was a humorous jab at President Roosevelt’s penchant for alphabetical agencies! From an item that Doc sent to me, it appears that Mr. Cash was a master at working the press (not unlike our Doc). Mr. Cash would send such creative information to the papers that they could not help but to use it! One such event escalated into a “legal battle” in the press. A “reactionary group” had sprung up, and called itself the “S.P.C.D.A.D.P.O.F.L.T.” (The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dumb Animals, Dumb People, and Other Folk of Low Taste.) This group was reportedly backed, promoted, financed, and advised by the Chamber of Commerce. Their purpose was to consider legal action to suppress, squelch, obliterate, eliminate, debilitate, and otherwise bring about the non-existence of the harmless group of tenors, basses, leads and baritones who enjoy their own singing once a month. The group, claiming to be fair, agreed to hold off any legal action until after hearing the quartets sing at the Chamber’s May 13th meeting. The performance was predicted to be just cause for mayhem or

murder. The man obviously had a sense of humor. Warped, to be sure, but that is a good thing!

All this leads, slowly, to the announcement of another birthday of note that will occur later this year. The Far Western District of the SPEBSQSA (aka Barbershop Harmony Society) was chartered on 22 October, 1946. The District, at age 60, is old enough to retire, but not quite eligible for Social Security. It was formed from chapters that existed primarily along the California coast, with a few extras thrown in such as Phoenix Saguaro, Reno, Guam Marines, Pacific Marines, and Salt Lake City. Of note, chapters existed in Seattle in 1940, and in Honolulu in 1941, but for obvious reasons most of these early chapters became inactive during World War II. The FWD originally was made up of California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Nevada. Oregon and Washington were removed in June, 1947 to form the Evergreen District, and Utah was added to the FWD in March, 1949. In May, 1951 the northern part of California was moved to the Evergreen District, and Hawaii and Guam were added to the FWD, which brings us to the present.

On another interesting note concerning the FWD, one of my favorite vocalists, Bing Crosby, was a member of the Hollywood Chapter which was chartered in April, 1945. Der Bingle also served as a member of the Society Board for the years 1939-1941. And I am told he couldn’t read a note of music. My kind of guy! Mr. Crosby once wrote that while on a USO tour of the European Theater of Operations during WW II, he had lunch with General Eisenhower and his staff, and since he (Ike) liked to sing barbershop harmony, we got up a quartet. The General sang baritone. Which only goes to show you that good barbershop music can be found everywhere!

That’s enough for now, but before I go I really need to acknowledge that the names, dates, and stories about the Far Western District came from a fine book called “Fifty Years of Harmony,” by El Wirt. Mr. Wirt wrote this book in 1996, and it can be found in its entirety at the FWD web site. Thanks for your time.

Larry

Analysis and Recommendation Arizona/SoNevada/SoUtah Convention

There are three categories in the Contest and Judging (C &J) system, and the chorus received the A & R from one judge in each category following the evening show. A number of you attended the session, and for those of you that did, I think you received some good insight into what they are listening and looking for, and what me might do to improve.

Presentation - Larry Clemons, who also is the International (C & J) Chairman :

Presentation evaluates how well we physically and vocally tell the story of the songs we are singing. Larry focused his A & R on demonstrating the importance of having each chorus member involved in portraying the message of the song through their own individual space. In “Little Pal”, he observed that most of the chorus were very static, and did not ‘buy into’ expressing a common feeling for the song, through their body and faces. He asked the chorus members attending what they were trying to express, and said that their faces were sad, and showed despair. He spent so much time talking about “Little Pal”, that we got little feedback on “...Barbershop Style”, but his comments applied to both songs, since we scored about the same on each song. (103 and 104, which are mid C level scores). In summary, he said, that we need to have a clear, agreed on, picture or story, that each member “buys into” and tells through his own face and body.

Singing – Chris Hebert

Singing evaluates how well we sing the songs with in-tune singing (intonation), uniform attack and release, and chorus blending. Chris talked about lack of section unity, hearing individual voices throughout the chorus, and hearing what

he described as “four part harmony” in the Lead section. He recommends that I drill the chorus on a set of vocal exercises “over and over”, until the chorus knows where “home” is, so that when the chorus sings a vowel in a song, they know what it should look and sound like, and do it consistently each and every time that that vowel is sung. He described this as each singer having a set of “Core Tones”. We need to work on “Section Unity”, by improving blend within the section and between adjacent singers. I am writing him for his recommended vocal exercises, which he said he would send me. This category was, by far, our lowest. (64 and 76, which are D level scores).

Music – Paul Engle

Music evaluates how well we sing the song arrangement that we use. Paul, had lots of observations on our performance. In “Little Pal”, he said we were “slow to tune” chords, had lots of synchronization errors, which he indicated, “just should not happen”. He talked about “noise” which are individual disagreement on notes, words or timing. Example was “Be the man”. Three times we had synch errors on “Pal”. He suggests we use unison singing to improve the synch error problems. Sustain sound through the end of the phrase. We did not portray a “heartfelt” emotion, which was the main thing missing from the performance. Chorus needs to take “ownership” of the song. He did like the song ending, which was emotional. In BS Style, there was lots of “noise”, and the chords just did not line up. “Song sounded like we were woodshedding it, and it was clipped and choppy.” This was our better category (107 and 103).

Doc

From the Membership VP

Dan Lewis

SMALL GROUPS

Being in a quartet or a double quartet truly is not for every one. But, even if you don't want to sing in a small group in front of 'people', you have to admit that it feels good to do it at the end of rehearsal. Most especially when you know the music.

I know that there are guys in our group who would like to try their hand at being in a quartet. They have seen the fun had by the guys in the Pinetones, Ponderosa and Crooks Trail quartets. Let me use Larry Kennedy as an example: a while ago Larry stated that he hated to sing in public. Now he is one of four "hams" that sing anywhere, any time and sometimes just for fun.

Every one of us enjoys being on stage, sounding GOOD, and having an audience showing their appreciation of our hobby. And when we are in our Tuxedo's, *Dude*, we look GOOD!

That being said, we need more guys

in our ranks. A quartet needs two 'normal' and two 'rare' elements. The 'normal' elements are leads and basses.



The two 'rare' elements are the baritone and tenor. Having more guys in our group means having more of the 'rare' elements. Wanna' have a go at quartetting? Step #1 is finding four guys, one of each part. Don't worry about sponsoring, or music or assistance; that is within our chorus in spades! What you need are guys!

Look around, ask guys to join us, then after a while to get a little comfortable, try to get a quartet going. It a documented fact that our small groups have more fun than anyone else. That is a FACT (just ask me).

Dan

May Birthdays

May 6	Alan Beste
May 25	Norm Ehmke
May 15	Joel Empie
May 28	Jerry Schrunk

Barbershopper of the Month for 2006:

January	Jerry Schrunk
February	Bob Lawson
March	Larry Kennedy

Let's get to 40 active members in 2006!

FROM THE EDGE May, 2006

Calendar of Events			
Date	Event	Time	Comments / Location
May 9, 2006	Music Committee Meeting	6 PM	Practice Hall
May 13, 2006	Woolford Road Cleanup	8:30 AM	Behind WME Theatre, Show Low
May 13, 2006	Road Cleanup Party	6 PM	The Dockendorf's
May 23, 2006	Chapter Board Meeting	5:30 PM	Practice Hall
June 13, 2006	Music Committee Meeting	6 PM	Practice Hall
June 20, 2006	Chapter Board Meeting	5:30 PM	Practice Hall
July 4, 2006	City of Show Low Parade	TBD	TBD
July 12, 13, 14, 2006	Show Rehearsals	7 PM	BRHS
July 15, 2006	Annual Barbershop Harmony Show	2 PM, 7 PM	BRHS

*High Country Barbershop Chorus
c/o Jerry Schrunk, Newsletter Editor
PO Box 3897
Show Low, AZ 85902*