A MIDWINTER TO REMEMBER
JACKSONVILLE AND THE FLORIDA THEATER HOSTED THREE DAYS OF HARMONY

NOTEWORTHY
MOVING ON WITHOUT LA 2020,
FOCUS SHIFTS TO CLEVELAND 2021

SPOTLIGHT
A VOICELESS TERRY LUDWIG
STAYED OUT FRONT FOR YEARS

TIP SHEET
INNOVATION IS MORE THAN
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX
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(SATB, TTBB, SSAA)

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arr. Dan Wessler
(SATB, TTBB, SSAA)

Take On Me
arr. Dan Wessler
(SATB, TTBB, SSAA)

Can You Feel the Love Tonight
arr. June Dale
(SATB, TTBB, SSAA)

In the Still of the Night
arr. Tom Gentry
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Be Our Guest
arr. Steve Delehanty
(SATB, TTBB, SSAA)

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On the cover: Saturday Night Showcase, Florida Theater, Jacksonville, Fla. Photo by Lorin May

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May/June 2020
Volume LXXX Number 3
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What could you do with 3.4 million hours? Change the world!

The Barbershop Harmony Society relies on the strength of far-flung members to teach one another and spread harmony throughout the world.

While recovering from back surgery, Society President Dick Powell discovered he had to let other people help him. It wasn’t easy, until he gave in to the fact that letting people give itself is a gift.

DICK: Look at a room full of 100 people and say, “Everybody who likes to contribute to the well-being of another, please raise your hand.” Everybody’s hands go up. Then say, “All right, keep your hands up if you’re comfortable accepting help from another.” You can guess what happens.

MARTY: No hands! Which is funny, because any social community surrounds people in need—yet it’s so hard to accept help. Think about natural disasters like the recent tornado here in Nashville or the California fires. Humanity kicks in ... and even those suffering themselves are out there helping others, too.

Most Barbershoppers would think of sharing their music as “contributing to the well-being of others,” and know they want to help. The way we all teach each other the art of barbershop singing is the other side of that, the “okay, you can help me” side. It’s a broad lever of strength for our Society.

DICK: Our Annual Report added up all the hours that volunteers across the Society give to make barbershop happen in chapters and schools and events, and it’s staggering: 3.4 million hours each year. We’re probably talking $20-30 million worth of intellectual capital and labor that goes into barbershopping every year.

MARTY: There’s no way you could ever buy that amount of talent. We all give it freely—eagerly! Why? So we can do something great for the world!

DICK: Barbesshopping does not happen only at headquarters or in the boardroom. Week in and week out, it happens 10 and 20 people at a time, wherever people gather to raise their voices in song.

MARTY: Our Strategic Plan recognizes the need to harness this passion and help it grow. This year, we’ve hired a new position of Volunteer Manager (see sidebar), specifically to make sure our various singing communities can amplify the value of all the training we offer throughout the Society.

DICK: Once upon a time, the way you got communication and education out to the edges was to send somebody out in a beat-up old Volkswagen and drive across the country. They’d spend weeks and weeks visiting local chapters and hoping like heck that some of it would stick and they would learn...
something and do something with other local chapters. That doesn’t scale very well. Multiply a staff of, say, 50 by 2000 hours per year, and you get 100,000 hours. That just can’t compare to 3.4 million volunteer hours.

MARTY: The kind of help everyone needs—but doesn’t always know how to ask for—becomes very unique and specific, because everyone’s recipe for success tastes a little different. How do you define success? How do we celebrate that? How can we help? A motivated, generous volunteer corps helps answer that—especially our Districts.

DICK: If you had asked me 15 years ago, “What does the District do?”, I’d say a District runs a convention and runs a leadership school and a music school. These days, district leadership is asking what it can do for its chapters. How does it help them? How does it improve and increase their degree of success or satisfaction?

MARTY: The Districts are accelerators. They have a greater opportunity to touch and influence, encourage, facilitate, celebrate. They’re staging more than 60 events annually, aimed at helping our singing communities (chapters, clubs, quartets, etc.) be part of something bigger, more expansive.

DICK: It all goes back to the generosity of people who are just aching to share what they know, so everyone can grow. You look at our music education events, and there are all these brilliant people giving their time, a weekend away from home—because they want more people having more fun making more barbershop. Look closer, and you see the hidden heroes who make it possible—who handle registrations and housing and setting things up.

Increasing volunteer power to 1.2 million people

Dustin Guyton took on the challenge of engaging volunteer power with a big mission: “With our Everyone in Harmony vision calling for 1.2 million people engaged in barbershop by 2028, we’re going to need a lot more people teaching other people.” As Volunteer Manager, he envisions a day when a BHS inventory of member skills can match tens of thousands of people with singing communities eager to learn, grow, and succeed.

Dustin’s first major project ensures that Districts can help singing communities succeed by tapping Society resources mutually agreed to an annual Memorandum of Understanding. “I really see myself as an ambassador on behalf of districts to all our Harmony Hall team, so together we can deliver our education, events, marketing, and training services to everyone.” This framework will help ramp up service delivery as demand increases—and ensures everyone can thrive in all the ways of barbershopping they love best.

“We really encourage chapters to reach out to their district teams for the events and education services they need, so we can be sure they have the training and materials needed to support you.”

Want to help? Email volunteer@barbershop.org.
“THE BARBERSHOPPER OF THE YEAR ALWAYS HAS THIS STUNNED ‘WHO? ME?’ LOOK. THEY DON’T DO IT FOR THE RECOGNITION!”

up classrooms—and you see what selfless giving looks like.

MARTY: These are the kind of people who are named Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY) in their chapters—they’re the ones who drive and inspire our Barbershop Harmony Society impact. People don’t do things for the recognition. The recognition flows from the love.

DICK: I’ve never met anybody who ran for the position of BOTY. And the person who gets the honor always has this stunned look on their face, like “WHO? ME? Really? I’m unworthy.” They didn’t do it for recognition. They did it for their chapter, for their community, for barbershop.

MARTY: Which is the point of the BHS Awards Gala that we had previously scheduled for this summer at the International Convention. For 80 years, we’ve recognized the best singing in the world, and not really recognized the huge gifts of time and sweat and shared knowledge that passes this ability through the generations of barbershop. Up to now, we’ve really only recognized a lifetime of work in the Honorary Life Member category, our BHS Hall of Fame category, and a few other awards. We haven’t really given them a bright spotlight.

This is really brand new for us. We’ll cover everything from best video to best arrangers to volunteers, to—everything! The Oscars would be pretty short if they only had Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Movie. We’re going to put barbershop on the same level as other arts and professional trade groups, and say, “Everything that makes up the barbershop world and culture deserves recognition.”

Cell phone alignment exercise: easy and powerful

@ Regarding Elizabeth Davies’ article on improving alignment, I love the focus on simplicity because that is what I have been teaching in my leadership classes for decades. Make it seem complicated and people will only half-heartedly try. Make it simple so people can grasp one idea and they will run with it! I am going to use your technique in my quartet rehearsal this week.

Bill Hickman
Issaquah, Wash.

Transforming nervous energy: just what was needed

@ YES. Donya Metzger’s article “How to transform nervous energy into electric performance”—I am exactly who she was writing for. My wife, who is a behavioral therapist, laughed and said, “I’ve been trying to tell you these things about recognizing and learning techniques to self-soothe, but a prophet is never a prophet in her own land.”

I’ve been an experienced vocalist and church choir director for more than 30 years. I’ve loved barbershop for 12 years, sing lead with an Internationally competitive FWD chorus, and have sung with three quartets. However, while I have very little fear response singing for church audiences or for the public, I really struggle to bring anything close to my best while in front of our judges. I’m fine until we hit the stage and then “Response 2” kicks in and I struggle to suppress or channel it. I get the tight chest, dry mouth, and anxiety while my mind races with acute awareness of every little micro mistake I’m making. I associate the contest stage with fear, judging, criticism, and hierarchy.

I’ve sung our contest set three hours later at midnight with a belly full of pizza, outside in the cold, and thought, “Wow, that was amazing! Why couldn’t we just do that?”

I’ll be sharing your article with the members of my quartet.

Dave Knight
Vacaville, Calif.
### Top Sellers

#### Men’s Voices (TTBB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Arranger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daydream</td>
<td>Knight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallelujah</td>
<td>Scott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hooked on a Feeling</td>
<td>Nicholas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can You Feel the Love Tonight?</td>
<td>J. Dale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under the Boardwalk</td>
<td>BHS</td>
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#### Women’s Voices (SSAA)

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<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Arranger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Luck Charm</td>
<td>A. Dale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing</td>
<td>Grimmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change the World</td>
<td>Sharon &amp; Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy Day</td>
<td>Wright</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I Fall in Love</td>
<td>Wright</td>
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#### Mixed Voices (SATB)

<table>
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<th>Song</th>
<th>Arranger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sing</td>
<td>Grimmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You*</td>
<td>Rector &amp; Bergman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Whole New World</td>
<td>Hicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If There’s Anybody Here From out of Town*</td>
<td>Briner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arranged for 8-Part Men’s & Women’s Double Quartet

Check out these best-selling charts from the past 5 years at shop.barbershop.org

Pro Tip: Improve your music search by using quotation marks (Example: “Daydream”). Try it! Members receive 25% off and Associates receive 10% off retail price.
COVID-19 SHAKES THE WORLD

Moving on without LA 2020, focus shifts to Cleveland 2021

In a big blow to competitors and fans, our 2020 International Convention is cancelled due to COVID-19 cautions. Plans are in place to accommodate all whose plans were affected.

After careful consideration of the options and ramifications, and out of an abundance of caution and concern for our members and fans, the Barbershop Harmony Society has determined that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible and irresponsible to continue to host the 2020 International Convention in Los Angeles this summer.

BHS staff members and Society leaders turned over every stone, consulted with stakeholders across the entire organization, and studied the legal and financial impacts. The conversation always came back to: Will this keep our members safe? In the end, we are unwilling to create any reason for members to gather in groups to prepare for video submissions or events in the near future.

The cancellation leaves a hole in the lives and hearts of Barbershoppers everywhere, as we are losing our barbershop family reunions, the final tournament to crown the best of the best, the thousands of musical moments that happen in stairwells and hallways and lobbies, the culmination of months and sometimes years of preparation, the continuity of our history, our chance to experience once-in-a-lifetime performances together.

Moving forward ... together
The Barbershop Harmony Society is more than a single event. The heart of BHS is in you—your quartet, your chapter, your choruses, your weekly afterglow, your tag parties, your singing family. Even apart, we can and will continue to Keep the Whole World Singing.

COMPETITOR AND ATTENDEE DETAILS
• Choruses that had been invited to compete in LA 2020 will automatically be invited to compete in Cleveland 2021. Additional choruses may qualify according to the new rules announced in November 2019. (Summary: 81% automatic qualifying score regardless of ensemble classification; each district is represented as long as an ensemble meets the 74% minimum score.)
• Quartets that had qualified to compete in LA 2020 as of March 1, 2020 will automatically qualify for Cleveland 2021.
• LA 2020 registrations may be transferred to Cleveland 2021, refunded, or donated to support BHS programs. Registration holders have already been contacted to select their desired option.
• Hotel reservations for the BHS block of rooms (made via BHS housing partner Orchid) have been cancelled automatically without penalty. The Society has no role or liability in reservations made outside the BHS block of rooms. They must be cancelled by reservation holders directly.
• Airfare and non BHS-block hotel refunds. The Society cannot refund or reimburse non-BHS reservations; however, many hotels and airlines are offering flexible refund options due to the COVID-19 situation. Please contact them directly.
• BHS Awards nominees/winners will be announced and celebrated via a revised plan.
• The qualifying age for the Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest and Varsity Chorus Invitational has been temporarily extended to age 26 for Cleveland 2021 only. Varsity choruses that applied for LA 2020 will automatically be invited to Cleveland 2021. Due to the addition of new group categories, Varsity quartets that already qualified for LA 2020 will have to requalify for Cleveland 2021.
• The Everyone in Harmony Chorus with Deke Sharon physical gathering has been cancelled. We are working with Deke to finish and premiere two brand-new barbershop SATB charts. Virtual rehearsals and a virtual performance are anticipated. More information will be shared in May.

CONVENTION INFO & RESOURCES Get the full text of the announcement and FAQs for both competitors and audiences at www.barbershop.org/events.
Valentines as a public service

Why for the first time, Circle City Sound decided to make Feb. 14 a day for service rather than a day to raise chapter funds.

A fter 24 years of delivering Singing Valentines, the Greater Indianapolis Chapter recently found it more difficult to sell enough Valentines and form enough quartets. The chapter board discussed the trade-offs between making Valentines rare and exclusive (usually about $75 or so) or cheaper and more plentiful. That’s when we looked at making Valentines an outreach opportunity rather than a fundraiser.

The chapter’s new Community Outreach VP board position had increased engagement significantly since November 2019. This included a free Veteran’s Day show that raised $1,200 for veterans assistance, Christmas carols at a local mall, caroling on the Circle in downtown Indianapolis, and performing Christmas Show repertoire for over 300 homeless men at an Indianapolis shelter.

The chapter decided to give away Singing Valentines to any sender or recipient who was in public service—military, law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, nurses, or teachers. Four quartets delivered 51 Singing Valentines in 12 hours! Two TV stations covered the outreach and a local public radio station ran an in-depth story. We couldn’t have gotten such great publicity if we’d paid for it!

The lyrics of some chorus repertoire express what the chapter is trying to do: “If you want more happy than your heart can hold / If you want to stand taller if the truth were told / Take whatever you got, and give it away.” It’s working for Circle City Sound!

– Terry Bynum

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Singing with a symphony goes interchapter

Tunkhannock, Pa. has under 2,000 residents but doesn’t act like it—the seat of Wyoming County (population 28,000) hosts both The Endless Mountains Barbershop Chorus and the Northern Tier Symphony. Chapter President Raleigh Bloch suggested a joint concert, and the symphony was all for it. The Society publishes scores for barbershop chorus and symphony, and they selected “Barbershop Christmas” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” practicing separately at first. Raleigh also invited members of the Honesdale and Wilkes-Barre chapters to join in, as well as members of his church choir and the local Wyoming County Chorale. The combined ensembles performed concerts and audience sing-alongs in both Montrose and Tunkhannock, Pa. last November, sharing each other’s audiences along the way.

Vocal Revolution records movie soundtrack

Emerson College students working on a thesis film needed male singers for their soundtrack—and found that Barbershoppers love singing four bars at a time. Five members of Vocal Revolution (Concord, Mass. Chapter) helped record background music in a Russian Civil War story about a Jewish man who doesn’t know whom he can trust to help him find his missing son. With little advance individual practice, the full ensemble first sang the haunting lyrics together on the same day they heard the instrumentals and recorded their tracks. For most, it was their first real recording gig. Look for The Hare in coming film festivals.
The Barbershop 7th Hour

Why your Thursday nights will never be the same

In a nutshell: An eclectic hour of great barbershop music every Thursday, including rare and never-before-heard tracks.

Hosted by Jeremy K. Gover, BHS video production manager since 2014. Exclusively on Acaville, a 24/7 a cappella Internet radio station.

Jeremy's musical background. Does roadtripping 41 Dave Matthews concerts count? I also worked in Top 40 radio for over five years before coming to the Society. Am I a Barbershopper? No, but let's put it this way: I will mark my 10-year anniversary at BHS by singing a tag. But my wife, Lynn, has been a barbershopper for decades and I'm a long-time barbershop fan.

When do we tune in? Thursday nights at 8pm Eastern/5pm Pacific. It also replays on Sundays around noon. Archives are not available—this is radio.

How do we tune in? Log onto acaville.org and click the big “play” button. As easy as Sunday morning.

Show format. It's an hour of what I would listen to. There's often a timely theme such as Mardi Gras, and there's a real arc to each show—I can't do five classic quartets or three ballads in a row. For example, you might hear a track from The Citations, then After Hours singing “Take On Me” at Midwinter 2019, then some 1970s Vocal Majority, followed by a track from GQ's latest album.

Tracks you'll hear nowhere else. Because of my role on staff, I have access to content nobody else has, such as non-contest audio from past conventions. I also have pretty much every audio track the Marketplace has ever sold. For legal reasons, we can't release a lot of it to the public except on radio.

Why he does it. I wanted to get back to radio in some way, and then I was invited by Acaville. I also wanted a cappella fans to be exposed to great barbershop music. Appealing to music fans outside of barbershop circles is important because it only grows our artform. But the main goal of the show is to make that hour a must-listen for Barbershoppers all over the globe.

1 QUARTET, 2 HOURS, 20 DELIVERIES

A new Singing Valentine every six minutes for two hours—it's got to be some kind of record, and The Squares did it while raising hundreds of dollars for charity. It probably helped that they never left the building. Criss-crossing the various wards and wings of Lion's Gate Hospital in North Vancouver, B.C., lead Erik Beauchesnen said that an employee of the hospital’s foundation found their Gigsalad listing and hired them for a hospital-wide fundraiser. A little over two hours later, The Squares had made a huge impact on staff and patients and left with a $200 fee. The four singers—Sean Huston, Erik Beauchesne, Samuel Dabrusin, and Allen Upward—are four of about 18 constantly-rotating quartet members who call themselves The Squares Chorus when they're all in the same room. Link to video of their performances at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

OPEN HOUSE INVITATION TO PAST GUESTS LEADS TO NEW MEMBERS

We had our Open House two weeks after our last show and it was an unprecedented success. We sent emails via eVite to 312 people, all our past attendees whose emails we knew. Fifty-six people showed up to be entertained by the 23 of us! Eight men joined us to sing (only for the night) and four came back in subsequent meetings!

Following the four songs and two singalongs, we opened the hall to our dessert buffet. We added four members this month, and we plan to add more next month!

– Rudy Xavier, Santa Maria, Calif. Chapter
To provide better clarity and visibility to competitors and audience members, contest rules have been amended to state that songs, lyrics, and actions not in good taste will now result in a penalty, up to and including forfeiture by the Performance Judge(s). This is a departure from the past few years in which issues were assessed holistically; this often made it more difficult for competitors and audiences to understand when issues of poor taste had been addressed.

No dramatic changes in scoring are expected. New language includes the following:

• Songs or actions by a contestant that are not in good taste will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Performance Judge(s).
• Barbershop performances should not contain vulgar, suggestive, or otherwise distasteful actions or lyrics.

The Performance Category included additional clarity and guidance in Position Papers. Key concepts include:

• Performances containing bad taste, or which could be considered offensive, are not common in barbershop contests.
• The test of whether a performance is distasteful or offensive is whether, in whole or in part, it would be offensive to today’s audiences or society in general ... These rare performances may range from inadvertent offense to a complete disregard for the potential impact on the audience. Judicial discretion in analyzing these situations is paramount, and judges draw on their own life experience as well as their judicial education and training.

Address questions to Performance Category Specialist Mark Kettner at mrkettner@comcast.net.

RESOURCES ONLINE Link to the full text and an explanatory video at barbershop.org/harmonizer.
Innovation: It’s not just thinking outside the box

Physical distancing requirements have changed how chapter members sing, plan together, and stay in touch. Adopting an innovators’ mindset will help your chapter adapt and stay ahead of the curve.

In the arts and nonprofit world, the phrase “think outside the box” is fairly common—and often accompanied by intense eye-rolling and annoyance of those who hear it during meetings. But thinking outside our current paradigms has never been more relevant for our organization. In the wake of the cancellation of spring contests, chapter shows, and our International Convention, chapters are looking for alternatives to their “norms.”

In a series of online Q&As with chapter and district leaders held in March, we discussed the opportunities that lay before us but also the innovations already being made, both outside and inside the box.

Chapters have always been looking for new ways to recruit singers, promote shows, get sponsors, support local artists, and to preserve and prolong barbershop harmony. While many of the questions and ideas from these March meetings were spurred by challenges brought on by the COVID-19 health crisis, they can apply to our chapter operations throughout the year. It’s during the storm that we may discover how to be a better organization when seas are calm again.

LOW-TECH STILL MATTERS

Sometimes, innovation can mean revisiting old ideas that have fallen by the wayside (cue Bluegrass Student Union’s rendition of “Everything Old Is New Again”). This is already becoming the case for many of our chapters during the health crisis. The simple act of a telephone call or hand-written note can be tremendously effective at bringing people together. How many times in the past did you and chapter members wonder, “What ever happened to Jim?” during a chapter meeting only for the question to be asked, “Has anyone actually called him?” Genuine contact matters even more when it cannot be in person, especially when it comes to staying in touch with those who are less comfortable with technology.

TECHNOLOGY BRIDGES MANY GAPS

Now more than ever, arts organizations are taking their cues from technological innovations already employed by the business world. While there are some musical challenges, chapters are gathering and enriching each others’ lives using online tools like Zoom. The inherent electronic delay is too much to enjoy most forms of live group singing, but can be helpful for a directed sectional, music theory/private lesson, or even board meetings. The true test is how we can utilize these tools going forward once we’re not worried about social distance. How effective and productive can we be then?

INNOVATION TAKES PROACTIVE EFFORT—AND REQUIRES SWALLOWING OUR PRIDE

In Steven Johnson’s book Where Good Ideas Come From, the author states: “Most hunches that turn into important innovations unfold over much longer time frames. They start

IT’S DURING THE STORM THAT WE MAY DISCOVER HOW TO BE A BETTER ORGANIZATION WHEN SEAS ARE CALM AGAIN.
with a vague, hard-to-describe sense that there’s an interesting solution to a problem that hasn’t yet been proposed, and they linger in the shadows of the mind ... assembling new connections and gaining strength.”

We only achieve innovation when hard work and proactive communication converge. It requires creativity and curiosity, and forward motion only happens when we set aside our individual pride, instead focusing on what will best benefit the chapter as a whole. If we succeed, we can sometimes find answers to questions and challenges before we are forced to confront them.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

In the words of Tim Sharp, Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association: “We ask ‘why,’ we read, we listen, we watch, we experience, we experiment, we fail, and sometimes, we succeed.”

What can your chapter use from its past without ignoring tools from its present and future? The sky’s the limit. And while we’re figuring it out together, know that the staff of Harmony Hall and the hundreds and thousands of volunteer leaders in our Society are here to help you. Let’s grow and innovate together!

Innovations from chapter leaders around the Society

A March 26 online meeting with chapter leaders revealed that many chapters were already using new tools and new approaches to keep their chapters running, funded, and impacting their communities. Innovations they shared included:

- A cappella/multi-tracks apps on smartphones
- Online/web meetings and rehearsals through Zoom meetings
- Slack communications and chat tools
- Fundraising opportunities through

Grocery Community Rewards, Amazon Smile, Scrip (gift cards)
- Harmony University online classes
- Shifting group focus to their communities
- Increasing newsletter communications via email and printing and/or emailing to less tech savvy members
- Sharing videos or past performances with local senior/nursing facilities

See more details on pages 16-18 this issue. Stay on top of distance resources at barbershop.org/virtualresources.

SINGING CHANGES LIVES. JOIN THE CAUSE.

Would you be willing to make a donation of $10, $100 or whatever you can afford to help us make the benefits of singing available to more people than ever?

We simply can’t do it without you.

Your support will make a real, lasting impact in the lives of those who create harmony with others.

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ONLINE: HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG
BY MAIL: 110 SEVENTH AVE NORTH, SUITE 200
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

Contact our Donor Care Center: donorcenter@harmonyfoundation.org
Terry Ludwig: No voice, no obstacle

For over 16 years, this director could barely speak, let alone sing. Yet he led Sound of Illinois to 12 straight appearances on the International stage without ever auditioning a performer.

In 2001, when Terry Ludwig was 34, his voice began failing. Not good for a singer and director in the barbershop world, a year before he became director of Bloomington’s Sound of Illinois (SOI) Chorus. But spasmodic dysphonia (vocal cord spasms) didn’t keep him from guiding SOI to 12 straight International appearances (2008-2019), even though he couldn’t sing and could barely talk for most of that span.

Illinois District President Brett Mulford, SOI member and close friend of Terry’s, remembers his first impression.

“I met Terry in 2006 at my first Sound of Illinois rehearsal. I loved the sound and wanted to be a part of it. A couple things stuck in my mind that night: the chorus respected Terry, he was a gifted musician, and he wore a microphone. He sounded like a bad cell phone connection. I came to learn his voice was not only affecting his musical life, but also his work life. I’m in sales, too, so I know you need to be able to communicate.

“Terry’s quartet won the district title in 2011 with Terry singing tenor. I don’t think he believed it would ever happen. We still joke about him being in the first winning quartet with only three parts!”

Terry found a possible surgical remedy at UCLA in 2017. When Terry was accepted, Mulford and his quartet lead Matt Carlen hastily planned “Voices for Terry” to raise funds (insurance coverage was uncertain).

“I still get chills recalling how the Illinois District came together because of the love everyone has for Terry. We had five choruses and six quartets, including After Hours. Everyone wanted to help the guy who’s done so much to help the district, and it’s had a long-lasting positive effect.”

The August concert raised nearly twice the $10,000 goal, allowing Terry to worry only about recovering from his October surgery. Today, Terry’s voice is much improved. “I have about 75 percent of my speaking voice back, and probably 50 percent of what my singing voice was. It is what it is, and I’m really fortunate.”

WANNA SING? NO STRINGS

Many choruses that make it to International are selective. Sound of Illinois is not. “If you want to sing with our chorus, you are welcome,” Terry says. “That’s how I was brought up,” he says, recalling his first directing stint with the small Quincy chorus.

“We were a ‘Joe Barbershop’ chorus that decided it wanted to sing better. We went from last in the district to placing fifth with our 15-man chorus.

“It’s in my DNA. Barbershop has given me so much over my 33 years, who am I to tell someone they can’t have the same experience. It’s so much more than a Tuesday rehearsal. My first date with Tina was a barbershop function. We were engaged at a barbershop function. All the guys in my wedding party were Barbershop-
pers. David was born on a rehearsal night, and my first call was to my chorus. Every major event in my life has included Barbershoppers.”

With a take-all-comers approach, Terry believes A-level singing is still possible. “It’s all about setting a culture of expectations. We want everyone to be a part of the chorus, but we expect members to learn their music and work hard at rehearsals. I think you can have it both ways: let everyone participate and expect to sing well.

“We do a lot of the same things other choruses do, and we couldn’t do it without a strong music team,” Terry says. “You can’t do it by yourself. We’re fortunate to have good singers in our chorus, including two section leaders who are district quartet champs.”

INSPIRING OTHER LEADERS
Co-director Tim Beutel, tenor of 2018 BHS quartet champion After Hours, records learning tracks and focuses on vocal production. “When Terry asked me to be assistant director,” says Tim, “we didn’t always agree on how to get the best out of the chorus. We’ve learned to draw on each other’s strengths, which has made us a great team. He has amazing hands that bring out the artistry.” Terry asked Tim to be his co-director in 2019.

Terry says: “Losing my voice took the emphasis off singing and talking and taught me to use my hands more effectively.” Now, as co-director, he’s able to sing with the chorus when his partner’s out front. “I sang on an International stage last summer for the first time in my life,” says Terry. “What a kick that was for me!”

Past district president Jim Waldorf, an SOI member, credits Terry with chapter growth. “He has stretched us musically, and he has attracted young members as a result.” Terry has adjusted his approach over the years while maintaining high expectations. “In his early years, Terry was sometimes frustrated if the chorus wasn’t having a good night,” says Jim. “But he’s matured into a very special leader and friend. His passion is infectious, and he shares it freely with everyone.”

Another close friend, Bret Reinthaler, says: “Of my top 100 barbershop moments, Terry is in at least 90 of them. I can’t imagine what my barbershop life would be without Terry.”

ABOUT TERRY LUDWIG
BHS member since 1987

CHORUS DIRECTOR
• Quincy (1989-2002)
• Bloomington Sound of Illinois (2002-present)
• Springfield Sound Celebration
  Sweet Adelines International (2015-present)

QUARTET TENOR
• Monarchs
• Critical Bridge
• Omega
• Back in Style
• Right on Q
• Wound 4 Sound
• Waldorf Hair Company (2011 district champion)

DISTRICT
• Music & Performance VP
  1999-2002, 2014-Present
• Chorus Director Development
  2006
• At-Large Board Member
  2016-Present
• Illinois District Academy of Harmony organizer
  2000-2019
• Award for Barbershopping Excellence
  2016
• QCA Music Man Award
  2017

FAMILY
• Wife Tina, son David

EDUCATION
• Associate in Science, Lincolnland Community College

OCCUPATION
• Menards commercial & contractor sales representative

NO ODD COUPLE. Outside the barbershop world, these co-directors would seem to have mismatched abilities. Tim Beutel (right) is a gold medal tenor and a full-time music educator with a Master’s degree. But no Barbershopper cares that Terry Ludwig (left) has less formal education and works in sales—it’s Terry’s experience and deep artistic and leadership abilities that matter. The two combine their individual strengths and make it work.
Don’t call it social distancing—chapters and friends are staying close and keeping up on music during long weeks of physical distancing until they can sing together again in person

What can your chapter accomplish via meeting apps? Here’s a brief summary of one of the first online meetings for Great Northern Union (Hilltop, Minn.) courtesy of chapter member Tyler Dvorak:

“We sang through one of our pieces, had PVI’s, which are just like private sessions with leaders in the chorus, had small master class sessions in a series we have been doing in the chorus, and we all enjoyed each other’s company, and maybe even learned something about each other we may have not known!

“I must say that this may have been one of my best nights in barbershop because we were able to have those connections, we were more focused on music, and you had to really get used to hearing yourself which is really hard in this setting that you aren’t used to. It was so great and joyful. I felt that this shouldn’t be kept secret and to let our barbershop friends know that there is a way that we can all still enjoy music and friendship.”

How to host virtual rehearsals

(Adapted from a much longer article that may be found at barbershop.org/news/blog and at barbershop.org/virtualresources.)

Why should you meet virtually?
Are you meeting for a rehearsal, fellowship, music education, or a mix?

FIND THE RIGHT VIRTUAL TOOLS FOR YOUR ENSEMBLE

Zoom. Robust suite for live, interactive group meetings. Participants can opt-in to be viewed via camera, share their screen, or comment via microphone or the chat feature. Free to those who join the meeting, but hosts must have a paid account to set up sessions longer than 40 minutes or more than 100 participants. Minimal set-up required for laptops; free app required for smartphone use.

Google Hangouts. Features are similar to Zoom. Free for up to 100 participants if host uses at least a basic version of G Suite ($6 per month upgrade over free Gmail).

Facebook Live. Free with a Facebook account, although this is not a videoconferencing application per se. Sessions are recorded, comments may be captured.

Band. Not for livestreaming, but app is set up for group communication. Leaders can post videos, graphics, documents, calendaring. Users can comment, RSVP, participate in polls.

KEEP THINGS ORGANIZED

Use a rehearsal schedule. Will you be singing through a song? Discussing a learning track? Showing choreography? Creating future plans? Having a singing lesson?

LEARN AND GROW

Assess how the meeting went, learn what people did or didn’t like, refine your structure.

Compiled by Jernie Talles-Millan (jtmillan@barbershop.org). Original article at barbershop.org/virtualresources links to sample rehearsal schedules, a rehearsal logistics document, how-to videos for Zoom and for uploading Facebook Live videos to YouTube.
If you are comfortable with technology, by now you have seen an explosion in virtual choir rehearsals, meetings, Facebook sing-alongs, and myriad new ways to gather. It’s a wonderful way to keep in touch!

However, the technology for today sadly does not allow for five or more choir members to virtually sing at the same moment and hear everyone in real time. A few hardware platforms “somewhat” work for small groups of 2-4, but even in these cases latency issues make a live rehearsal challenging and expensive.

If you are not comfortable with technology, let me share a few other ways to connect with your people: **Mail a letter.** I’m always so surprised at how meaningful, simple, and powerful a handwritten letter can be. With this gift of time, send a note to your people and tell them you miss them and are excited for the future when we can gather once more.

**Pick up the phone.** Call your people and check in. It is powerful, simple, cheap and impactful.

**Share some music.** Pick up some new music and learning tracks for your group. People are hungry for “new” brain activity; a new song would be welcome. I remember we had a “first group off the paper wins X” award at my old chorus.

**Use this time to plan.** Have a virtual board retreat, plan out your show crazy early, re-invent your rehearsals, survey your members about the future, update your repertoire.

**Use smartphones well.** You can connect with your people by using a free built-in feature (Facetime) or download a free app (Google Duo or chat, Zoom, Skype) for a teleconference. Seeing people’s faces makes all the difference!

– Donny Rose, BHS Director of Education
drose@barbershop.org

**What BHS chapters are doing to stay connected**

On March 26, chapter leaders met with BHS staff via Zoom to discuss options for their chapter during days of physical isolation. Chapter leaders shared the below via Zoom chat.

• We will be trying tonight a Google Hangouts chorus get-together. Going over new music. Doing “analysis” of text, interpretation, etc. together before we later get together.

• While we can’t necessarily sing as an ensemble on Zoom, we have done some vocalization/singing exercises (on mute), we’ve done voice lessons under glass, had discussions about the text of our songs, and have had folks recite the text as a monologue to help us improve our storytelling.

• I’ve been using email extensively to keep in touch. Have scanned articles from The Harmonizer to help singing posture, etc.

• We have a Zoom “producer” who will manage the tech so the director is hands-free, and we’re using the break-out rooms for sectional and smaller conversations.

• Virtual afterglows! They’ve been great.

• Gotham leadership (Voices of Gotham & Sirens of Gotham) introduced Slack over a year ago now as our main communication platform, so we have a way to communicate socially, educationally, and musically!

• We use Flock for our communications, similar to Slack. They are offering the pro version of video conferencing for 6 months to 501(c)(3) orgs. https://flock.com

• Various members are hosting educational classes on music theory, vocal pedagogy, barbershop history, etc. to help our members.

• Most of my members are in their 70s and 80s and not very tech savvy. Email is about their tech limit. Just use what your members are comfortable using.

• My tenor section is passing around recordings of ourselves singing against the learning tracks. We then meet via Zoom to review those recordings.

• We have begun one-on-one Zooms by part with section leaders to qualify for contest or show performances.

• We are involved in a Community Foundation Giving Challenge on April 28 making partnerships with other local non-profits.

• We did a class on dynamics/texture, movement, authenticity. It’s been a cool way to get new members!

• We are working on doing a video with clips from our show to send to senior facilities we have performed at for the locked in residents.

• Handwritten notes are almost a lost art and highly valued!

• Each week a tag is sent email with the music as an attachment.

• We are planning on offering our Chapter choruses and quartets gratis to the city leaders for when the isolation is lifted.

**Technology is helping to connect us, but it has its limits**
From the blog: Tips for practicing music at home

By Steve Scott and Rob Mance. Adapted from a much longer article that can be found at barbershop.org/news/blog or at barbershop.org/virtualresources.

Needed: A space free from distraction, water (stay hydrated), your sheet music, smartphone or other audio/video recording device, a pitch pipe or other device.

GETTING STARTED

Warm up. Physical, then mental, then vocal. (Links to exercises in original article.)

Work on your musicianship. Start with something simple like interval training or note identification.

WHEN LEARNING A SONG

Learn the notable features of the song: Introduction, verse(s), chorus(es), bridge, tag, etc.

Note key signatures, meters, metronome markings, and any other tempo-related markings (rubatos, ritardando, accelerando, etc.).

Review your voice part’s position relative to other parts and as parts of chords. (Full article breaks this down extensively.)

Note any key changes or difficult harmonic passages.

Highlight challenging sections due to range and tessitura.

Make comments on lyrics, especially how the arrangement highlights the text.

LEARNING A NEW SONG VIA LEARNING MEDIA

Get an overview of the song. What is the harmonic language? Who has the melody? What is the vocal/emotional/performance apex?

Learn the melody using lead part-predominant track, gradually increasing the volume of other parts after each iteration.

Learn your part on the part-predominant track, first without the other voice parts, then gradually adding the others.

Sing your part against the other solo tracks, part by part.

REHEARSING A KNOWN SONG

Stop using the learning media, switch to rehearsal recordings where possible to work on your group’s interpretations. Use recordings that are both recent and the best examples of what you want from your chorus. This will make sure that your singers are singing with the most up-to-date material.
Fancy yourself an arranger?
Learn online from the Society's best!

Beginning Barbershop Arranging
Kevin Keller  New Classes begin May 18th! Join us!
An introduction to the key concepts of barbershop arranging, including harmonic pillars and harmonic motion.

Intermediate Barbershop Arranging
Patrick McAlexander
Builds competence and proficiency by exploring the circle of fifths, voice leading, sensible development, and momentum.

Advanced Barbershop Arranging
Steve Tramack
Equips arrangers with advanced tools that improve their construction and development of arrangements, and approaches to common challenges.

Each online course lasts 6 weeks and includes virtual classroom discussions, interactions with the instructor and other students, and the opportunity to implement new concepts within your own arrangements.

“Steve is such a wealth of great information about arranging. The class was tons of fun. I am so inspired to continue my arranging journey!”

Josh Moore, Music City Chorus

See course descriptions and start dates at education.barbershop.org
What do you get when you take the most experienced barbershoppers and mix them up for three days with the most enthusiastic new lovers of four-part harmony? An unforgettable experience that likely launched many on a lifetime of harmony.

Add in great contests, fantastic shows, the best tagging, and some of the best educators in the barbershop world, and we cannot wait until we can do it all over again!
SENIORS QUARTET CONTEST
The Seniors Quartet Contest featured 27 quartets that had qualified in advance at District and Alliance contests. All members must be 55+, ages adding up to 240+. Here’s the journey of 2020 Seniors Quartet champion Hearsay.

The longest 15 minutes in barbershop singing: the contest results call-off. For 2020 International Seniors Quartet Champion, Hearsay, those 15 minutes felt like a lifetime. And for the four of us, the gold medal announcement was a lifetime goal achieved.

Hearsay won the third-place bronze medal at the 2019 International Seniors Quartet contest in Nashville. There, we learned that walking from the hotel to the contest venue in brand new plastic shoes in the bitter cold was not a good idea. Taking that lesson to heart in Jacksonville, we gave ourselves plenty of time to arrive at the Florida Theater for this year’s contest.

Preparing for the 2020 contest began immediately after the 2019 contest call-off. Coaches Jean and Brian Barford set forth a plan of continuous improvement for us. Jean came up with an approach for contest day that we credit with mentally preparing us to peak at the right time without sacrificing energy and voices.

Arriving at the theater, we were told the warm-up room was up a flight of stairs from the stage. Recognizing our limitations, we sang in the alley behind the theater in a light drizzle and were escorted directly to the stage from the alley.

Opening with our “By The Sea” medley, we got into our comfort zone with the uptune, the crowd standing in applause. Mike then stepped to a side microphone where he announced the flight departure to West Point and we began the Clay Hine arrangement of “Little Pal,” focusing the interpretation to the son leaving for military service. The crowd responded with an ovation the quartet will never forget as they stood for a second time. And then the wait began.

All members of Hearsay sing with the Southern Gateway Chorus in Cincinnati, Ohio. Tenor Bob Moorehead began singing barbershop in high school, joining the Barbershop Harmony Society in 1960. He has won two International Chorus gold medals as a 50+ year member of the chorus. In addition, he received International bronze medals singing with The Naturals. Bob was involved in the Contest & Judging Program as a Sound & Singing Category Judge for over 35 years, achieving Judge Emeritus status in 2012.

Bringing many years of contest experience to the quartet is baritone Tom Rouse. Tom had already won a Seniors gold medal in 2012 with Rusty Pipes. His first trip across the International quartet stage was in 1977, and he has been at it ever since, with well over 240 rounds across various choruses and quartets on many contest stages.

Bass Mike Bell came to Hearsay from a background in vocal coaching and classical performance. He is the resident in-house arranger for the quartet and sang with Tom in Rumors many years ago on the International contest stage.

Rounding out the quartet is lead Kent VanderKolk. Kent sang in district-level quartets for years, focusing on local performances and district contests. He joined the chorus in 2015, ultimately meeting up with the other three guys to form Hearsay.

– Kent VanderKolk, lead

SENIORS CHORUS INVITATIONAL
This year, 340 singers (age 55+) from eight BHS districts participated in the Invitational. Top among competitors were the Ozark Overtones (CSD, above). The seniors shared the same stage with participants in the Next Generation Barbershop Junior Chorus Invitational. Other Seniors Chorus participants included Carolina Statesmen (NSC), Dixie Seniors Chorus (DIX), Guys Who Can Drive at Night (NED), Pioneer Spirit (PIO), Seneca Statesmen (SLD), Sunshine Statesmen (SUN), and Vintage Voices (ILL).
SINGING CHANGES LIVES

During Signature’s Gold Medal Hour performance of “Dance With My Father,” a teary young singer stood up and flew down the aisle toward the back of the ballroom and into the open arms of a woman who could only have been her mother. Her body shook with sobs until the song ended.

Christy Mace, a chaperone for the Chandler High School Treblemakers of Arizona, later explained that her daughter, Brooklyn—front and center for her chorus’ electric performances at the Next Generation Invitational a day earlier—had lost her father to cancer a little more than two years earlier when she was 16. In the short weeks before he passed away, father and daughter had lamented that they would never experience her childhood dream for them to dance together at her wedding reception. Brooklyn had heard Signature perform that song twice before and had hoped she could contain her emotions this time. That would have been a tall order, considering that folks without such a backstory can have a hard time keeping it together at the champions’ most famous song.

No doubt, countless moving and emotional moments were experienced throughout the weekend in Jacksonville, even if few were caught on camera.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Two-time Sweet Adelines International quartet champion Debbie Cleveland revealed how music and the barbershop community had helped her and her family cope with her son’s long roller-coaster journey into and out of addiction—even as almost no one knew the burdens they were carrying. She was joined by her Gaither High School choir to demonstrate the power of song in times of difficulty.

HARMONY UNIVERSITY

Attendees enjoyed more than 30 sessions with big-name instructors on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday—a Midwinter record! Others took advantage of private voice lessons and quartet coaching.
TOWN HALL
Society CEO Marty Monson spoke candidly for an hour about the current state and future of the Society. He and several Society Board members answered multiple questions from members who attended.

ALL-CHAPTER CHORUS
Attendees who signed up in advance got to sing in a high-end chorus at Midwinter after learning their music in advance and practicing daily with director Donny Rose. Many participants had never enjoyed such a large audience—or such a huge ovation—as when they opened the Celebration of Harmony show on Saturday night!

NEXT GENERATION BARBERSHOP JUNIOR QUARTET CONTEST
Singing Double won a superior rating and took the top prize in 2020 after placing second in the inaugural 2019 Junior Quartet Contest. Debbie Cleveland says the following about her former choir students.

The Paschal twins and the Majid twins met in my high school Women’s Chorus when they were freshmen. They began a close friendship right away, sharing the unique joys and challenges of going through life as identical twins.

They joined my Barbershop Harmony Club at school, and all four wanted to be in the baritone section. When the idea came up to be a quartet, I asked them to determine who had the most solo-type voice, and they picked Hannah, so we gave her the lead part. We found out Emma could sing the lowest, so she became the bass. The other two flipped a coin, and Krystal won, so she became the bari. Kelly lost and thus became the tenor of Singing Double.

They all maintained their own personal interests as well. Emma was a cheerleader, Hannah was on the tennis team, and Kelly and Krystal created artwork for many visual projects at school, as well as both finishing in the top five of their 600+ member senior class.

Throughout high school, besides performing at school concerts and on shows in the community at large, they also served as clinicians/section leaders for youth barbershop festivals. One of their highlights in their senior year was being invited to perform at the swearing-in ceremony of Tampa’s new mayor. They also came in second in the BHS Junior Quartet Contest last year in Nashville, and they traveled to England for their first Sweet Adelines International Rising Star Contest, where they took home 5th-place medals.

All four have now moved on to Gainesville, Florida, and have sung in various vocal groups at the University of Florida. They plan to keep singing together and creating the kind of blend that only twins and best friends can!

—Debbie Cleveland
SUCCESSFUL YOUTH OUTREACH – IT DOESN’T JUST HAPPEN

The Wade Hampton Singers from Wade Hampton High School in Greenville, SC, qualified for and traveled to January’s Midwinter Convention Next Generation Barbershop Chorus Invitational in Jacksonville. After performing a three-song Beatles set, they were judged “Outstanding” by the judges panel.

This was the high school group’s first visit to a BHS convention but not their first experience with barbershop harmony, thanks to the Upstate South Carolina Chapter’s Palmetto Statesmen. Chapter member Don Campbell (Dean of the BHS Directors College) had spent several years encouraging the school’s choral director, Amy Moyer, to attend Director’s College at Harmony University. She attended in 2019, and upon her return, contacted the chapter to learn more about the artform.

As you can imagine, I was thrilled to hear from Ms. Moyer and set in motion a series of school visits, a Youth in Harmony Workshop to improve the Singers’ performance, and a show to raise money for the Singers’ Jacksonville trip. All the work resulted in a tremendous improvement in the Wade Hampton Singers’ performance. A $2,250 donation to their music program came from the chapter’s Youth in Harmony Fund that was established by the retired Chord Street Boys quartet, donations from chapter members, and from Melissa Martin of Quadrophonic quartet.

This successful Youth in Harmony outreach by the Upstate Chapter did not just happen. Members of the chapter have been building relationships with area choral directors for the past several years.

The successful formula that we use is:

1. Build relationships with school choral directors.
2. Deliver a complimentary Singing Valentine to a choral director or other teacher in a high school.
3. Sponsor a choral director to Directors College at Harmony University.
4. Attend or volunteer at school music events.
5. Set up a Youth in Harmony Workshop for a school’s singers.
6. Make a donation to a school’s music program.

Perseverance and generosity are important ingredients for success!

– Larry A. Gilhousen, President, Upstate South Carolina Chapter
ENTERTAINMENT

The Four Freshmen and 2019 Quartet Champion Signature each headlined two nights filled with harmony. The Four Freshmen started as a barbershop quartet in 1948 and have been singing continually since then—even after the last original member retired in 1993. If you closed your eyes, you’d never know! The 2019 medalist quartets Throwback, Quorum, and Midtown delivered stellar performances as well as providing most of the voices for the best small chorus finale you’ll likely ever hear. Other special performers included 2019 Junior Quartet Champ Quintones, 2019 Sweet Adelines International Rising Star winners Duly Noted, 2019 Varsity Quartet Champ Wildfire, and 2018 Harmony Incorporated Harmony Queens Aged to Perfection.

Additionally, 2019 Seniors champ DoubleDouble and 2018 Seniors champ St. Croix Crossing appeared with the AISQC Chorus and with Wildfire and Signature on the Association of International Seniors Quartet Champions Show.

NEXT GENERATION JUNIOR CHORUS INVITATIONAL

Singing changes—and even saves—the lives of young singers

In Jacksonville, we saw 625 singers in 13 Junior Choruses as well as 15 Junior Quartets participate over the weekend. The experience of preparing for and performing in the Next Generation Junior Chorus Festival hooked hundreds of young singers and their directors on the joys of four-part harmony. Many directors reported the life-changing benefits of mingling with an older generation in Jacksonville. One director reported that the preparation for the event may have literally helped save one singer’s life.

“Just before we performed at Midwinter, I told one of my first-time choir students, ‘I’m glad you’re here.’ She broke down in tears and said, ‘I almost wasn’t!’ Her mother later told me that her daughter had hit an emotional low last summer and was suicidal by the start of the new school year. But as this student started to get more and more involved in choir while we prepped for Jacksonville, she realized that she had finally found her place. The emotional place Midwinter brought her was unique to her. “Two-thirds of my new choir students didn’t know whether they liked choir or not. After this trip, all of those students are eager to progress, and they hope we are invited to Midwinter next year.”

— Daniel Rohovit, Anna Coyotes (Anna, TX)

“Several of my students met older members and stayed up singing tags. It’s moments like this that make this convention so valuable for our students and the future of barbershop music.”

— Cody Duff, MLK Choirs, Bro Re Mi & Belle Voce (Nashville, TN)

“Singing in a restaurant with one of the senior quartets was our best moment! As a choral music educator of 32 years, I have tried many different programs to grow my choirs. Barbershop is still the most true reason why we sing! It is joy, plain and simple.”

— Kim Watters, Georgia Spirit (statewide)
Walking ALL the way through

2019 Quartet Quarterfinals In the Salt Lake Tabernacle: Paul Saca (T), Daniel Cochran (L), Dan Walz (Bs), Will Rodriguez (Br)
I was surprised but honored to fill in the following day, especially knowing that Gene had been close to some of “the boys” since their teens. (Nobody did youth outreach quite like “Geno.”) In fact, the Cokeroft kitchen had hosted Signature’s first gathering in October 2013. They were looking for affirmation that this quartet had enough of “the right stuff.” The Hall of Famer turned to his wife, Iris—a quartet champ and legend in her own right—and definitively proclaimed, “These walls haven’t heard chords like this in a long, long time!”

I wouldn’t let Gene down. “Honored to take them through the second round pattern,” I replied. Gene then became gravely serious and looked me square in the eye. “I may need you to walk them all the way through,” he corrected me. Only weeks later did I truly understand. Though he’d kept it quiet at the time, Gene spent the next two days in a Pittsburgh hospital before returning home to Florida—his cancer still a secret to nearly everyone. Three weeks later, an aneurism took his life.

His loss was huge to the barbershop world, and devastating to “the boys” and to me. The best honor we could give Gene was to finish what he started.

**Walking ALL the way through**

I ran into Gene Cokeroft on the streets of Pittsburgh on a warm Wednesday night in 2015, shortly after Signature quartet had been announced as a Semifinalist in its International debut. This 79-year-old iconic tenor of 1961 champ The Suntones had been coach, mentor, muse, and inspiration for these four young men from the beginning. We celebrated their successful Semifinals berth a bit, and then Gene’s face became solemn. “Gipp, I’m not feeling well,” he said hauntingly. “Need you to walk the boys through.”

George Gipp is a performance coach, judge, educator and champion competitor, working with groups worldwide to discover their identity and “BE.” His influence spans decades. ggipp@att.net

**GROWING UP TOGETHER**

Friendship is at Signature’s core. Paul Saca (T), Daniel Cochran (L), and Will Rodriguez (Br) have been friends for 20+ years. Paul and Will (and Will’s future wife Gisela) sang together in the choirs of South Miami High School under director Christine De La Rosa. Daniel attended Forest Hill High School further north in Palm Beach, where choir director Elizabeth Phillips and mentor Harold Bradley recognized and helped develop his one-in-a-million talent from an early age. All three were at the vanguard of South Florida’s vibrant youth barbershop scene, and Gene was front and center in outreach efforts.

Gene formed, directed, and took...
The importance of faith, family and friends

Paul Saca (T): My mother, Judy Saca, is my rock. She has been driving, flying and exhorting my quartet efforts since 2001. My wife, Jennifer, and children Aiden and Leah are my reasons for living. She has supported me through all the ups and downs of contest. I want to recognize my family for all they do and give.

Daniel Cochran (L): My Mother, Carol Boldin, is my best friend- she has always been there for me. Every show, every celebration, every let-down—she's been there to pick me up. My “perfect fan.” You can always hear her in the audience saying, “Sing, Baby ... SING!”

Will Rodriguez (Br): I am one of the truly blessed men to have found the love of my life in my high school years—mixed choir to be exact. My wife, Gisela Padron, is my soul. She makes me a better man. “Mi Madre,” Julie Muniz, taught me, although we came from nothing, what true work ethic accomplishes. Showing me how to love as if no one was watching—even when others do not reciprocate.

Dan Walz (Bs): My parents Pam and Steve Walz have supported me throughout my life, they taught me to work hard and truly appreciate what I have around me. I am grateful for what opportunities barbershop has given me and I am thankful that I get to share the art form with my girlfriend, Supriya Padki, and her family. We met while at Harmony University, and ever since have been traveling and making music together.

FORMING WILL’S DREAM TEAM

Will has always been the quartet’s catalyst; he had the idea to form a dream team quartet with Daniel as lead and himself as tenor. They had a great bari in Matt Clancy living only two hours away, but they reached all the way to South Carolina to find the incredible bass pipes of Dan Walz, who had recently sung with Will in NSC quartet 1/2 Ton Pickup.

From day one, Signature had a sound that could fill the Grand Canyon, but in all my decades of coaching I’ve never seen a quartet with a more unyielding work ethic to build upon that foundation. For example, early on Dan would drive thousands of miles for rehearsals. Once all four were in Florida, they committed to rehearse together every Wednesday and Sunday they did not have a show. Either Matt or the trio made the 244-mile roundtrip twice a week for years.

When it became clear in 2018 that Matt needed to bow out from the intense schedule (they remain great friends), the quartet turned to their old friend Paul Saca … a tenor. A voice part shake-up seemed worth it, because with Paul they wouldn’t lose a step in commitment, talent, or personal chemistry—and Paul even lived nearby in Miami. That last advantage was short-lived, after Daniel was blessed with singing commitments at Disney Orlando from October through December of 2018—now a 470-mile round trip from Miami. The quartet still did trios twice a week, adding Daniel whenever time permitted, and would FaceTime with coaches even if only as a trio. Ask me or Theo Hicks or Kohl Kitzmiller how consistent they were—they simply did not miss sessions.

Even outside of rehearsal, there may be no other quartet that puts as much time into finding the right songs and in revising arrangements until they are perfect. The quartet’s emphasis on detailed planning and high personal accountability was critical to success in
Salt Lake City, with Paul new at tenor and Will switching to baritone. Will is now the only champion to win silver on one voice part and then earn gold on another voice part one year later.

THE MOMENT EVERYTHING CHANGED ...
Signature in Pittsburgh had been only a small taste of the breakthrough we would see in 2016. In Nashville, Daniel opened Signature’s Quarterfinals round with a brilliant, soulful solo from a Sam Cooke anthem: “I was boooooorn by a river ...” drawing gasps and cheers. Those six words heralded a new quartet identity and a new chapter in barbershop history. Six songs later, the barbershop world was in love with one of our most talented and original leads ever, while Signature channelled powerful themes from ethnically and culturally diverse songwriters—songs that had never before graced our stages. “A Change Is Gonna Come” indeed!

That moment also marked the arrival of an inspiring new arranger: Patrick McAlexander—“P-Mac,” who penned both “A Change is Gonna Come” and “Somebody To Love”—and of Signature’s now trademark red suede shoes and jackets.

... AND A MOMENT THAT WON’T BE FORGOTTEN
Many who saw Signature’s performance of “Dance With My Father” the next year in Las Vegas called it “life-changing.” Now imagine what it was like to perform it.

Months earlier, the quartet had instinctively known that Daniel would wrap his heart and soul around the Grammy-winning song based on Luther Vandross’ own childhood. When Daniel embraces a musical mission, he goes all in, and a song soon becomes a quartet ministry. They chose Theo Hicks to arrange the song for them.

“I would send something their way, and they would respond quickly with other ideas, thoughts, and dreams for their vision ... we would go back and forth until we were all sure we had found the right choice,” Theo said. “With how versatile their voices are already, it was a broad palette to work with!”

Everywhere Signature performs,
Dan would need to hit a low B-natural once Daniel rejoined. Together, they had bared their souls and rejoiced.

A LEGEND “GONE TOO SOON”
Singing in Orlando in 2018 focused the quartet on developing a tribute to their friend and mentor, “Geno,” in the district he built. They chose the iconic Michael Jackson piece “Gone Too Soon,” again with Theo Hicks as arranger. The run-up to Orlando began an intensified musical mentorship with Tony De Rosa. They also chose another pre-Pittsburgh mentor, four-time gold medalist Joe Connelly, to help them bring this musical message to life. Joe’s genius added Gene’s iconic “Danny Boy” melodic refrain to the end of the tag. Because Signature sang as the tenth performer in the Finals, the last notes heard in the contest were “I love you so.” It simply doesn’t get any better.

THE WALK OF A CHAMPION
While their all-star coaching team had already positioned the quartet for its best performances ever, the quartet wanted to rise to yet another level in Salt Lake City, as well as finally show off its fun side. Enter the legendary maker of champions, Jean Barford. In daily on-site coaching sessions, Jean and her husband, Brian, tweaked, fine-tuned, and mentally prepared the quartet to own the stage and fully deliver in real-time. Jean’s contagious championship attitude exhorted the men to know they had

2018 FOCUSED SIGNATURE ON A TRIBUTE TO GENE COKEROFT. THEY WERE THE 10TH COMPETITOR IN THE FINALS, SO THE LAST NOTES HEARD IN THE 2018 CONTEST WERE “I LOVE YOU SO.”

The long coattails of Gene’s Young Miamians chorus
Gene Cokecroft helped form a Miami-based youth chorus, the Young Miamians, for the first Youth Chorus Festival in 2008. In 2010 it evolved into The HD Chorus, with Alex Rubin as director. More than 100 men sang with the under-30 chorus during its five-year history, including many from outside the Sunshine District. The extreme talent on tap made the chorus a hotbed for quartetting. Dozens of past members are well known today for their own youth outreach efforts, as chapter and district leaders, and for their musical and competitive accomplishments. Below is a partial sampling of past members.

International champions
Paul Saca, Daniel Cochran, Will Rodriguez, Dan Walz (2019 champion Signature); Drew Ochoa (2018 champion After Hours)

International medalists
Matt Clancy (2017, 2018 silver medalist Signature); Alex Rubin, Dan Rubin, Michael Skutt (2019 silver medalist Throwback); Christian Diaz, Nick Gordon (2019 bronze medalist Midtown)

Next Generation/Collegiate champs
Kevin Mendez (2019 champion Wildfire, 2014 champion The Academy); Chris Cordle (2018 champion Frontier); Peter Cunningham, Andrew Lujan, Michael Skutt (2014 champion The Academy); Nick Gordon, Gordie Howe, Drew Ochoa (2011 champion Prestige); Paul Saca, Matt Swann (2003 champion Heat)

Next Generation/Collegiate medalists Spanglish, Sunny Boys, Fortissimo (members include Eddie Mejia, Albert Rico, Amos Velez); uncounted International competitors, chorus directors, chapter and district leaders, Harmony University faculty, and professional music educators.

the men are asked to relay stories about their fathers. The reality is that unlike Vandross, the quartet sang this song for their mothers. (“I pray for her even more than me ...”) This and other themes came into focus during a session with Brandon Guyton (baritone for 2002 champion Four Voices and 2009 champion Crossroads), a Sunday afternoon in Fort Worth that the quartet and I considered almost a spiritual experience.

After the Vegas performance, I know at least four lives that were never the same. When Daniel broke down to tears in heartfelt weeping, Will consoled him while the bass clef stood in support knowing they would have to flawlessly recover.
“already won.” Anyone who saw the quartet throughout the week saw the difference: the walk of a champion.

P-Mac arranged Aretha Franklin’s “THINK / R-E-S-P-E-C-T” classic to open the contest, while Theo contributed epic ballads in each set. But the fun side would come via Kohl Kitzmiller, whose “Blame It On The Boogie” for the Semifinals and “Proud Mary” for the Finals were just what the doctor ordered. And maybe a doctor should have been ordered by Dan Walz, who broke a toe during the Semifinals and “Blames it On The Boogie.” He iced it, taped it, and performed “Proud Mary” in the Finals while most were none the wiser.

GENE NEVER REALLY WENT AWAY
The only thing that exceeds this quartet’s love of singing is love for their families (see sidebar), including their Sunshine District family. It is for this reason they always “go home” in preparation for major events. They willingly make the trip to South Florida to receive Iris’ input and stamp of approval on upcoming performances. They seek the counsel of their coaches and trusted advisors in the circle. This extended family provides unconditional love.

On that night in Pittsburgh, Gene thought he was permanently passing me the baton; but in a sense he never let go of it. Every time this quartet enters a stage with that quiet confidence of men exquisitely prepared to connect with an audience, I see Gene. Whenever I see them actively seek out opportunities to give younger singers their undivided time, attention, and encouragement, that’s when I really see Gene.

And finally, every time I see “the boys” huddle up and pray backstage before a performance and then chant, “1-2-3 Geno!” I know that they see Gene, too.
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The 50-year-old Jeffersonland Chorus of Charlottesville, VA, is a 20-man chorus that rehearses Monday nights. We are looking for an experienced director, and offer a modest compensation package and an engaged membership, eager to learn and to perform. Contact Tom Guterbock: TomG@Virginia.edu.

The North Georgia Barbershop Singers (Lake Lanier, GA) has 30 members and seeks a director to take us to the next level. This paid position includes reimbursement for expenses and training. Contact hitch30534@gmail.com.

The New Tradition Chorus (Northbrook, IL) is an acclaimed Chicago-area chorus seeking someone with strong choral directing experience and a track record of inspiring singers to reach for the best. A college degree or strong music training and the ability to arrange in the barbershop style is a plus. Contact music@newtradition.org.

Atlanta Vocal Project, the singing unit of the Atlanta Metro Chapter, is seeking a new Musical Director to lead us on to the next chapter of our journey. We seek an enthusiastic team player with a proven track record. This is a paid position. Please direct inquiries to directorsearch@atlantavocalproject.com.

We have an immediate opening for music director for our chapter, the Scarborough Dukes of Harmony. (dukesofharmony.com) A preferred candidate would be one with barbershop experience and perhaps other choral directing experience. Please contact Daniel Berlin ASAP if interested at 647-297-8905 or info@dukesofharmony.com.

The Nashua NH Chapter seeks a new musical director for its Granite Statesmen Chorus. Contact DirectorCandidate@granitestatesmen.org.

The Mohawk Valley (N.Y.) Chapter seeks that special talent to fill the shoes of our retiring director, Hall of Fame member Dr. Rob Hopkins. This includes a modest salary. Seeking candidates with choral director training, a vision for growth in music and attracting membership, while preserving our musical excellence. We rehearse in New Hartford, N.Y. on Wednesday evenings. Contact Brian Sagrestano at Christine-andbrian@yahoo.com or 315-292-2384.

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The music for this issue is titled “Shout it Loud” tag. In order to place all three versions on a single page, we had to remove the title, and the names of the composer and arrangers. The complete copy of each version is at barbershop.org/tags.

Further, Tom had a super idea. Since we, as singers, can’t get a foursome together yet, we are hopeful that there will be a multitrack video of these tags so you can sing along! That’s easier said than done these days—if it happens, look for BHS communication in your inbox or social media.

Because the trouble we are all presently facing requires isolation from relatives, friends, and our singing activities, we thought an appropriate tag should be written. I wrote three sets of lyrics, and ran them by two of my favorite critics: my wife, Kay, and Tom Gentry. They both agreed to the lyrics you see here. I set them to a melody, then Tom and I collaborated on the arrangement.

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