

The Harmonizer

BRINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY TO LIFE • SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020



80 YEARS OF CONVENTIONS

HOW ONE WEEK A YEAR AFFECTS THE TRAJECTORY OF BARBERSHOP



NOTEWORTHY

VIRTUAL HARMONY UNIVERSITY
ENJOYS HISTORIC SUMMER SEASON

SPOTLIGHT

WHY SKY HARRIS STARTED AN
INTERNATIONAL MEN'S CHORUS

TIP SHEET

WHAT DO WE DO IN
DOWNTIME? EMBRACE IT!

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Yuletide Favorites
Vol. I
Barbershop Harmony - Mixed voices

Yuletide Favorites
Vol. I
Barbershop Harmony - Women's voices (SSAA)

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and Up On The House-Top)
Coventry Carol
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
Hark! the Herald Angels Sing
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
It Came upon the Midnight Clear
Jingle Bells
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
O Christmas Tree
O Come, All Ye Faithful
O Holy Night!
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Silent Night
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On the cover: Conventions past and present, by Eddie Holt *main photo by Read Photography*

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The Harmonizer

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Lorin May

OUR VISION
Everyone in Harmony

OUR MISSION
To bring people together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

OUR PURPOSES
To perpetuate the old American institution: the barbershop quartet and barbershop harmony
To promote appreciation of barbershop harmony

To initiate and maintain a broad program of musical education, contests, and appreciation in support of barbershop harmony and the allied arts

To establish and maintain foundations that support our vision

To initiate, promote and participate in charitable projects that support our vision

The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (DBA Barbershop Harmony Society) is a non-profit organization operating in the United States and Canada.

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STARTING PITCH

A conversation with our President and CEO

Survival assumed—aim for serving the world during a crisis

Maybe the pandemic is the distilling moment that reveals our true purpose.



BRIAN: To use Marty’s favorite metaphor, how do we keep the fly-wheel spinning during a pandemic? How do we accept and understand that things are not going to be the same as they were in February before this all hit?

DICK: I don’t see the situation we’re in as doom and gloom. I see it as an incredible testament to the spirit of Barbershoppers, to the “can-do!” attitude they bring to every challenge, to the wondrous things we’ve learned how to do in the last six months that have slingshot us into the future. We see online courses

in abundance, online coaching for chapters, visits of Society Board and district officials to chapters.

Despite the fears and disruption brought by the coronavirus, our communities are healthier and able to cope with the pandemic much better because of barbershop. I think that’s profound, I really do.

MARTY: Our second quarter member survey shows it: more than 80% agree/strongly agree that “when people facing significant challenges SING together, it helps them with those challenges.” So the many chapters (about 60%) that are hold-

ing some kind of online meeting are getting that benefit.

We still have lots of work to do to help the other 40% of chapters who are not meeting regularly. It’s my hope that the chapters having some success online will reach out to those that have not yet tried. Invite them to your meetings, teach them how

“IT IS THROUGH OUR SERVICE TO OTHERS THAT WE FULFILL OUR OWN DESTINY AND RISE ABOVE THE DAILY TRIALS TO BECOME WHO WE WERE MEANT TO BE. DON’T HOLD ONTO THAT NOURISHING STUFF AND KEEP IT TO YOURSELF!”



Get in Touch

Dick Powell, Society President leadsingerdpowell@gmail.com

Marty Monson, CEO/Executive Director CEO@barbershop.org

to use the technology, have featured guest speakers and coaches that all can enjoy. We're already seeing well-resourced chapters offering open rehearsals. We're seeing two or more chapters combining on interchapter Zoom calls. It feels a bit like getting on the bus and going to a cookie festival or interchapter quartet night, like we used to do in the '70s and '80s.

DICK: How do we encourage more of that versus just always thinking about ourselves? It is through our service to others that we fulfill our own destiny and rise above the daily trials to become who we were meant to be. Don't

“THIS DISTILLING MOMENT OF THE PANDEMIC BRINGS US TO THE CORE: WHAT ARE THE ABSOLUTELY IMMUTABLE, UNCHANGING QUALITIES OF OUR BARBERSHOP EXPERIENCE?”

hold onto that nourishing stuff and keep it to yourself—enrich yourself and the world around you!

MARTY: I think it gives our barber-



Society Board

Transition planning with President-elect John Donehower, EVP-elect Steve Denino

Marty's virtual meetings

Aug 10, Downeasters Chorus
 Aug 20, Acaville Radio Interview
 Aug 22&29, Legacy Quartet Championship
 Aug 23, EVG District Board
 Aug 24, Gulf Coast Harmonizers
 Sept 3, BABS interview

Dick's virtual meetings

Aug 6, Central Florida Chapter
 Aug 6 MAD Board
 Full Circle virtual choir production of "Dream Lover"
 Patapsco Valley BHS virtual rehearsal (every other Tuesday)
 Aug 19, Virtual Mixed Barbershop Harmony Showcase

Dick is learning

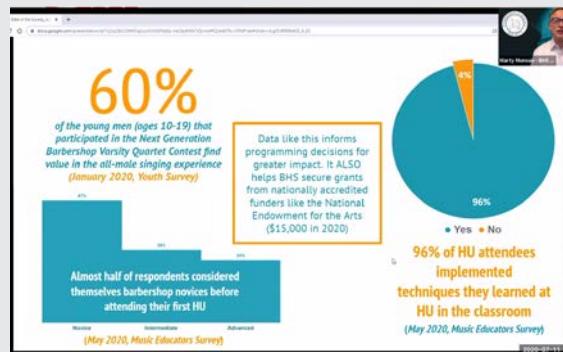
"Yesterday" (mixed),
 "Hallelujah" (mixed),
 "Sweet Caroline" (mixed)

Marty is reading:

Dying to Lead,
 Dr. Robert Mckenna

Watch the full State of the Society address

In an address livestreamed as part of the annual meeting of the Society Board of Directors, CEO Marty Monson reflected on the challenges of thriving during a pandemic. Watch the full video online, as Marty speaks frankly about controversy, hope, hard choices, and great new ideas. Some (excerpted) highlights follow.



CHANGES: "The changes we've experienced over the last three years pale in comparison to what we've experienced over the last four months as an organization. As a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society, you have experienced a lot of change in the last several years."

TRUST: "To thrive during periods of change, there must exist a trust between the organization and its members that the decisions being made are with integrity and, ultimately, in the best interest of our collective future. I recognize the trust you have provided in us has been challenged since the launch of our Strategic Plan and our new vision of Everyone in Harmony, especially the recent frank and honest questions, deep concerns, and passionate dialogue that have been expressed in public forums, phone calls, meetings between leaders, and emails to me personally around our decision to fund-raise directly, which has also led to some sobering realizations regarding the overall change management of the Strategic Plan's implementation."

APOLOGIES: "True leadership is built on honesty and humility, and though it is hard at times to do, we would like to take this opportunity to humble ourselves, apologize, and ask for your forgiveness."

INCLUSION: "Looking at the heartache that our communities are experiencing today, I can say... I am so glad that our Society chose to become more inclusive years ago. We may not have rolled out the vision perfectly, but being more inclusive is always the right thing to do."
barbershop.org/state-of-society-july-2020



“DESPITE THE FEARS AND DISRUPTION BROUGHT BY THE CORONAVIRUS, OUR COMMUNITIES ARE HEALTHIER AND ABLE TO COPE WITH THE PANDEMIC MUCH BETTER BECAUSE OF BARBERSHOP.”

shop community energy to go help their own local backyard community. Why don't we invite the local community choirs or church choirs that aren't getting together right now and do a virtual choir with them? Talk about unification! Our barbershop community can be a solution for their local circles of need. Once you've figured out how to feed yourself, go out and feed others.

DICK: Marty, this sounds like trying to fulfill the entire Maslow Hierarchy of Needs. First, we've been focusing on survival—our personal survival of not being sick, but also our barbershop survival. What you're saying is, now we can drive it up that pyramid of needs toward self-actualization, creativity, reaching human potential—through service!

MARTY: I wonder if people are going to read this column and think, “Sure, sure, optimism and hope, but you're not connected, you're not seeing reality.” But really, our strategic plan suggests that we have a greater duty that goes beyond our present membership and brings our value to a broader world.

DICK: So, this distilling moment of the pandemic brings us to the core: what are the absolutely immutable, unchanging qualities of our barbershop experience?

MARTY: It's not just the harmony singing. It's the harmony making in terms of fellowship that keeps people around, that gives hope and gives a journey of support. During this pandemic, it's needed more than ever. ■



Reader Feedback

Let us know what's on your mind: Harmonizer@barbershop.org

The Reen Family's story



I always enjoy my Harmonizer, but just like other publications issued on a recurring basis, some issues are just “better” than others. Take, for instance, your July/August issue. I had never heard of the Reen Family, or heard them sing. But what a great story well told. And what a hugely memorable impact!

PW “Bill” Miller

Columbus, Ohio



Super article on the Reens! Lots of moving pieces and a moving piece on a well-known family. It was worth a cover.

Jim Bagby

Kansas City, Mo.



Legacy Quartet Contest



The **139th Street Quartet** had four leads, all earning medals. To only list Larry as the lead is not fully encompassing the longevity of the group from 1976-1996 in competition. It would be unfair to not recognize all. Likewise, the **Easternaires** had multiple members, as did the **Playtonics** and **Bank Street** and **The Roaring 20's**, etc.

Dan Jordan

139th Street lead 1991-2010

To clarify: The committee selected each group's highest contest placement and/or score, then listed the lineup for that year. Contest videos will be primarily drawn from that year. A story about the “champs” and/or “medalists” will appear in a future issue. Members of those groups that were not from the year listed in the July/August issue may be listed in that article.



Speaking of which, the wrong lineup for the Easternaires was shown in the July/August 2020 issue. The honored Easternaires lineup from 1970 is Dave Mittlestadt (Br), Bob Bohn (Bs), Danny Heyburn (L), and Eddy Ryan (T). ■



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Barbershop resources for the classroom!

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Educators: check out our *What makes it Barbershop?* video series playlist on YouTube, hosted by education team members Donny Rose and Steve Scott! youtube.com/BarbershopHarmony38

Explore all our music educator resources at

barbershop.org/educators



There are more ways than ever to engage with the **Barbershop Harmony Society!**



Chapters with **multiple** choruses!



High school and college groups!

Local clubs!

Want to learn about the new ways to engage with the Barbershop Harmony Society?

Email community@barbershop.org



● ONLINE EDUCATION

Hundreds learn virtually during historic Harmony University

There may have been no singing in the stairwells or late-night ice cream, but we just learned how fun and effective online Harmony University instruction can be!

This year, we celebrated 50 years of Harmony University, but although we could not gather in person, hundreds enjoyed the live HU experience online for the first time ever. Led by the same world-class faculty as previous years, Virtual HU (VHU) offered hours of programming every day for four weeks in July. Attendees mixed and matched class types in both full registrations and à la carte packages.

There were 85 faculty members representing seven world-wide barbershop organizations teaching some portion of VHU, including six core seminars: Arrangers, Directors, Leadership, Music Educators, Performance, and Mechanics of Artistic Singing, plus an additional 80+ elective courses.

Overall, VHU produced 323 different sessions resulting in 378 hours of content, with the hundreds of registered attendees engaging in live content in more than 13,117 points of



Andrew Rembecki (left) taught “Ear Training Apps” from his home in Germany, while four-time champ Tony De Rosa (above) taught “Artistic Singing.”

engagement. There were 2,384 hours of recorded content produced in July; there were 100,805 page visits to education.barbershop.org in July.

The Everyone in Harmony Virtual Choir experience with Deke Sharon moved from LA2020 to VHU and swelled to 351 participants; section leaders were 2018 International Champion **After Hours** and women’s quartets **GQ** (2019 SAI bronze medal-

ist) and **Hot Pursuit** (2019 Harmony, Inc. Harmony Queens), all of which are registered BHS quartets. After rehearsing virtually with Deke Sharon, Virtual Choir members submitted video and audio recordings for both songs, which are being combined into online video performances.

More details about Virtual Harmony University will appear in the November/December issue.

KEVIN KELLER, ALAN LAMSON INDUCTED INTO BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY HALL OF FAME

Congratulations to the two new members of the BHS Hall of Fame. Both will be appropriately honored online this fall.



KEVIN KELLER. A Society member since 1978, Kevin lives in St. Louis, Mo. and is in high demand as a coach and arranger (more

than 250 songs so far), educator, and as a highly innovative chairman of Contest and Judging. He has won gold medals with the **Vocal Majority** and the **Ambassadors of Harmony**, and placed as high as 6th on the International quartet stage with **Cheers**.

ALAN LAMSON. Since 1981, Alan has had a strong impact in a wide variety of leadership roles at the chapter, district, and Society levels. A past NED President, he was also NED



Barbershopper of the Decade for the 1990s. A professional architect, he identified the new BHS headquarters location and made major contributions to its design. He served as Society President in 2011-12, serving for a time as interim CEO, and led the search for the new CEO.

Nominate for the NAFME/BHS Music Educator of the Year award

With the National Association for Music Education (NAFME), the Society annually honors an exemplary music educator who inspires students through the power of music. Nominate educators by November 1. Link at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

Largest-ever Virtual Choir

A lot of Barbershoppers added their voices to the record 17,572 from 129 countries who made up the largest virtual choir ever assembled. Link to the performance of Grammy-winning composer Eric Whitacre's "Sing Gently" at barbershop.org/harmonizer.



Barbershoppers voice song in animated movie *Animal Crackers*

Three Nashville Barbershoppers now share a screen credit with Ian McKellen, Sylvester Stallone, Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, and Danny DeVito. Eddie Holt, James Pennington, and Donny Rose, plus *VeggieTales* composer and past HU Keynote speaker Kurt Heinecke, provided four-party harmony for *Animal Crackers*, a big-budget animated movie recently released on Netflix because of the pandemic. It's a blink-and-you'll-miss-it quartet moment at the 1:03:57 time remaining mark. Fun Fact: Recorded on April 11, 2017 (Barbershop Quartet Day)!

2019 Annual Report also online

The report included in this issue is available online with additional information. Go to barbershop.org/2019.

THE ROARING 20'S QUARTET



Sticking their necks out for an old friend

Members of **The Roaring 20's** quartet hadn't been singing in person due to COVID restrictions, but when they learned that former lead Gerry Kelly could pass away any day, they assessed the risks and donned their masks in Gerry's bedroom on July 15. Despite barely being able to talk, Gerry mouthed the words during much of the 45-minute performance—a lot of songs to choose from, considering he started singing with the quartet in 1969 and earned seven international medals with them from 1976 to 1983. The singing and tearful goodbyes were none too soon, as the quartet received word the following day that Gerry had passed away at age 83.

"I think it did us a lot of good for Gerry," said bari Mike Connelly, "and it did a lot good for us to be ringing chords after four months." Above: Mike Connelly (Br), Ned Comisar (Bs), Tom Rouse (L), Bob Moorehead (T).



CHANGING LIVES

FRESH TAKE QUARTET A DEAD "RINGER" FOR FOUR FRESHMEN

After **The Quarter Tones** of Pennsylvania competed in the Junior Quartet Contest at Midwinter in January, they were in awe of guests the **Four Freshmen** and saw a bit of themselves. The original 1940s Four Freshmen started out as a barbershop quartet before combining their vocal and instrumental skills to become a famous jazz foursome. After a one-member change, these recent high school graduates (they are literally four freshmen!) are now **Fresh Take Quartet**. The high quality of their Freshmen covers—only a few weeks after forming—suggests they should keep this up and see where it goes. They're already making a splash locally and online. Watch and follow them at facebook.com/FreshTakeQuartet.



NOTEWORTHY

The latest in the world of Barbershop.

● THE PODCAST (NOT THE FACEBOOK GROUP)

Let's Talk Barbershop

Host Nicholas DiLorenzo says it was always intended to be kind of like the International livestream banter, but at your leisure

Why a barbershop podcast? We love all the talk during the contest Livestream. We wanted a show like that available year round. It started in April 2019 to lead up to International in Salt Lake. It is now a regular program with 30+ episodes!

What is an episode like? Most are about an hour long. Among other things, hear about new quartet formations, previews of new albums, interviews with champs and other well-known Barbershoppers, current events, scores, and more.



Are champions humans too? They pay the same price for gas as we do, they do laundry (sometimes during the interview), they work normal jobs, and fangirl or fanboy over the same quartets as we do. We've talked about things like when a quartet loses its rental car keys, thinks they finished fifth then won the whole thing, or what barbershop is like in Australia.

Who produces the show? Nicholas DiLorenzo from his studio in Raeford, N.C., with Rob Roman, Ann McAlexander, and Patrick McAlexander.

How is it done? Most are via Skype or phone call. Guests call in, it gets recorded, edited, we add some production elements, and then we publish it. If you're subscribed, it comes straight to your phone or computer.

How do I get it? iPhone, iPad, Mac: Open iTunes and search "Let's Talk Barbershop," tap the subscribe button, hit play! On your computer, do the same at speakr.com. It is also available via Facebook, iHeart Radio, Spotify, and Soundcloud.

Member Center is upgrading
Member Center is getting an upgrade! BHS staff and a team of volunteers are working with partners Cloud for Good and Salesforce Community Cloud to improve the functionality and user experience of Member Center. Watch for more information as we get closer to our target Fall launch!



Yonge Guns collaborates on movie tune with '70s pop star

Yonge Guns quartet worked with Elliot Lurie, lead singer of Looking Glass and songwriter of the 1972 soft rock hit "Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)," used in the opening scenes of Marvel Studio's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*. Link to the video at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

COVID-19 resources for members

Go to the COVID-19 Resources for Barbershoppers web page for up-to-date singing safety research, virtual activity recommendations (see the "How to Use Zoom" tutorial), BHS leaders resources, and Society events and announcements. Go to barbershop.org/virtualresources.



Canada knows what's cool
Seen on a billboard near the Toronto Pearson International Airport

● ASK A CUSTOMER SERVICE REP

Reaching 50 years



HOW DO I QUALIFY TO BECOME A HARMONY FELLOW?

Those barbershoppers who have been members of the Barbershop Harmony Society for 50 years are welcomed into the status of Harmony Fellow. In recognition of this loyalty and years of service, Society level dues are no longer assessed and many districts and chapters also waive their dues. This year, these folks are being recognized in a virtual way at the Society's first ever Gala Awards.

– Allison Barrett,
customerservice@barbershop.org



What's Happening

Barbershop Songwriter Series Published September 2020

Arrangements and learning tracks available for purchase at shop.barbershop.org



- ◀ 2021 International Cleveland
- 2022 International Charlotte
- 2023 International Louisville

Harmony, Inc. Convention November 4-8, 2020 Online

AIC Show December 18, 2020 www.aicgold.com



◀ Harmony University Belmont U, Nashville

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- 2022 Midwinter Pasadena ▲
- 2023 Midwinter Daytona Beach
- 2024 Midwinter New York

● CHAMPS BEING CHAMPS

10K streams for July's AIC Show

Association of International Champions' July 3 production so successful that they'll be doing a 90-minute one in December

From a hotel ballroom in Nashville, the AIC put on a live show during what would have been our International Convention week in Los Angeles. While there was no audience onsite, more than 10,000 screens connected to 12 live and recorded quartets, as well as a 102-voice virtual choir. Mike Rowe made a virtual cameo appearance, while Debbie Cleveland hosted live onsite.

"With the absence of singing, we knew we needed to put on a show," said Tim Broersma, tenor of 2005 champion **Realtime**. Quartets that did not wish to perform live offered prerecorded video performances. Live quartets were tested before arrival, then quarantined from other quartets. Live performances took place on two separate stages that were disinfected between quartets, and all crew remained masked and distanced.



The show was free to all, with considerable production and travel costs covered by Harmony Foundation International. Quartets on the show were (in order) **After Hours** (2018), **Vocal Spectrum** (2006), **Masterpiece** (2013), **OC Times** (2008), **Interstate Rivals** (1987), **Crossroads** (2009), **Instant Classic** (2015), **Ringmasters** (2012), **Forefront** (2016), **Main Street** (2017), **Storm Front** (2010) and **Signature** (2019). The production company owned by Chad and Brandon Guyton (**Four Voices**, 2002 champion) produced the show, and will produce a 90-minute show planned for December. ■



WATCH ONLINE While the live show will not be rebroadcast, the AIC is gradually re-releasing songs online. Go to YouTube.com and search for "Association of International Champions."

YOUR GIFT CREATES A WORLD OF HARMONY!

Which area of our work resonates the most with you?



TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

For young people searching for a sense of belonging and self, barbershop singing is a pathway to acceptance, recognition, safety, and artistic expression.

We energize young people of every background with amazing events, scholarships, music, and performances that help them in the here-and-now, while kindling a lifelong love of singing.

PRESERVE BARBERSHOP MUSIC ANOTHER EIGHT DECADES—AND BEYOND

Our barbershop predecessors had a vision of preserving the great American art form and pastime of singing together, but 16 million YouTube views? Today, we bring barbershop to the whole world via publishing, recordings, and contests, with more ways to find, hear, and sing barbershop than ever before. We leverage our vast historic archives to preserve the past — while creating the future! — for every generation of singers.

LEARN MORE AT
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LEARN MORE AT
GIVE.BARBERSHOP.ORG/PRESERVE



SUPPORT THE ENTIRE MISSION

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. We hold major national and international events, publish thousands of barbershop arrangements and learning tracks, produce educational programs and events live and online, produce or fund major youth festivals across the country, produce content on many different social media platforms, and collaborate with peer organizations in the choral world.

Barbershoppers have a passion for their craft and the lasting bonds of friendship it builds. Working together, we can build a future where more people can make harmony together in more ways.

We'll point your gift in that direction!



FORGE CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

The benefits of singing – emotional, physical, intellectual – are magnified when people sing together. Barbershop singing builds unity and cohesion across differences in age, race, gender, orientation, identity, economics, abilities, and beliefs. We build and strengthen nearly 3,300 barbershop communities, from our original all-male groups to the diverse communities that have flourished since we welcomed all people as members in 2018.

**LEARN MORE AT
[GIVE.BARBERSHOP.ORG/COMMUNITY](https://give.barbershop.org/community)**

- Focus your gift more precisely on specific programs that resonate with you – or choose to support our overall work and vision.
- Direct a portion of your gift – up to 85% in total – to your local chapter or district

SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATORS

Great music educators create a ripple effect across hundreds of young people by hooking them on harmony. Singing improves overall school participation and attendance, critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving, but school music programs face huge budget pressures. We support the success of music educators through scholarships, destination events, free music and curricula.

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- Easily set up an employer match
- Make a tribute gift or a memorial on behalf of someone who has passed

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development@barbershop.org (800) 876-SING



TIP SHEET

Nate Ogg, BHS Chapter Success Manager

✉ nogg@barbershop.org

What do we do with downtime? We embrace it!

Months into a frustrating online purgatory, the time has come to view our forced downtime as a “sabbatical”—a break from the routine that gives us the time and means to rejuvenate our groups

In music, there’s a notation known as a caesura, a metrical pause or break in a verse where one phrase ends and another phrase begins. In barbershop music, it can be expressed by a comma or two lines, either slashed (/ /) or upright (||) and often referred to as “railroad tracks.” In time value, this break may vary between the slightest perception of silence all the way up to a full pause. When we, as performers, see this notated, the duration of the pause is entirely up to the conductor or individual performers. While this pause can help build tension and suspense, it can also give the listener (and the performer) a well-needed rest and reprieve from a busy or challenging piece.

This spring, all 781 of our BHS choruses, from the casual, social chorus to the gold medal chorus, were plunged into new territory, not knowing immediately how to keep their singers engaged and not knowing the duration. Suddenly, out the window went all plans for social events, local concerts, new music, conventions, and world travel. While the emotional toll on many of us is lasting, the impression on our organizations could be indefinite if not used proactively.

BHS staff have been busy visiting hundreds of chapters’ virtual rehearsals to provide organizational guidance and musical enrichment. Even though some are excelling at providing content and keeping engaged, it’s clear that to one degree or another,



most of us have not settled into knowing what to do with extended caesuras or downtime.

THE PURPOSE OF A “SABBATICAL”

Among university professors and in some professions, it can be common or even encouraged for those with seniority to take off up to a yearlong sabbatical from work. The idea is to prevent burnout or stagnation by allowing time to attain professional goals, develop additional skills, write a book, or simply take some well-needed rest from a relentlessly stressful career. What some

When The Alliance (Greater Central Ohio Chapter) went through a change in directors, the chorus took a year off competition and attended Harmony University as an ensemble in 2019.

call “creative disruption” can have meaningful benefits both for the leader and the organization itself.

In their 2009 study on “Sabbaticals for Capacity Building & Leadership Development in the Nonprofit Sector,” Deborah S. Linnell and Tim Wolfred state: *“The stresses and demands of leadership make intellectual, emotional, creative, and even physical burnout all too common among nonprofit leaders. A ‘time away’ from the daily grind of high-pressure work routines can rejuvenate body, mind, and spirit. It can also bring a leader to new perceptions and re-framings that ultimately create greater leadership capacity in his or her organization.”*

What sabbaticals can do for an indi-

WHAT SOME CALL “CREATIVE DISRUPTION” CAN HAVE MEANINGFUL BENEFITS FOR BOTH THE LEADER AND THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF.

DURING A REST, GAIN ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL CLARITY ON HOW TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF YOU CAN BE.

vidual, they can do exponentially for an organization as a whole.

Although uncommon, an “organizational sabbatical” can happen even without pandemics and other “acts of God.” From 1935 to 1987, the storied Handel Choir of Baltimore was known for its unbroken annual tradition of performing Handel’s “Messiah.” Then they took an unprecedented 10 months off to reevaluate their bylaws, merge/reorganize their board structure (to include members of the singing chorus) and launch aggressive educational outreach programs.

The leadership took a proactive approach to address some issues they’d been hearing about among the singers and patrons regarding a lack of connection to their changing community. They made the best of the time, and the shifts they made would have been impossible while trying to maintain

After months of online meetings, Great Northern Union took a few weeks off to help send members to Virtual Harmony University. “This also gave the music team time to fill their well and focus on long-term items of musical strategy,” said GNU Director Mo Field.



operational “business as usual.”

UTILIZING YOUR FORCED SABBATICAL

A break like this—either by choice or by necessity—can be disruptive to an organization, but often sparks creativity and establishes new perspectives regarding a group’s work, organization, and leadership style. The disruption may also show leaders that they need to take on, delegate, or outsource additional responsibilities—sometimes permanently—and allow board members to examine their own roles from a new, productive perspective.

Such was the case for the **Concord, Mass. Chapter (Vocal Revolution)** and **Greater Central Ohio Chapter (Alliance Chorus)**. Both followed up director turnover with a year off of contest, followed by taking the entire chorus to Harmony University for leadership and musical development.

In a recent example, the **Hilltop, Minn. Chapter (Great Northern Union)**, took advantage of the time, now in abundance, to invest in their members. After five months of virtual rehearsals, an online music theory and education program, and an aggressive online coaching schedule, they saw the opportunity to dig deeper when it was announced that Harmony University was going virtual this past July. Instead of continuing to bring in only a couple of coaches, they thought “Why not go where all the coaches are and let everyone enjoy their own path to becoming a musician for the month?” The chapter invested in their members’ development by underwriting half of the cost for their members to attend the hundreds of available sessions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

Now is the time to create a new foundational base, refine and realign mission and vision statements, raise local funds, apply for grants, or make any necessary personnel changes. Build an education

plan for members (or your community as an outreach project), build a leader succession plan, and ensure that leaders’ heirs apparent are trained/mentored effectively. Reach out and connect virtually with past members.

Most important, don’t be afraid to rest and invest back in yourselves. Enrichment for yourself and your members might benefit the organization in the long run, but it has a value all to itself. In that “rest,” you can find personal and organizational clarity on how to be the best version of yourself you can be. ■

BY THE NUMBERS

Here’s more about the quoted Linnell and Wolfred study that analyzed the sabbaticals and business models of 120 organizational leaders. The responses demonstrate that as a result of the planning and learning surrounding this kind of “break,” the organizations underwent significant post-sabbatical changes. The leaders reported:

85% Shared a greater amount of decision-making with other leaders

84% Were more comfortable delegating major responsibilities

83% Felt that employees/volunteers had become more skilled

69% Restructured the management team

64% Restructured their job and delegated some of their duties to others

60% Reported that their board of directors became more effective



SPOTLIGHT

David Lunden, President of Liverpool, N.Y. Chapter
✉ dlunden@nscsd.org

Flying high with Sky Harris

Before she could become a Society member herself, the former “barbershop brat” had already founded an internationally competitive BHS men’s chorus. Sky Harris discusses what she’s learned as a music educator and in her experience within both men’s and women’s barbershop.

I watched Sky Harris introduce my kids to barbershop as their choral director, and then my kids brought me back to barbershop after 35 years. The passion and persistence of Sky, now my chorus director in **Harmonic Collective (SLD)**, gave me the gift of singing with my son on chapter shows and on the International Chorus stage. I sat down with Sky to let her share a little of her past, present, and perspective with everyone.

WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS YOU’VE TAKEN AWAY FROM GROWING UP AS A “BARBERSHOP BRAT”?

Staying to watch every quartet in the Quarterfinals with my dad taught me that every voice has value. Volunteering at his chapter shows, I learned you don’t have to win a medal to make a difference—you just have to care about people. At afterglows, I learned it’s okay to make a mistake—just ask the group to sing the line again and keep trying. Singing tags with the guys in my dad’s chorus taught me that reaching out and including people in your circle can change lives. When Dad pulled my brother and me up on stage to sing “Keep the Whole World Singing” at every chapter show, I learned your “hobby” can become a calling if you believe in its power to make the world a better place.



WHAT DO YOU WISH YOUR BARBERSHOP AND MUSIC EDUCATION COMMUNITIES KNEW ABOUT EACH OTHER?

I want music educators to learn from the inclusive, accessible family experience that barbershop can be and embrace it for all its musical, vocal, and social value. I want Barbershoppers to take the time to embrace all the music-making going on in schools already, with no strings attached. Sometimes barbershop *music* isn’t necessarily the answer, but the barbershop *community* can always be.

WHY START A MEN’S CHORUS?

In all my time growing up around the men’s barbershop world, my dad always treated me like just another Barbershopper, and so everyone else did, too. When I started teaching, my brother and I took kids to barbershop camps. He’s always my partner in crime. When the girls got bitten by “the bug,” I could bring them to **Spirit of Syracuse** (Sweet Adelines). But my guys didn’t have an equitable opportunity, so we created one with the help of

Harmonic Collective started in 2016 as a youth chorus composed mostly of Sky’s students and alumni from Liverpool, N.Y. In 2017, the group became a BHS chapter open to all ages and won the Seneca Land District Chorus Contest. The chorus competed in the International Chorus Contest in 2018 and 2019. From the beginning, Sky has been the central figure in the formation and musical direction of the chorus.

the women in SOS. They chaperoned the youth chorus to the Youth Chorus Festival at Midwinter, threw us a party when we got our BHS charter, invited us to be on shows, and we’re still learning from and cheering for each other today. As an educator, I know the treble/bass choral experience can be invaluable on so many levels, just like mixed experiences. I’m grateful to so many that my kids have access to both.

OUT OF HUNDREDS OF PERFORMANCES AS A SINGER OR DIRECTOR, WHAT IS YOUR BEST MOMENT ON STAGE—OR WORST?

Being on stage at International with my brother and father had been a dream since my first International



WATCH ONLINE See Sky Harris direct Harmonic Collective at Midwinter and International Contests 2016-19 at youtube.com/BarbershopHarmony38.

contest in 1998. The first time, my butterflies were fully deployed. But when I turned back to my guys, I wasn't afraid anymore—just in awe of their greatness.

The most awkward things have happened after performances. After my Sweet Adeline quartet's second contest ever, we had a great hit, won most improved, and then we got our scoresheet. It included a comment about how unflattering our outfits were. Very deflating. Another was after directing Harmonic Collective in a BHS contest. A gentleman told me, "Those guys are amazing! How are you not married yet?" I laughed and tried to change the subject. His response? "I could be the one!" I know he meant it as a compliment, but it felt like being reduced to a commodity instead of the powerhouse I had felt like moments before. Words matter.



WITH YOUR EXPERIENCES, WHAT PERSPECTIVE DO YOU MOST WANT BARBERSHOPPERS TO HEAR AND KNOW?

Last summer, I was the only female director to cross the contest stage. There were five of us in Orlando. My fear is for my guys to be judged by one trait that I cannot and would not change. I'm humbled and proud to be one of the few women in the Society currently directing at that level, and I'm grateful my guys value me both as a Barbershopper and a woman. Intersectionality and understanding the value in all our pieces matters. Making music together has the potential to make us all better humans—that's why I became a music teacher. Use your platform, your passion, and your privilege to amplify others and make the world a better place. I'm grateful I have the chance to still learn how to do that every day from my family and from my singers of all ages.

IF YOU COULD JOIN BOTH A GOLD MEDAL QUARTET AND A COMEDY QUARTET, WHICH QUARTETS AND WHY?

I love so many quartets—**The Gas House Gang**, **Vocal Spectrum**, **GQ**, and all the youth quartets I've ever gotten to love, but in both cases I'd choose **Storm Front** (2010 champion). I love their mission with young people, and that they can make you laugh and cry in the same set. Having had the honor to learn from them in person, I feel their quartet culture is one I could always buy into—help each other, work hard for each other, and do something out there that makes people think and feel. I sing tenor, so that would mean kicking out Jeff Selano ... sorry! ■

Left, top two photos: With her father and brother at a 2011 Carolinas District Convention, competing with her mother in New Orleans with Spirit of Syracuse. Bottom two photos, both at Lakeside A cappella Camp: serving as Camp Director, singing tenor with Revolution quartet.

ABOUT SKY HARRIS

BHS member since 2018 (Associate 2015-18), 17 Persons of Note

CHORUS DIRECTOR

- **Harmonic Collective** (Founding Director, 2016-Present)
- **Spirit of Syracuse** Sweet Adelines, International (Associate Director, 2010-Present)
- **Scarlet YWIH Chorus** (Founding Director, 2017-Present)
- **Liverpool High School Concert Chorale** (2014-Present)
- **Chestnut Hill Middle School Chorus** (2008-Present)

QUARTET TENOR

- **Revolution Quartet** Sweet Adelines, International (2010-Present)
- **Sky and the Guys** Mixed Quartet (2020-Present)

YOUTH ADVOCATE

- **Lakeside A cappella Camp** (Founding Director, 2014-Present)
- **SAYacaFEST** (Founding Director, 2015-Present)
- **SAI Region 15 YWIH Co-Coordinator** (2015-Present)

FAMILY

- Sagan (brother), Mary (mother), Richard (father)
- "All my 'kids' at school"

EDUCATION

- B.M. and M.M. in Music Education, Syracuse University

OCCUPATION

Music Educator, Liverpool Central School District (N.Y.)

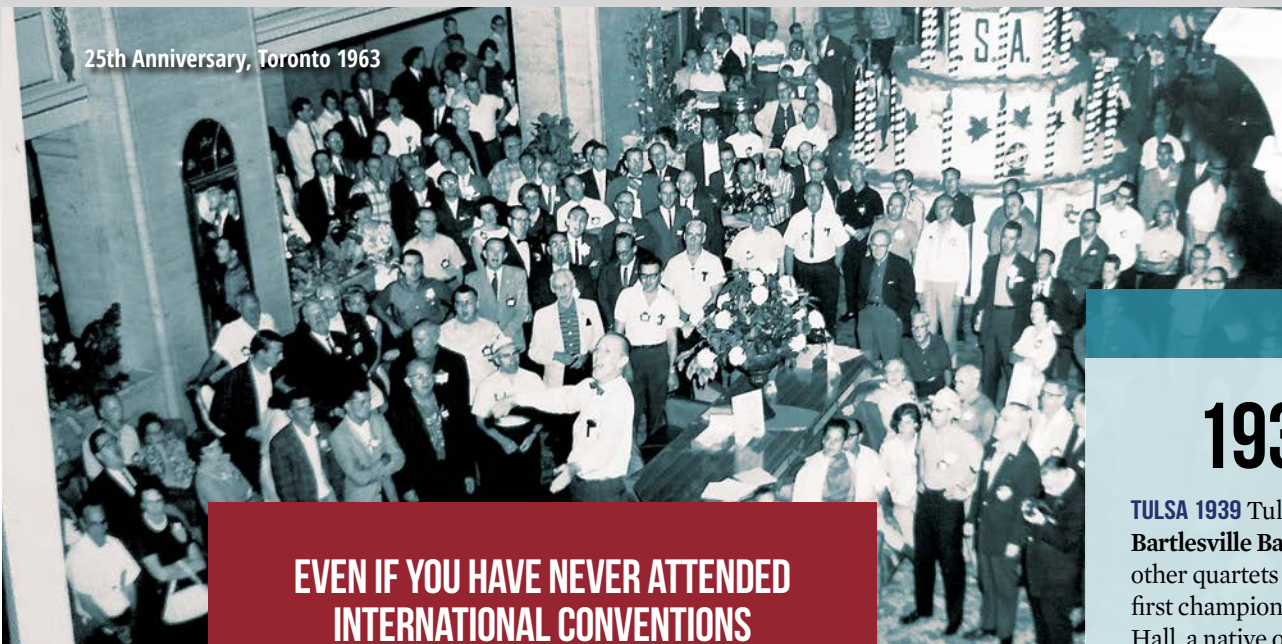
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

A PARTIAL LOOK AT 80 YEARS OF IMPACT

By Lorin May, editor of *The Harmonizer*. With contributions by Kevin Keller (KK), David Wright (DW), Jim Bagby (JB), Brian Lynch (BL), Terry Reynolds (TR), Eddie Holt (EH), Rob Hopkins, Ken Buckner, John Schneider, Dusty Schleier, Henrik Rosenberg, Anthony Scardillo, Doug Miller, Bill Biffle, Chad Bennett, and Tim Brooks. With thanks also to the late BHS historians Grady Kerr and Val Hicks.

St. Louis 1941, O.C. Cash is bottom left

25th Anniversary, Toronto 1963



**EVEN IF YOU HAVE NEVER ATTENDED
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS
IN PERSON, THEY HAVE IMPACTED
YOUR BARBERSHOP LIFE**

The first convention was meticulously planned by O.C. Cash. Always the showman, Cash had crafted an agenda of events that included a business session, luncheon and, of course, the quartet competition. In the program, Cash wrote this about the registration process on the Mezzanine floor: “Barber Shoppers will be vaccinated, ear-tagged and tattooed so they can be returned to the herd if lost, strayed or stolen.” The cost of registration was “a mere \$3.00,” which covered the cost of the “Official Songbook, badge, luncheon and dinners.”

Among the competitors at that convention were the **Capitol City Four** from Canton, Ill. Folklore has it that on the first day of the convention, the quartet entered the lobby of the Hotel Tulsa and “were overwhelmed by the singing of the **Flat Foot Four**” (eventual 1940 champs) who were there performing.

The first qualifying rounds took place on Friday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. with quartets being scheduled “as they arrived” that afternoon. The second round of qualifying took place on Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. Cash wrote in the program “Those who blew a tonsil or made it to the finals can play golf, if they want to waste their time that way. The more serious artists will serenade the townsfolk from pillar to post.” The “Grand Finals” for the “World’s

Championship Barber Shop Quartet” were held Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m.

Being the first contest, there were very few rules. The ones that were observed included: “Competition restricted to Quartets (male) with or without accompaniment”; “Each quartet will be permitted to sing two numbers of own choosing in qualifying and final rounds”; and finally “Quartets will be known to the judges by number only.”

Speaking of judges, none would qualify as a judge today. The panel included a doctor, the Lieutenant Governor, an American Legion commander and local educators.

The **Bartlesville Barflies** won singing “By the Light of the Silvery Moon” and “Just a Dream of You.” Incidentally, the second-place quartet was the Capitol City Four—the quartet that had been overwhelmed by the Flat Foot Four!

As the third-place quartet, the Flat Foot Four were awarded a “Consolation Title” and a “commission to each member as ‘Little Colonel.’” The “Also Rans” were awarded “A box of throat lozenges and best wishes for the next convention.”

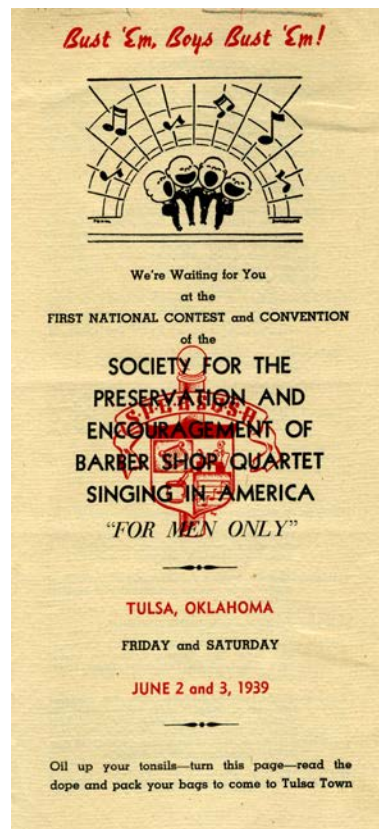
The contest—and the publicity it garnered—created an instant hit for the young society and by early 1940, new chapters were springing up across the country.

– Anthony Scardillo

1930s

TULSA 1939 Tulsa’s **Bartlesville Barflies** tops 23 other quartets to become our first champion. Lead Harry Hall, a native of the United Kingdom, is the first foreign-born champion.

O.C. Cash polls membership about whether to include popular actress Ann Sheridan as a celebrity judge. She doesn’t attend, but O.C. Cash is 80 years ahead in seeking women judges! (KK)





1941's NYC Parks Contest quartet champion **The Grand Central Red Caps** were denied the chance to compete in the 1941 contest because they were not white. The quartet members were honored at the 2017 Vegas International Convention with posthumous Society memberships. (See Nov/Dec 2017 issue)



1940s

NEW YORK CITY 1940 The Quartet Contest is held at New York City's World's Fair. One of the celebrity judges is reportedly overheard telling Al Smith, "Gee, Al, they all sound the same to me!" From 1941 on, only SPEBSQSA members are judges. (KK)

ST. LOUIS 1941 Joe Stern writes the first contest rules, which included that no instruments were permitted. (None had been used before.) (KK)

Prior to the convention, NYC Mayor La Guardia wires O.C. Cash that he intends to send as New York's representative the **Grand Central Red Caps**, a top-level African American quartet that won 1941's prestigious NYC Parks contest. Cash responds that only members can compete, and membership

is only open to white men. (Onsite, the Society Board makes the whites-only rule official.) The Society is excoriated in national media, and the exclusionary policy profoundly affects the musical, cultural, and demographic future of the Society. At the 2017 Convention, Society leaders formally apologize and bestow posthumous memberships to the four Red Caps members, while debuting a new policy to actively foster inclusion. (DW)

GRAND RAPIDS 1942 Sacred and patriotic numbers are officially barred as contest repertoire.

DETROIT 1944 Chord Busters tenor Doc Enmeier organizes past champions into what would eventually become the Association of International Champions (AIC).

CLEVELAND 1946 Of the 31 quartets, 19 perform with canes. Rules and brief descriptions of the judging categories are first published for public viewing.

MILWAUKEE 1947 With two competing "Keep America Singing" compositions to choose from, Arrangements Committee Chairman Phil Embury prioritizes Frank Thorne's at the convention due to personal respect for Thorne. But it is Bill Diekema's superior version that becomes our unofficial anthem (official after 1988), its popularity assured after Bill has the **Milwaukee Chapter** perform his composition on the grand staircase of the HQ hotel and has copies distributed in the lobby. Bill disapproves of the later alteration to "Keep the Whole World Singing." (DW)

OKLAHOMA CITY 1948 Mistrust of the judging system comes to a head after crowd favorite **The Mid-States Four** wins silver. Accusations of bias had circled for years due to the lack of training offered to each year's famous and/or knowledgeable judges. A robust and more objective system, including trained and certified judges, begins development. (KK)

BUFFALO 1949 Highly influential comedy quartet **The Mid-States Four** (singing non-comedy sets) receives the first-ever quartet trophy, later called the Landino Trophy. It is presented in person by creator Ben Landino, who had spent 600 hours crafting it without being asked or informing anyone. The Society Board had been inclined to reject the gesture until seeing the trophy.

UNDER THIS SIGN, PASS THE BEST SINGERS ON EARTH





1951 champion The Schmitt Brothers were extremely active during their career. In 1952, they made a two-week USO tour of military installations in Alaska, and at the 1966 convention in Chicago, the four brothers rented a bus and loaded their wives and 32 children aboard. All 40 appeared on stage at the AIC show. (EH)

1950s

OMAHA 1950 The **Buffalo Bills'** winning sound helps them become a top-tier show quartet and later the Society's most famous quartet, starring on Broadway and in the film *The Music Man*.

TOLEDO 1951 The first systematic judging system is used, with certified judges in Harmony Accuracy, Balance and Blend, Voice Expression, Stage Presence, and Song Arrangement. The system lasts through 1970. (KK)

The last quartet of the first round, **The Schmitt Brothers**, faced a worn-out audience fanning themselves with programs in a hot auditorium. The quartet belted its famous "Hello" bell chord intro. Everyone forgot how miserable they were and rewarded the Schmitts with a rousing ovation. They would go on to win gold. (DW)

WASHINGTON, D.C. 1954 The 72-man **Singing Capital Chorus** tops 22 others in the first official chorus contest. (1953 winner **Great Lakes Chorus** was unofficial because not all Society Districts were represented.) The Society enjoys outstanding nationwide convention exposure as the top five quartets are recorded and broadcast by CBS Radio, with recordings provided to local stations. Some past champs are included.

LOS ANGELES 1957 The past champions stage their first convention show.

COLUMBUS 1958 All 13 competing choruses perform together on the Ohio State Capitol steps.

CHICAGO 1959 Illinois' small, stunningly precise **Pekin Chorus** wins gold with director Jim Moses. They'd win again in 1963 and 1968.

NECESSITY, ACCIDENT, AND PURPOSE: HOW CONVENTIONS INCUBATE CHANGE

Without an annual international convention, what kind of organization and culture would we have today? Time and again, circumstances arising around the yearly gathering have shaped the traditions and practices of our Society.

It's easy to mythologize the earliest years of SPEBSQSA as an era of predominantly casual quartet singing, with contests and chorus singing mere afterthoughts. But from the first convention in 1939, a contest was at the center, and time and again that has resulted in secondary effects that have shaped our culture. Barring **The Grand Central Red Caps** from the 1941 contest reflected the widespread segregationist practice of fraternal groups of the day and helped institutionalize it in the young Society. Moving from ear harmonizing in contests to written arrangements codified the style and spread the "standardized" sound more broadly—at the expense of a richer, wider tapestry of sounds and styles, to the point where there was understood to be a definite division between "contest barbershop" and "show barbershop."

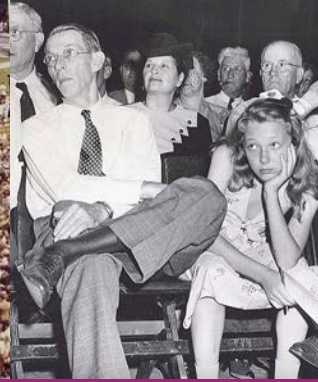
An emergency decision eliminating racial exclusion in membership eligibility salvaged the 1963 Convention, and with the stroke of a pen resolved (on paper, at least) a contentious issue that had raged for years. The actual impact on making barbershop welcoming to non-whites was glacially slow, but another convention innovation, the 1992 College Quartet Contest, grew to become an important entry point for younger singers who came from a broader demographic mix than the Society as a whole. Today, those singers lead our chapters, quartets, and Society and enrich our thinking and art.

Expanding the array of offerings and appealing free events for host city residents has been a springboard for better awareness in each market we visit. Looking to the future, an international contest that welcomes men's, women's, and mixed ensembles will undoubtedly engage more people in the pursuit of the biggest stage in barbershop. It will be neither an accident nor an unforeseen circumstance. It will reflect purposeful inclusion. Its effects on our Society may not be seen for several years, and they may be wildly different from what we expect. What happens in Vegas may stay in Vegas, but what happens in conventions ripples outward for years to follow.

– Brian Lynch

Dinner show, Miami 1955





1960s

DALLAS 1960 The **Evans Quartet**, among the first quartets to use extensive choreography, sees its announcement as winner tarnished by audible protests from audience members who are angry that the crowd-favorite **Nighthawks** were shut out from the medals. Mal Purdy (son of Hal) reportedly stands and dramatically tears up his Society membership card before storming out.

PHILADELPHIA 1961 The **Suntones** win in style, later becoming popular outside of the Society and going down as one of our most beloved and well-known champions.

KANSAS CITY 1962 The **Thoroughbreds** win the first of seven championships. The

Osmond Brothers Quartet, special guests at ages 7-13, makes the audience swoon shortly before its star-making appearances on *The Andy Williams Show*.

TORONTO 1963 Early in the week, the Society's most controversial policy is thrust to the top of the agenda after the Province of Ontario informs the Board that events that exclude on the basis of race are illegal, and that the convention would therefore be shut down. (See p. 21 sidebar.) The Society Board immediately amends Bylaws to remove the word "white" from qualification for membership in the Society. (DW)

In a non-contest performance, Rudy Hart and the 15-to-20-man **Hartsmen** from Michigan City, Ind. receive a five-minute

standing ovation for their next-level arrangements and sound. They later perform over 200 shows and sell four popular LPs.

SAN ANTONIO 1964 Avid quartetter and wealthy golf course designer Hal Purdy starts the invitation-only hospitality room Purdy's Corral. Plentiful food, top quartets, and an open bar are behind an often well-guarded door. The tradition continues under Hal through 2001. Others, including AIC members, continue to sponsor it after Hal passes away in 2002. (JB)

BOSTON 1965 With a packed main venue, the Society sells tickets to a room with closed circuit TVs, where many watch the **Four Renegades'** diverse sets foreshadow its career as an all-time popular show quartet. (JB)

CHICAGO 1966 Joe Wise and Jim Miller lead the **Thoroughbreds'** stunning introduction of chorus choreography with the "Mardi Gras March." Wild applause and a win follow—"My watch flew off my arm, I was applauding so hard" quipped Jim Bagby—although not all cheer. After the **Pekin Chorus** wins its third gold in 1968, director Jim Moses declares, "Just proves singing is better than dancing!" (JB)

LOS ANGELES 1967 Minutes after the **Potomachords** perform the popular **Four Renegades** ballad "This is All I Ask," it is announced from the stage that the quartet has been disqualified for violations of barbershop style rules. This is very poorly received. While it is the last time such an on-stage announcement is made, it likely accelerates





MEMORIES FROM RUNNING CONVENTIONS

discussions concerning the number of non-arrangers serving as Arrangement judges, plus concerns regarding style evolution. Later, 1971's "new" Arrangement category rewards and penalizes arrangements based upon a strict codification of the style. Ironically, the disqualified song had appeared on the 1965 Top Ten album because SPEBSQSA Director of Music Education Bob Johnson asked them to break tradition and record the non-contest song. (Double irony: The favorite barbershop song of uber-purist Bob Johnson was non-contestable!) (KK)

CINCINNATI 1968 Various strikes lead to a last-minute change of convention dates and venues, wreaking havoc on competitor and attendee schedules.

LOGISTICS. The night before the chorus contest at the first convention I managed (1998), I dreamed that the contest had started 45 minutes late because I led the first competitor in the wrong direction and we wandered downtown Atlanta trying to find our way back to the arena. The next day, the service I had hired to transport wheelchair-bound competitors to the arena provided a driver who didn't know how to operate the lift. Two members of the first competing chorus needed that lift. By the time we got them to the stage, the contest was starting 45 minutes late.

VOLUNTEERS. Most convention goers have no idea how many volunteers it takes to plan and run a successful convention. For the largest, we needed up to 400 separate four-hour segments to be covered by volunteer busing coordinators, chorus and quartet hosts, backstage aides, marketplace workers, PR runners, ushers and door monitors, and more. Most volunteers served multiple sessions and received no more than a shirt for their hard work. They just wanted their local convention to be successful.

FIREWORKS. Halfway through the 1997 Quartet Finals in Indianapolis, we began to hear fireworks booming outside so loudly that we took an unscheduled intermission until the fireworks stopped. Among several hundred Barbershoppers watching from an adjacent parking garage rooftop came the sounds of people singing "God Bless America." Before long, everyone on the rooftop was singing patriotic songs, a moment those involved will never forget.

NOISE. On an Atlanta site visit before my first convention to run (1998), I learned that a July 4 rock concert was scheduled in nearby Centennial Park at the same time as our Quartet Finals. I objected rather loudly to no avail,

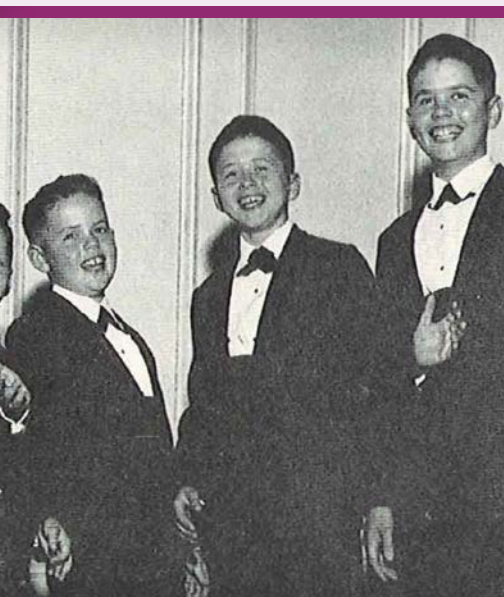
but the rep finally agreed to have us visit the Georgia Dome contest venue during a different concert, confident there would be no issue. As we stood on the floor of the Dome during that next visit, the general manager asked the security guard to turn off the radio. The radio wasn't on—we were hearing the concert. The GM said, "If I hadn't been here to hear this, I wouldn't have believed it!" He helped resolve the scheduling conflict, and as a bonus the **Vocal Majority** performed at that rock concert!

WEATHER. In 1994, the AIC Show had planned to open the arena roof just before 10 p.m. to allow the crowd to watch the nearby July 4 Fireworks. It poured down rain during the entire show. Facility managers said they would only open the roof if it stopped raining by 9:50—the rain stopped at 9:45!

BUSING. Imagine trying to move thousands of people from one location to another, 55 people per bus. It was taxing on volunteers and busing companies and also required great patience and understanding by convention attendees.

KARMA. After retiring in 2009 with 12 internationals and 12 Midwinters under my belt, I was so looking forward to Philadelphia in 2010. I got to my section, row, and seat to find that a production video camera had been placed where my seat should have been—pretty late in the process to try to find another good seat. I knew that my successor, Dusty Schleier, likely had no say in where the camera was placed, but I "blamed" him anyway. When I first told the story to friends, their only comment was, "Welcome to our world!"

– John Schneider,
long-time Events Committee member,
BHS Director of Events 1998-2009





1970s

NEW ORLEANS 1971 The French Quarter kicks off an especially strong decade of great food cities. (JB) The exciting sound of **Gentlemen's Agreement** helps Al Rehkop (T) and Glenn Van Tassel (Br) become the second and third double gold medalists after Mo Rector.

PORTLAND 1973 A BBC camera crew follows the pre-contest presumptive champ **Pacificaires** all week. The finished barbershop documentary shows their disappointed faces backstage when they are announced as silver medalists. The program

signs off with, "Oh well, there's always next year." **Dealer's Choice** becomes the only quartet since the Society's early days to win in its debut, its "expanded sound" techniques forever changing barbershop groups' approach to singing. (DW)

INDIANAPOLIS 1975 Sore disagreements swirl about changes that give Stage Presence judges nearly one-third of the total score. The **Vocal Majority Chorus** wins its first of 13 championships.

SAN FRANCISCO 1976 The winning **Phoenicians** chorus stuns the audience with the first-ever costume tear-off. The rivalry between supercoaches

Lyle Pilcher and Don Clause intensifies, intertwined with controversy regarding judges who score groups that they coach. By 1979, a rule is implemented that judges cannot score a contest that includes groups they have coached within the prior 60 days.

PHILADELPHIA 1977 **The Dukes of Harmony** (Scarborough, Ont.) top the mighty **Thoroughbreds** to become the first SPEBSQSA chorus champion from Canada.

CINCINNATI 1978 For the first time, the quartet (**Bluegrass Student Union**) and chorus (**Thoroughbreds**) champs come from the same chapter. This would be repeated

in 1996 with **Nightlife (Masters of Harmony)** and in 2009 with **Crossroads (Ambassadors of Harmony)**. BGSU would become the most popular show quartet of the 1980s and a landmark ensemble.

MINNEAPOLIS 1979 **The Vocal Majority's** winning "Liar Medley," arranged by Renee Craig and Jim Clancy, demonstrates a perfectly executed quick tempo that did not run away, setting a standard emulated for decades in the barbershop choral world. (DW) Musical and choreographic innovators **Grandma's Boys** win gold with a repeat of their 1978 Toy Soldiers performance.

KEN BUCKNER'S BAPTISM BY FIRE

Only after I started my new Events job in September 1987 did I learn there were no hotel contracts, no contract for the contest site for our 50th Anniversary convention. Ten months out, I had zero information to prepare.

I flew to San Antonio to meet with Carman Gamez in the Convention Bureau. With hat in hand, I explained that I was new to the job and had no information about hotels, rates, contest sites. She said, "Close the door and have a seat." Then she walked me through the whole process: which hotels to use, what their normal convention rates were, who to talk to, ideas on picking the Headquarters hotel, arranging for decorators—you name it and she had the answer. She concluded with, "If you tell anyone about this meeting, I'll deny it."

Over the next 10 years, assistant Kathy Gilliver and I introduced the Society to computers and FAX machines; established the Convention Management Committee (CMC); wrote, along with John Schneider, a hotel contract that moved all the "perks" from the hotel side to our side; established a direct line of communication with Convention Bureaus; led the move to selecting three convention sites at a time; and coordinated the change to computer-generated convention seating assignments and tickets.

— Ken Buckner, Society Events Manager 1987-97



The Barbarteen program used to occupy teenagers while giving their parents a break. Activities included pizza parties, local entertainment stops, trips to a ranch, quartet performances in their Barbarteen room, etc. After a few years, interest waned. Due to popular demand, the "Barbertots" room was born as a place for parents to take unruly children and still view the competition on television. It took a while for attendees to grasp that parents had to stay with their children—it wasn't a babysitting service.

— John Schneider



Waiting for a hotel bus

1980s

SALT LAKE CITY 1980 After eight medals, **Boston Common** finally finishes on top; many still contend that the Common were the best quartet in some prior contests as well. **4 Under Par** debuts its contest comedy approach that would later inspire **FRED**, **Storm Front**, **Lunch Break**, **The Newfangled Four**, and others. **Most Happy Fellows'** (1977 champ) *Wizard of Oz* set on the AIC Show sets a high-water mark for comedy. The **Vocal Majority Choir**, the beginning of a long collaboration that would include recordings, concerts in Dallas and Salt Lake City, and future concerts in the Tabernacle in 1986, 2005 and 2019. The **Masters of Harmony** would also perform in the Tabernacle in 1996.

DETROIT 1981 The Thoroughbreds give one of the most electrifying performances ever with their "Mardi Gras Parade March." At that time,

the Arrangement Category considered songs that were single tempo from start to finish "foot music" that was not in line with a style focused on ringing chords and distorting tempos. Uptunes were expected to break tempo for various effects. The judges thought better of it and let it go, setting the stage for many future set tempo performances on and off the contest stage. (KK)

The **Sounds of Concord** perform an on-stage wedding that includes men impersonating women. Though not the first such performance, it was enough for a rule change that lasted many years, stating that female impersonation could be grounds for disqualification. (KK)

PITTSBURGH 1982 The Rainbow Suite begins as a relatively secretive gathering for LGBTQ Barbershoppers. In 1991, **Special Feature** is the first competing quartet to perform in the suite, and in 1993, **Nightlife** and **Special Feature**

are the first medalist performers; **Nightlife** is the first champion performer in 1996. In 2004, the "private" suite ends up next to the President's Suite, hosts numerous top quartets, and effectively becomes public. In following years, organizers promote via Rainbow buttons and big screen ads, and the Rainbow Room becomes one of the convention's most popular hospitality rooms. (TR)

SEATTLE 1983 Everyone's heart stops when **The Side Street Ramblers** belt the tag of "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry" (arr. Brian Beck), landing on a unison high F# then blossoming outward in a swipe then an echo. The "Cry" tag remains one of our most sung tags. (DW)

ST. LOUIS 1984 Higher and louder seems to be the trend, whether due to the sound system or otherwise. Over the next few years, judges impose penalties when voice parts sing higher than their reasonable range. (KK)

MINNEAPOLIS 1985 A "Marx Brothers" set helps **The New Tradition** become arguably the first comedy gold medalist; five of six contest songs had comedic themes. The first Gospel Sing is organized by past champs Jerry Fairchild, Joe Mazzone, Dale Deiser and Mo Rector as the **Good News! Gospel Quartet**. It would continue for decades under successors **The Happiness Emporium**.

SALT LAKE CITY 1986 The first-ever Affiliate (now called "Alliance") quartet competitor (BABS) is **Gilt Edge** from England. SNOBS would send **Good Time Singers** and **Evening Swingers** in 1987-88. In 1990, BABS chorus **Hallmark of Harmony** becomes the first Affiliate chorus competitor.

HARTFORD 1987, SAN ANTONIO 1988 To battle "two-song syndrome," the top six chorus finishers perform an additional set in a "super finals," meaning top groups had to have four contest songs ready.



For the 50th Anniversary Convention, we strutted pretty hard. A real street parade put Barbershoppers in front of San Antonio. Bringing up the rear was a farm tractor driven by the **Rural Route 4** towing a float that bore retiring champs the **Interstate Rivals**, and 85-year-old Glenn Howard, who had attended every international convention since 1939. A Riverwalk Massed Sing was attended by more than 4,000. (BL)

JIM BAGBY, 55 CONVENTIONS LATER

A few stalwarts like **Suntones** baritone Harlan Wilson have attended more (Harlan hasn't missed since 1959), but Jim Bagby has attended all but two International Conventions since his first at age 19 in 1962.

"Conventions were homecomings, family reunions, a giant, harmonious hug, a place to meet virtually all your best friends, every year," said Jim about why he kept returning. "Before I got into quartet competition, conventions were for hearing every contest session, staying up all night tagging and woodshedding, sleeping until noon, and starting all over the next day."

Convention schedules have gradually expanded to accommodate a NextGen quartet contest, a World Harmony Showcase, and an expanded Chorus Contest. Today, attendees can also stay entertained throughout most convention days without attending a show or contest: 100+ HU classes, Tag Zones, Everyone in Harmony Chorus rehearsals, Harmony Platoon, etc.

Jim remembers enjoying a lot of downtime when there were fewer events and competitors—at least until he became a BHS judge and served on the Society Board ("Meetings, meetings, and more meetings ..."), competed nine times as bari of 1986 champion **Rural Route 4**, and directed **Heart of America** chorus more than a dozen times. Prior to that, his schedule looked something like this:

WEDNESDAY

- Arrive with Joann, meet our friends
- AIC Show
- Tagging/woodshedding/gang singing

THURSDAY

- Quartet Quarterfinals, each quartet limited to six-minute sets. (Slots were pre-allocated to districts according to their size, resulting in a much wider spread in skill levels.)
- Meet mutual friends and family for lunch and dinner, set up more meals for Friday and Saturday.
- Tagging/woodshedding even later

FRIDAY

- Wake up barely in time for noon Mass Sing
- Rehearsals for chorus members; sightseeing, socializing, and golf outings for everyone else
- Quartet Semifinals
- Tagging/woodshedding until exhaustion

SATURDAY

- Chorus Contest, 16 groups
- AIC Sing with the Champs
- Quartet Finals
- Hospitality rooms, Chordatorium, tagging until dawn



Largest-ever Convention: Calgary 1993

1990s

SAN FRANCISCO 1990 The recently formed **Masters of Harmony** tie seven-time champion **Louisville Thoroughbreds**. The Masters win the tie-breaker with the top Sound Category score, the first of three consecutive Masters championships with director Greg Lyne. The Masters go on to win nine championships under four directors.

NEW ORLEANS 1992 The shootout between **Keepsake** (best song: "Roses of Picardy") and **The Gas House Gang** (best song: "Bright Was the Night") fascinates the audience. (DW)

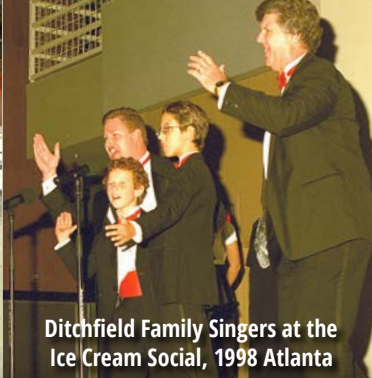
Water Street Junction wins the inaugural College Quartet Contest. Now called the Next Generation Barbershop Varsity Quartet Contest, the event launches the barbershop careers of many future chorus directors, coaches, district and chapter leaders, judges, International leaders, and staff. Youth quartets to become international champs so far: **Four Voices** (2002), **Vocal Spectrum** (2006), **Ringmasters** (2012), and **Musical Island Boys** (2014). **Instant Classic** (2015) and **After Hours** (2018) are past youth medalists. In recent years, medalist quartets that do not feature at least one past youth competitor are the exception.



1994. Problem: how to get the **EntertainMen** Chorus of Ronninge, Sweden, from a free gig at an outdoor festival to their performance on the World Harmony Jamboree? They could walk the five blocks ... or they could run while screaming at the top of their lungs, jumping on bus benches and brandishing swords. Spectacle won, earning a front-page photo and story. (BL)



Society Board Meeting



Ditchfield Family Singers at the Ice Cream Social, 1998 Atlanta



CALGARY 1993 All-time peak convention attendance in Calgary with 11,103 registrations. The **New Tradition Chorus** (2nd place) and **Ambassadors of Harmony** (12th place) are the first-ever chorus wildcards. **The Gas House Gang** sets a scoring record for the retiring 1971-1993 judging system.

PITTSBURGH 1994 Songs from all of the Great American Songbook (swing, big band, and other eras) are finally permissible in contest, with many new songs quickly making their way into District and Divisional contests, as well as non-contest repertoire. Prior to that, swing rhythms

were discouraged. Time penalties were also removed, allowing groups to sing fully developed music and comedy quartets, such as **FRED** and others, to further develop their shtick. (KK)

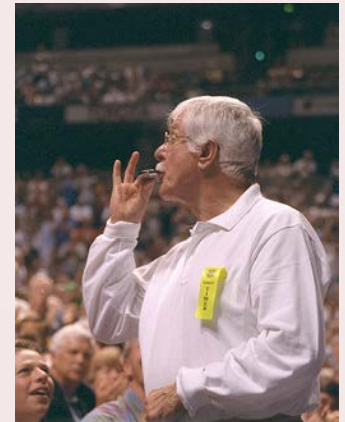
SALT LAKE CITY 1996 CBS News Overnight broadcasts a live onstage performance from **Nightlife** following the Semifinals; the next day **Nightlife** wins chorus gold with the **Masters of Harmony** and the quartet championship. (BL)

Acoustix (1990 champion) and the **Masters of Harmony** join the **Tabernacle Choir** in a joint Sunday concert.

INDIANAPOLIS 1997 Bari Rod Nixon of **Yesteryear** becomes the oldest-ever quartet champion at age 59.

ANAHEIM 1999 The **New Tradition Chorus** performs “Do You Hear the People Sing” and “Bring Him Home” from the musical *Les Miserables*. While lauded for its artistry, many fear the style had broadened too fast, and call for a study. While the resulting Style Examination Committee’s findings focus less on the style and more on the perceived loss of “lock and ring,” style debates and the pushing of the style seem to slow down for a few years. (KK)

New Honorary Lifetime Member **Dick Van Dyke** spends several days at the convention, including onstage performances with **Mutual Fun** quartet and at Disneyland with the **Alexandria Harmonizers**. (BL)



(above) In 1996 Ron Reagan, Jr. directed the “World’s Largest Barbershop Chorus” for the *Record Breakers* TV show. The famous first son directed an officially-tallied 10,456 singers from a cherry picker in the Olympic Plaza. (BL)

(below) 1994 Champ **The Gas House Gang** performs *Lady of Spain* at the AIC Show, which never failed to bring the house down. (EH)



Legendary comedy quartet **FRED** wins their first medal in 1996 while simultaneously setting the record for highest celebratory jump in call-off history. At least we’re pretty sure, if this photo of Jared “Pookie” Carlson (tenor) is any indication. (EH)



9-11 Memorial, Portland 2002

2000s

KANSAS CITY 2000 For the first time, 16 district winners are joined by four wildcard and three affiliate choruses, a then-record 23 chorus competitors. Gary Lewis is the first collegiate winner (bass of **The Real Deal**, 1994) to win international gold, singing tenor for **PLATINUM** with lead Joe Connelly, who becomes the first three-time quartet champion.

The first-ever webcast and audio livestream is hosted by Rich Taylor and Phil DeBar, a comparatively low-tech affair in which thousands dialed up on their 28.8K modems to listen via Live365 ... at least until family members bumped them off by picking up the home landline. (BL)

NASHVILLE 2001 The Society hosts a two-day SING! festival early in the week featuring top a cappella and barbershop groups. It sells 5,700 total tickets and earns rave reviews,

but not enough Nashville locals attend to cover costs. ABC News broadcasts a live Semifinals segment featuring eventual champion **Michigan Jake**. After 13 consecutive medals—the last eight at silver—Jay Giallombardo directs **New Tradition Chorus** to gold. **The Gas House Gang** and **Power Play** sing at the Grand Ole Opry to enormous ovations.

PORTLAND 2002 At the first post 9-11 convention, a music-filled outdoor ceremony draws thousands. **Four Voices** is the first youth champion to win the big contest. Professional stage production is first implemented in contest, with custom stage set-ups each year and improved lighting and sound.

MONTREAL 2003 Quebec discovers barbershop in various scheduled public outdoor performances. The Slamkas of **Power Play** are the first all-family champion since the **Schmitt Brothers** in 1951. The Finals are bookended by arguably the funniest mic

test of all time (**Freestyle** and guests) and the soaring swan song performance “All Rise” by **Four Voices** and **Voices of Lee**.

LOUISVILLE 2004 Months after baritone Rob Henry passed away from cancer, **The Gas House Gang’s** retirement performance on the AIC show sees Rob deliver the solo with his three quartet mates via video magic in a live performance of “I Still Can’t Say Goodbye”; many call it the most moving barbershop performance they have ever witnessed.

SALT LAKE CITY 2005 The audience convulses with laughter as body parts go flying during **Hot Air Buffoons’** “Crash Test Dummies” set. For one year only, all wildcard choruses must compete in a semifinals contest in order to appear in the Chorus Finals. **Realtime** quartet, featuring two Canadian brothers, an American, and a recent Australian transplant to Canada, becomes the first

true “International” quartet champion. A Sunday morning “Sacred Gold” concert features 526 Barbershoppers of the **Gold Medal Chorus** combined with the **Tabernacle Choir**.

INDIANAPOLIS 2006 The Chorus Contest permanently moves to Friday. **Midwest Vocal Express** chorus presents a medal-winning, polyurethane-enhanced comedic masterpiece that ensures 2006 is thereafter remembered as the “Year of The Fish.” Ubiquitous camera crews for the coming *American Harmony* barbershop documentary blanket hallways, backstage areas, and the arena floor all week. The AIC Show features dozens of Sweet Adeline and Harmony, Inc. champion singers, including a mixed chorus that produces overtones unlike any heard before.

DENVER 2007 Society music education staff begins offering a few barbershop craft and voice classes onsite,



In 1995, Scott Kitzmiller and Jim Richards invited judges to pack an instrument for Category School. Many enjoyed the jam session, and a few years later Bill Biffle dusted off his trumpet after 35 years and asked Scott, Steve Delehanty, Jim Richards, Ev Nau and others to join him in a semi-public Midwinter performance. Soon an ever-changing cast of performers and instruments, now called the **Dixieland All Stars**, jams at every Midwinter and International convention. In the late 2000s, the popular late-night performances were added to the official schedule.





BACKSTAGE ALL-STARS



Each year, local committees have moved mountains to help conventions run smoothly. The incredibly complex and technical aspects

of creating and running the contest stage were for decades shouldered largely by staff members and an Events Committee. Since 2016, volunteer expertise has been concentrated in a convention team of BHS members, most of whom have worked countless hours before and during every convention since 2004, if not also years before: Tim Brooks (Production), Scott Wetle (Production), Hank Pivarnik (Back of House) Daniel Endy (Team Coordinator), David Duncan (Stage Manager), Kevin Pape (Front of House), Jack Donaldson (Meetings Manager).

“Doug Maddox (2004-14) was the biggest influence to the way we have professionally handled the production of our events,” said Dusty Schleier, BHS Director of Events & Conventions. “His legacy lives on today in every aspect of our convention. We also have had so many influential convention volunteers over the years, including Raisha Quinn & Jeff Forman, as well as all of the convention chairs.”

It’s also a new stage and venue every year, which means endless months of preparation. Since 2004, Tim Brooks has been in the thick of details like the selection and placement of mics, speakers, lights, backdrops, cameras, risers, and curtains. Each venue presents new challenges: the acoustics, the size (or lack) of backstage areas, audience sight lines, potentially loud air-handling equipment and its effect on curtains (now eliminated), and coordinating professional contractors and union members. Unlike prior decades, there are no longer concerns about sound shells (replaced by monitors), quartet backdrops, or changing the number of risers.

One of the best decisions? “We used to require that judges didn’t hear any amplified sound,” Tim said. Often, that meant either optimal sound for the judges or for the audience, but not both. This abruptly ended when there was an unbearable echo in the judging “pit” during the first quartet mic test in 2009. When the performance was piped through the public address speakers in the pit, the echo went away. “I was quick to point out that there was no going back once we had amplified sound in the pit,” Tim said. “And, indeed we have done that, allowing both the judges and the audience to have a better listening experience.”

supplementing the standard Gold Medal Hours.

The **Westminster Chorus** wins but almost doesn’t, after a non-singing, multi-measure, foot-powered “drum solo” is too much for some judges.

Their scores are lowered enough that Westminster ties with the **Ambassadors of Harmony**, but Westminster wins on a tie-breaker Singing score. Due to perceptions that judges “penalized” the performance, BHS CEO Ed Watson and others call for rule “infractions” to be quantified and published. Over the years, eventually only rule infractions have quantifiable penalties assigned. (KK)

NASHVILLE 2008 Thousands tour the new BHS headquarters building and participate in large-scale outdoor performances. **Hotshots** quartet competes on one riser section as a four-man slice of a barbershop chorus, lampooning (without exaggeration) every possible chorus quirk. **Max Q** sings the National Anthem for an audience of over 100,000

gathered for the Nashville fireworks. **Old School** wins the Quartet Quarterfinals round and **Crossroads** wins the final two rounds, but super-consistent **OC Times** wins overall.

ANAHEIM 2009 A snarky segment taped onsite by *The Tonight Show* host Conan O’Brien is later enjoyed/panned by many Barbershoppers. Jim Henry becomes the first gold medal director/quartetter in the same year; **Crossroads’** “Lucky Old Sun” becomes the song of the decade and The **Ambassadors of Harmony’s** winning performance of “76 Trombones” goes on to become one of the most viewed barbershop chorus performance ever (3M+ YouTube views to date). The **Vocal Majority**, **Masters of Harmony**, **Ambassadors of Harmony** join their 400 voices on the “Harmony Foundation Presents ...” show. The **Dapper Dans of Disneyland** become Honorary Lifetime Members.



zero8 at the Larry Ajer Show



World Harmony Jamboree Dinner Show



Gospel Sing, Nashville 2016

2010s

PHILADELPHIA 2010 Lunch Break quartet invites the other nine Semifinalist quartets to join in the onstage chaos of its Finals mic test; the 40 performers somehow precipitate a sound system malfunction that is resolved with the flick of a switch after a 45-minute delay. A comedic “car ride” makes **Storm Front** a champion. The **Alexandria Harmonizers** enjoy several televised performances for oversized July 4 crowds, while a diverse barbershop “marching band” entertains at Philadelphia’s parade.

KANSAS CITY 2011 The Father/Son/Grandson chorus melts audience hearts. **Old School** lead Joe Connelly becomes the first four-time gold medalist while tenor Kipp Buckner earns his third. The legendary **Suntones** defy their age in a magical AIC Show set, one of their

final performances. **Great Northern Union** almost wins gold while satirizing recent contest trends with an intentionally over-the-top medley that features 30 songs and four layers of tear-away vests.

PORTLAND 2012 Sweden’s **Ringmasters** become the first non-North American Quartet Champion, while Sweden’s **zero8** is the first off-shore chorus medalist. The host chapter chorus, **Salem Senateaires**, closes out the contest with a 25-minute, impossible-to-describe “Caveman” comedic set that wins massive ovations and fifth place.

TORONTO 2013 Historian Grady Kerr and Harmony Hall staff pull out all the stops to celebrate our 75th Anniversary. Harmony University expands offerings on both Tuesday and Saturday. Harmony Brigade holds its first convention

event. The front curtain is permanently eliminated from chorus contests. The **Toronto Northern Lights** win in their hometown while dressed as vegetables, the first comedy performance to win chorus gold. The Saturday Night Spectacular debuts as a can’t-miss event.

LAS VEGAS 2014 The entire convention takes place inside the gargantuan MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Doug Maddox, despite a terminal cancer diagnosis, produces his 11th and last contest. Harmony Platoon enjoys its convention debut. **Kentucky Vocal Union** brings zombies to the stage with “Thriller,” while “Johnny Comes Marching Home” gives the **Vocal Majority**, now under director Greg Clancy, its first win since 2006. The four Pacific Islanders of New Zealand’s **Musical Island Boys** become the second non-North American quartet champion.

The **Great Northern Union** “Winter Wonderland” set includes a “snowball” fight and a streamer cannon, leaving the stage “damaged” for the final competitor. Rules at International regarding props, glitter, etc. were thereafter implemented, with significant penalties if violated. (KK)

PITTSBURGH 2015 Harmony University makes a huge leap forward to more than 100 one-hour onsite courses throughout most of the week. Designated Tag Zones free attendees to sing at any time with experienced tag teachers. The Tuesday night Larry Ajer Show ends its long run. The Society begins posting all competitor videos on YouTube, creating tens of millions of new barbershop views and helping grow the BHS channel from 20K in 2014 to 134K today. **Main Street’s** “Pop Songs Medley” goes viral, now with almost six million YouTube views.



Sing with the Champs



Toronto 2013, Most Happy Fellows Wizard of Oz Costumes, 75th Anniversary displays



Since 2015, there has been a concerted effort to ensure that both our International and Midwinter conventions leave a mark on the cities we visit that is felt beyond the venues, restaurants and hotels. Since then, dozens of competing and non-competing quartets and choruses have performed at food banks, children's hospitals, schools, and with various other charitable organizations, as well as at other local festivals and gatherings and in high traffic public areas.



NASHVILLE 2016 "A Better World Singing" Day draws more than 2,000 Nashville locals to the Saturday Night Spectacular and Quartet Finals. Onsite music publication offerings expand exponentially. **Ringmasters'** (2012 champion) performance of Aaron Dale's "Hunchback of Notre Dame" medley on the AIC Show is lauded as a high-water mark for the art form. Following years of non-comedy sets, **The Newfangled Four** launches its comedy and viral online identity by showing off high-level comedic chops during a non-contestable Quartet Finals mic test.

LAS VEGAS 2017 Arena construction work in Minneapolis prompts a quick, challenging relocation. Two additional sets of mics give competing quartets triple the stage width to execute routines. The Finals round is almost canceled due to flooding from a burst pipe.

Signature's "Dance With My Father" is song of the decade. Members of **The Grand Central Red Caps**, denied the chance to compete in 1941 because of their race, receive posthumous BHS memberships. The presentation of the "Everyone in Harmony" long-term vision of inclusion receives a standing ovation. Mike Rowe, 2017 Honorary Lifetime Member, spends several nights tagging at the convention. Video of his onstage performance with 2016 champ **Forefront** goes viral.

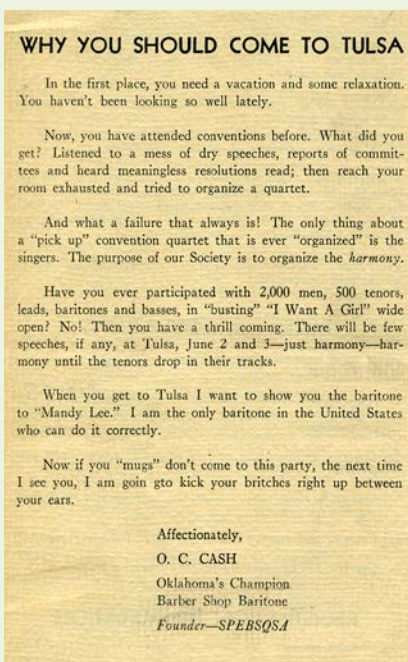
ORLANDO 2018 The Quarterfinals are held in three rounds and in a different venue than later contest sessions. **The Gas House Gang** reprises its 2004 tear-jerker tribute, this time adding soloist Ryan Henry, Rob's son. **The Everyone in Harmony Chorus** debuts three weeks after BHS membership is opened to all; many of the

women onstage are newly-minted BHS members. **After Hours** sets a quartet scoring record.

SALT LAKE CITY 2019 **Westminster Chorus** beats its 2010 chorus scoring record in a soaring send-off to director Justin Miller, while the **Ambassadors of Harmony** push the creative envelope with a literal "black and white movie" set. The **Vocal Majority** performs a televised joint performance with the **Tabernacle Choir**. **Signature** is the first champion since **Acoustix** (1990) to win within a year after a (two) part change.

ONLINE 2020 A global pandemic cancels nearly every major gathering worldwide. Some events planned for LA2020 are retooled into online versions. A widely-viewed AIC Show is broadcast during the canceled convention week. The **Everyone in Harmony Chorus** practices

online with Deke Sharon in July and later releases its performance. Harmony University courses enjoy a large online presence throughout July. Viewers vote for the best quartet to never win during two weeks in August. The BHS Gala Awards are scheduled to take place online in September.



TRENDS IN CONTEST PERFORMANCE

Partly adapted from the author's paper in *American Music*: "From 'the Chord Was King' to 'a Dynamic Journey': Changes in the Barbershop Quartet Style in Contests Since the 1950s"

1940s The emphasis was on four men having fun singing chords rather than attempting to entertain the audience. Deac Martin states in a 1944 *Harmonizer* article: "I've always maintained that the very essence of barbershop harmony is—Four guys singing for their own pleasure, and to hell with any audience."

1950s At least through 1955, contest rules made no mention of the audience or visual presentation, and Stage Presence judges focused primarily on uniformity in costuming. "It never crossed our minds to be as entertaining in contests as we were on shows," said Dave Mittlestadt, a 1958 quartet finalist. The care, precision, perfect tuning, and diction of the 1958 top ten quartets was impressive. Society Historian Val Hicks reported: "The 'chord was king.' Emphasis was placed on certain

'tasty' chords, even at the expense of interpretation." Only six-minute sets were allowed, so arrangements were simple and brief; the majority repeated neither the verse nor the chorus.

1960s Stage Presence judges started to focus on entertainment, to the ire of some competitors. Stage Presence judge Bill Spooner replied, "We're not asking you to dance, but to entertain." Longtime contest judge Jim Massey said of the early 1960s judges, "They were still hyper-concerned about pant lengths, matching shoes, and mechanically coordinated hand and body movements; but were beginning to comment on the entertainment and presentation as a plus." Over time, performers became more concerned with entertaining general audiences, partly due to the immensely popular 1961 champion Suntones, who were performing extensively on television. Tenor Gene Cokeroff reports that the quartet aimed to appeal to audiences that were newly shaped by television of the late 1950s and in the 1960s.

1970s Society President Wilbur Sparks emphasized a need to entertain, encouraging "excellent visual presentation" in public appearances: "Does your chapter understand that its annual show is Show Business, in competition with the best that

television, professional stage shows and nightclubs have to offer?" In 1972, the Stage Presence category was weighted equal to the Sound and Interpretation categories, and a new Arrangement category had a range of -20 to +20. This placed increased emphasis on entertainment.

1980s Attendees had to be prepared to hear several of the same arrangements of the same songs over and over again, as the scoring system encouraged competitors to select songs that had previously been rewarded with higher Arrangement scores.

1990s New scoring categories substantially changed contest performances, in part because of the increased emphasis on musicality and entertainment and in part because of the absence of time penalties and the restrictions of the old Arrangement category. Audiences enjoyed more varied kinds of songs and the opportunity to allow a song to develop in more interesting ways over a longer period of time. The lack of time penalties opened up the opportunity for extended comedic performances. ■

— Rob Hopkins is a coach,
arranger, music professor, past C&J
Chairman, past BHS President,
BHS Hall of Fame member



CHAPTER ETERNAL

Members reported as deceased between May 15 and July 15, 2020. Send updates to membership@barbershop.org

CAROLINAS

Charles Gugan
Brunswick County, NC
Rocky Mount, NC
Wilmington, NC

CENTRAL STATES

Ray Eilts
Hays, KS
Robert Johnson
Olathe, KS
Gerald Jordan
Lincoln, NE
David Montgomery
Beatrice, NE
Calvin Yoder
Kansas City, MO

FAR WESTERN

Frederick Garner
Sun Cities, AZ
William Santee
Davis-Vacaville, CA

Peter Sparaco
Fremont-Hayward, CA
Robert M
Thompson
Central Arizona
Greater Phoenix, AZ

Sun Cities, AZ
John Wright
Conejo Valley, CA
San Fernando
Valley, CA
Ventura, CA

ILLINOIS

Leslie Bloomfield
Elgin, IL
Don Duff
Chicagoland West
Suburban, IL

JOHNNY

APPLESEED
David Johnson
Greater Central Ohio
Lima Beane, OH

Edwin Simons
Cleveland West
Suburban, OH
Kenneth Wheeler
Zanesville, OH

LAND O' LAKES

Harold Casselman
Winnipeg, MB
Gerald Erickson
Frank Thorne
Kenneth Felton
Appleton, WI
Gerald Hampton
Delta County, MI
John Solheim
Wausau, WI
Paul Stein
Winnipeg, MB
William Southam
Winnipeg, MB

MID-ATLANTIC

Peter Cerutti
Bryn Mawr, PA

Kenneth Ehrlich
Lansdale, PA
Joseph Fiori
Manhattan, NY
Montclair, NJ
Princeton, NJ

Thomas McKinney
Altoona, PA
Somerset County, PA
David Updegrove
Loudoun County, VA
Kenneth Weber, Jr.
Bryn Mawr, PA
Pottstown, PA

NORTHEASTERN

John Cruickshank
Cape Breton, NS
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Gonna Rise Up on Wings of Song

We're endeavoring to do all of the happy things we can muster during these challenging months. Listening to virtual singing being produced by users of new technology, reading books, having fun conversations, a lot of laughs, getting to know each other even better than before, playing with the doggies, using FaceTime and other visual communication, Netflix, Prime, HBO, growing plants and veggies (Did I mention eating?) ... all provide pleasure and recreation.

A lot of sadness, too, for friends and neighbors suffering the result of a virus running rampant throughout the world. But we hold great expectations that it soon will be eradicated. Then we hope the next challenge that may come, if it must, is a far off future time. The tag for this issue is from a song that expresses our anticipation to participate in the creation of harmony. We WILL rise up on wings of song! ■

for men's voices

Gonna Rise Up on Wings of Song Joe Liles 2020

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

Tenor Lead

Gon - na rise rise up on wings of

Bari Bass

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

song!

5 6 7 8 9 10

song, on wings of song!

for women's voices

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

Tenor Lead

Gon - na rise rise up on wings of

Bari Bass

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

song!

5 6 7 8 9 10

song, on wings of song!

for mixed voices

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

Tenor Lead

Gon - na rise rise up on wings of

Bari Bass

rise, rise up on wings, on wings of

song!

5 6 7 8 9 10

song, on wings of song!



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