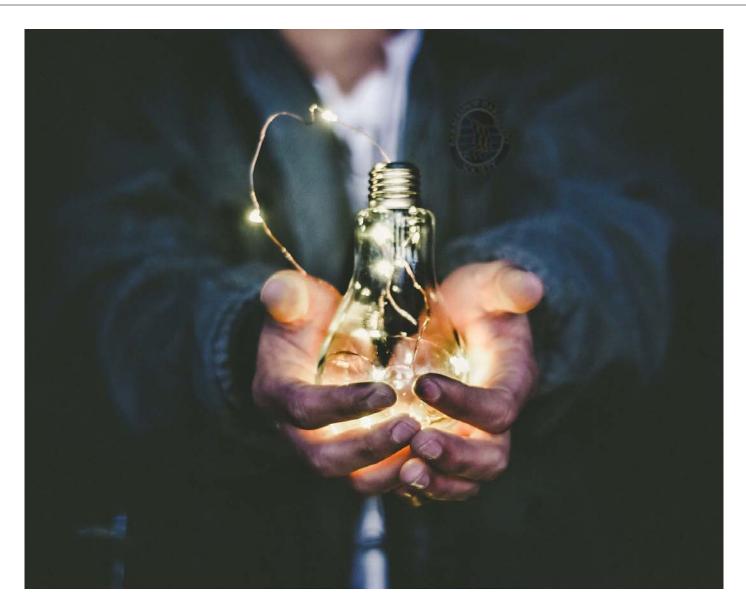
# Harmonizer

BRINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY TO LIFE • MAY/JUNE 2021



# SEIZE THE MOMENT

Be ready to implement your biggest dreams and brightest ideas—be ready when the post-COVID window opens



**NOTEWORTHY**IN-PERSON CONVENTIONS COMING
DO YOU NEED PROJECT CONNECT?

**SPOTLIGHT**MANNY LOPEZ DELIVERS
PURE ENCOURAGEMENT

TIP SHEET
FEEDBACK ON CUE:
FOR PEOPLE OUT FRONT



# July 17 - August 7

Attend classes from the comfort of your own home! No travel costs, no time off work necessary.

Over 3 weeks of classes and programming to help you do dout VHU... improve your craft, led by top barbershop instructors.

Here's Whor

last year's attendees

"I attended 64 hours of extremely educational classes and it cost me only about \$4/hour. Can't beat that deal!"

"Huge array of Electives for an amazing price. Class after class was excellent."

"I have wanted to attend HU for years. VHU made it possible for me to receive quality education for a fraction of the cost of attending in person. The courses were amazing, the instructors prepared and engaging. This was such an awesome opportunity."

"VHU was absolutely, hands down, the best part of my summer of 2020! It renewed my spirit, and something I will always treasure. Thank you for an inspirational, motivational, and educational month!"

Weekly packages starting at

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov.





"I've been part of many professional development and continuing ed programs. **HU** leaves them in the dust. The instructors are passionate, the goals are concrete, and the curriculum is rigorous and challenging."

"I had a fantastic time attending VHU and participating in the **Virtual Choir.** It was a blast!"

"I was a bit skeptical about how much could be achieved with virtual classes, but VHU far surpassed my expectations! The course offerings, classes, and instructors were fantastic! I learned soooo much, and my head and heart are full. I am so excited to bring what I've learned back to my chorus."

# KICKOFF VII

VIRTUAL CHOIR EXPERIENCE

WEEKS 1-2 **CORE SEMINARS** Arrangers, Directors, Leaders, Performers, Music Educators, and Singers

WEEK 3 **ELECTIVE CLASSES**Over 90 live, interactive 50-minute classes

Virtual Harmony University. Online. Together.

Learn more at barbershop.org/HU

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The time for your chapter to start dreaming big is now, so that you are ready to pull the trigger once it is safe to start singing together again. Adapted from Kevin Keller's Keynote Address at the 2021 Virtual Midwinter Convention, with additional notes on how to develop and implement successful plans.

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and socializing via cartoon avatars was no mere novelty—it allowed true personal connections.

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Encouragement: whether he is teaching a tag, coaching chapter leaders, or helping students aim high, Manny Lopez has made a 24/7 mission of helping people reach their full potential.

On the cover: Image by Riccardo Annondale / Unsplash.com

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"This is a Wild and Crazy Sound"



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# Harmonizer

#### GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE/EDITORIAL

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#### **EDITOR**

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

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.

#### May/June 2021

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# Life-changing lessons from a \$5 Blue Plate Special



Gene Scholtes shifted my perspective on singing forever

Like a fashion plate on Broadway, You came out with the sun's first gleam, Sweet, Sweet, Roses of Morn, You're the ideal of my dream...

ou know, when most people sing "Sweet Roses of Morn," they revel in the barbershoppy splendor of the chords and the ringability of the great old tune. When I sing it, I revel in the memory of a great old Barbershopper. One of the great heroes of the hobby, at least to me.

Gene Scholtes had been a member of the **Dubuque**, **Iowa Chapter** for as long as I'd been alive and was a fixture on the risers. He was one of the guys you could always count on to sing until the cows came home. He supported the chapter by singing on every show, regularly bringing guests, and for years, brought more

sponsor dollars to the chorus than the rest of us combined. All he asked of us in exchange for his service to our art form was that whenever he wanted to sing a Polecat, we sang a Polecat. And his favorite was "Sweet Roses of Morn."

Gene, who passed a few years back, was a very gentle and soft-spoken man, and I had directed the chorus for a couple of years before I really started to get to know him. I'm ashamed to admit it, but up until then, I never really paid attention to him. Much of my time as a chapter leader was spent keeping the Alphas happy, putting out fires, and greasing squeaky wheels. Gene was a Beta. I don't mean that in an insulting way. He was just always there. He

always seemed happy. But he never said much. I gave very little thought to what he wanted. I gave very little thought to him.

I had so much to learn as a leader... and as a human being.

45 minutes that changed everything

One day, out of the blue, Gene called and invited me out to lunch. I didn't really want to go, but he was uncharacteristically insistent. Admittedly, I went more out of obligation than want. But I'm glad I did. In just 45 short minutes at the Julian Diner,

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MUCH. I GAVE VERY LITTLE
THOUGHT TO WHAT HE
WANTED. I HAD SO MUCH
TO LEARN ...

#### **Get in Touch**



**John Donehower, Society President** johndonehower@gmail.com **Marty Monson, CEO/Executive Director** CEO@barbershop.org over the \$5 Blue Plate Special, Gene Scholtes changed the whole way I looked at the barbershop hobby.

Gene began by asking me questions about what I loved about being a Barbershopper, what my favorite songs were, what I enjoyed about singing and what I wanted to do at rehearsals, and then, after I told him mine, he shared his. We had some things in common and were miles apart in others. He never questioned or challenged what I loved but did point out that, after being the director of the chorus for several years, I had never asked him, a faithful member, until that day, what he wanted to do at rehearsals. I had never asked him, or anyone else for that matter, what they loved to do as a Barbershopper. It was all about what I wanted.

He talked about how every singer on the risers had "that one thing" that kept them coming back week after week, year after year, and about how singers leave, and don't come back, when they aren't getting enough of "that one thing." He gently pointed out that the rehearsals I led each week often fed my "one thing" to the exclusion of others. As a director, I liked to drill and repeat and

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ALL ABOUT WHAT I WANTED.

perfect. All too often, I was oblivious to the fact that not everyone wanted to do what I wanted.

Dick liked to get the interp just right. Dale was all about the ring. Bob liked learning new songs while Bill preferred to sing stuff he already knew. Lyle enjoyed tags. Merlin enjoyed pick-up quartetting. And Gene, well, Gene liked singing Polecats, especially "Sweet Roses of Morn." Everyone liked some of the same stuff, and everyone liked something different. Gene was right. Everyone

The Music Men Chorus of Dubuque, Iowa in 1993. Gene Scholtes is in the back row on far left. John Donehower is in the back row, second from the right.





# John & Marty's Virtual Meetings

April 5, First in-person weekly quartet practice with The Good Ol' Boys! (John) Apr 13, Finance Committee Apr 26, Westchester Chordsmen, NY (Marty) Apr/May, Virtual District Conventions/Meetings May 5, SPC meeting May 16, Board meeting June 2, SPC meeting June 16-18, Chorus America Conference (Marty) June 30-July 4, Virtual International July 17-Aug 7, Virtual HU

# Marty and Dick are Learning

"Spoon Full of Sugar," arr. Russ Foris (Marty) "The Parting Glass," "Mama Tried," & "Flowers on the Wall" (John)

#### **Marty is Reading**

The Art of Possibility,
Rosamund Stone Zander &
Benjamin Zander
Exponential Organizations,
Salim Ismail

GENE WOULD COMPETE ONLY BECAUSE HE KNEW IT WAS SOMEONE ELSE'S "ONE THING." HE DIDN'T PARTICULARLY CARE ABOUT LEARNING NEW SONGS. BUT HE WORKED HARD AT REHEARSAL SO THAT SOMEONE ELSE GOT "THEIR THING."

has their "one thing," and the success of a group may lie in its ability to manage the wants and the needs of all of its members—not just the ones who talk the loudest.

Since assuming a leadership role in the Society, I've thought a lot about that lunch with Gene and what he had to say. Gene didn't care about competing, but he would compete because he knew it was someone else's "one thing." He didn't particularly care about learning new songs, but he worked hard at rehearsal so that someone else got "their thing." He always strived to help other singers get enough of what they wanted at harmony night, and all he asked was that he got some of what he wanted too. Seems like a fair deal!

I think I learned three lessons during that lunch with Gene. First of all, that for the health of a chapter, or a Society, we need to pay more attention to the quiet members that don't always say very much. Secondly, instead of doing fewer things perfectly, we should do more things joyously. And thirdly, and I can't stress this enough, never eat the \$5 Blue Plate Special at the Julian Diner! ■



#### Reader Feedback

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

#### More crossword puzzles, please!

(n) Hoved the Crossword puzzle by Michael Black in the March/ April issue! I'd love to see it as a regular feature in The Harmonizer.



#### **Dave Buss**

Two Rivers, WI

We loved it, too, Dave. While we can't speak on Michael's behalf as a volunteer creator, he has produced a second crossword puzzle that will be run in an upcoming issue. He is also considering creating a third, so stay tuned!

#### More history, please!

(a) Watching Kevin Keller's history of C&J put me in mind of the importance of our history. I bet if there were a fairly substantial article in each issue that reproduced some section from the magazines of the early years, it would be well received. Most of us are a bit overwhelmed at the pace of change these days—in all aspects of life, including barbershop. A look back at the quaint, sometimes important, always interesting history of our Society as shown in the early magazine issues—looking into the mindset of our founders and pioneers—would be fun. At least, to me.

#### **Bill Biffle**

BHS President 2009-10

Great idea, Bill! See page 30 for a 1948 glance at the idea of chapter choruses and quartets by then-Society President O.H. King Cole.

#### Errata! March/April 2021 Chapter Eternal

Some of the Chapter Eternal listings placed members in the wrong district. Rod Businga of Scottsbluff, Neb, was a member of the Rocky Mountain District, not the Central States District. Art Mable of Savannah, Ga. was a member of Carolinas District, not Dixie. John Megow of Colorado Springs, Colo. was a member of the Rocky Mountain District, not the Far Western District.



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# SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS!

We need your help in providing scholarships for high school music teachers to attend Virtual Harmony University in July.

Will you join us?



"The Music Educator Seminar at **Virtual Harmony University** was an inspirational experience. There was an excellent mix of the science of sound, artistry, history and skills. I am returning to a new school year armed with new ideas, skills and buckets of enthusiasm. Thank you!" — Educator and scholarship recipient



After attending HU, over 96% of music educators report implementing barbershop techniques in their classroom.

Invest in the FUTURE of your BHS!
Learn more at give.barbershop.org/educate

BRING YOUR OWN ICE CREAM

# Virtual HU is back even stronger in 2021

Last year was a successful scramble to adapt curriculum to a totally online format; this year, faculty and staff had a big head start

ue to the great success in 2020, Virtual Harmony University 2021 is back and positioned to be the best Harmony University yet, with even more options to customize your learning experience.

New opportunities will allow more interaction, more questions, more hands-on, and more learning. Like last year, you can choose to purchase a full registration or choose from several exciting options.

Virtual Choir (July 17-18). Open to all singers, under the direction of Alex Morris.

Seminars (July 19-31). These six seminars consist of 110-minute topic-specific sessions that meet six times over the course of two weeks. Each has been redesigned and fine-tuned to provide more content, more experiences, and more learning:

- Leadership
- Music Education
- · Directing

- Arranging
- Performing
- Applied Vocal Instruction (new for 2021), geared specifically for music team members and section leaders.

Weekly quartet coaching. Get your pick of favorite barbershop coaches!

Electives (August 2-6). The most impactful 50-minute electives from last year are back again in 2021 and are again taught

by the best in barbershop. This year there are more elective session options for learning and participating with workshops, labs, reading sessions, panel discussions, and a special "From the Vault" series.

... and more. And no HU would be complete without keynote addresses, music premieres, general sessions, tag singing, and (bring your own) ice cream social times!

Don't pass on the can't-miss barbershop event of the summer! Go to barbershop.org/hu to register.



#### STEP OUT YOUR BACK DOOR FOR THE GREAT SUMMER **GET-TOGETHER**

A laptop on the back patio can be your portal to meeting up with hundreds of friends and seeing some great barbershop this summer, when the BHS International Convention goes virtual from June 30-July 4, 2021.

The BHS convention experience has always been as much about the people you see as the shows you watch. So when the pandemic forced us the rebooking of Cleveland 2021 into 2024, we looked at the alternatives.

The success and delight of more than a thousand guests at Virtual Midwinter in January made it clear that we were on the right track. (See full story, page 26.) Over and over, guests have told us that they loved being able to bump into the same folks they'd see face to face-and that the randomness of it all was actually a virtue! So... get ready for the 2021 Virtual International Convention.

Complete event details and schedule were still under development at Harmo*nizer* press time, but you can expect:

- Terrific shows featuring your favorite performers, including champion quartets
- Afterglow-style events with parades of performers
- Meet-ups and social activities galore
- Special presentation by the Westminster Chorus
- Early bird registration will be open by the time this hits your mailbox. For details, go to www.barbershop. org/international



BRITAIN'S LABBS JOINS BHS GLOBAL ALLIANCE



The Ladies Association of **British Barbershop Singers** (LABBS) has become the first

all-women international organization to enter an alliance agreement with the Barbershop Harmony Society. This alignment will provide greater access to education resources for all, judge training, and access to the Society's International Contest stage for LABBS quartets and choruses.

"Taking this step helps us become greater

contributors to all aspects of the barbershop world," said Nancy Philbin, chair of LABBS.

BHS CEO Marty Monson placed the agreement in the context of the Society's Strategic Vision. "We have so many shared goals, including preserving single-gender experiences for men and for women," he said. "Aligning with LABBS reflects our commitment to helping all people find the singing setting that's best for them."

Read more at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

#### WAS THE TAG TOO TASTY?

Nine weeks after Ottowa Barbershopper Bill Panter's pup Mäki was born, the pooch's four paws gave reason for pause. That torn tag page of the 2019 Yearbook Issue (Jan/Feb 2020) in Mäki's snout raises some questions: (a) Does this creature have no respect for history? (b) Shouldn't he be "off paper" after nine whole weeks? (c) Is it possible the little fella overheard the words "dog tag" and simply misunderstood?



CHARITY DURING COVID



#### HEART OF AMERICA RAISES \$19,000 FOR SALVATION ARMY

Kansas City Chapter **Heart of America Chorus** members raised \$19,500 in a single day this past December using a Virtual Caroling Caravan. Over more than 25 years, the chapter has helped raise an estimated \$250,000 through various methods, including a \$25,000 haul in the pre-Covid 2019 holiday season—the entire Salvation Army's largest one-day community group donation.

Before 2020, chorus members traveled to large senior centers to perform 30-minute programs, with transportation underwritten by community sponsors. Due to COVID, in 2020 the chapter rehearsed and video recorded using facilities and staff donated by the First United Methodist Church of Blue Springs. Chapter member Mike Mathieu contacted the retirement centers who would have normally hosted the chapter live to share the video and donation fliers. Chapter members and friends publicized the video and donated as well.

At least 32 chapter members participated in the recorded performance and single rehearsal. Both took place in a large sanctuary that continually draws fresh outside air.

PROJECT CONNECT

# Manageable dues

A fter spending the last few months chatting with members who've been hit by all the weird circumstances of the pandemic, I'm so proud that the Society is allowing our members to pay what they can for their BHS dues for all of 2021.

We would rather have our members remain with us, giving their time and talents to their local chapter, than leave the wonderful barbershop community altogether—especially during a time when we need each other most.

Feel free to call Customer Service at 800-876-7464 and mention "Project Connect" and we'll work with each member individually to

find an amount that makes Society dues manageable.

(You'll likely talk to me!)

If you don't need the help, don't take it. We trust you. If you need it, we've got your back; and if you don't, please, help other people stay on board. (Heck, you might even offer to pay someone else's dues!) Thank you, friends. We'll be together SOON!

- Katie Macdonald, Recruitment & Retention Manager



# ABOUT THE CAROLINAS DISTRICT'S NEW BRAND

The District's 10-year anniversary was a great occasion for a refresh—one that goes deeper than most. In the spirit of outward forcus, for example, notice two missing words: "Carolinas District" and "Barbershop Harmony Society"—words that mean little outside the Society, and which are implied within. Learn more from designer Erik Lindstrom, NSC VP of Marketing by linking to the story at barbershop.org/harmonizer

IN-PERSON CONVENTIONS

## In-person rebooting, Cleveland rebooked

Cleveland International will go on—just in 2024; in-person plans for Midwinter 2022, Charlotte 2022, and Louisville 2023 are moving forward

he consensus of leaders, competitors, quartets, judges, and the Cleveland convention bureau regarding hosting in-person events this summer: "Too soon." Due to ongoing coronavirus concerns, Cleveland 2021 will now be Cleveland 2024—same great venues, same hotels, and same rates. All future conventions, beginning with Pasadena 2022, are expected to be in-person events.

As for summer 2021, look for more information on a big virtual event (June 30-July 4), plus Virtual Harmony University (July 17-August 7).

#### A few details

Those who purchased registrations for Cleveland have already been offered the option to donate their registration, transfer it to Midwinter Pasadena 2022, or apply it toward Charlotte 2022. Hotel rooms were automatically cancelled.

#### 2021 Chorus Qualifiers:

- Paid entry fees for choruses and quartets were automatically refunded.
- 2022 Charlotte International invitations will be granted to previous qualifiers, plus any scoring 78 and above.
- Additional invitations are possible for qualifying scores of 78 and above judged live or by video through Spring 2022.







Venues for the next three conventions. (Top) Charlotte 2022: Spectrum Center. (Middle) Louisville 2023: KFC Yum! Center. (Bottom) Cleveland 2024: Public Auditorium.

**2021 Quartet Qualifiers:** Our standing process will return with qualifying contests in Spring 2022.

**Next Generation Varsity Events:** Age limits will be revised for the 2022 event.



**MORE ONLINE** Link to more details about quartet and chorus qualification, registrations and other information at *barbershop.org/harmonizer*.





**Calgary rebrands, too** 

As noted in the Jan/Feb 2021 Yearbook issue of *The Harmonizer*, Calgary's 30-year-old **Western Hospitality Singers** (EVG) went through a thorough rebranding process in 2021. They are now called **Acappella Road**, with a new brand identity as well. The chapter worked with marketing professors and became a real-world project for marketing students. The chapter created a 10-minute video that chronicles its journey and provides additional detail. Link to it at *barbershop.org/harmonizer*.



**Cara Award Barbershop Nominees** 

As of publication time, the Contemporary A Cappella Society (CASA) planned to present the 2021 Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards in early May. We congratulate the nominees in the barbershop category:

Best Barbershop Album: *Down For Double*, **Kohl Kitzmiller** *This is Halloween*, **Midtown** 

Best Barbershop Song:
"Down For Double"
from *Down For Double*, Kohl Kitzmiller
"This is Halloween,"
from *This is Halloween*, Midtown
"I Write The Songs"
from *He Writes The Songs*, **HARMONIUM** 

See the results at casa.org

#### ASK A STAFF MEMBER

# Member experience



WILL THE RECENT REDUCTIONS IN STAFFING LEVELS AFFECT MY MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE?

The position eliminations and furloughs of 13 talented and passionate individuals earlier this year has been difficult and challenging for both departing and remaining staff. In the weeks since, all remaining staff members have worked together to shift, combine, or reduce job

responsibilities to continue serving members. You definitely shouldn't see a negative impact on your membership experience because of this, but you will see more staff members occasionally assisting in different roles. So, what do you do if the person you used to contact isn't available anymore? It is always the best bet to start with *customerservice@barbershop.org*, and now *everyone* on staff will routinely be checking that email and working to address your needs. Thank you for your patience as we continue to learn, adapt, and remain flexible to serve you.

- Caki Gray, cgray@barbershop.org



Interstate Rivals cheer Drayton Justus While Gentlemen's Agreement lead Drayton Justus (1971 champion) battled cancer in late January, he enjoyed a visit from 1987 champion Interstate Rivals. "We're here to honor the mighty awesome Drayton Justus," lead Joe Connolly told WTOL TV. "One of the



all-time great Barbershoppers and human beings to ever grace the planet." Top: Kipp Buckner (T), Joe Connelly (L), Jay Hawkins

(Bs), Paul Gilman (Br). See the video at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

COVID-19 FALLOUT

## Pandemic forces staff reductions

All staff functions have been realigned, with an emphasis on maintaining member-facing functions and services at the forefront

aced with the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, the Society announced reductions in its staffing levels that began on March 1.

"This has been a difficult, sad day," CEO Marty Monson said in the February 17 announcement. "Today's action to streamline the organization will keep the Society on a sustainable, effective path toward 2022."

Six positions were eliminated and another seven team members went on furlough. These reductions involved multiple departments and levels. Staff functions and responsibilities have been realigned to continue serving BHS members, deliver on priorities, and shape the Society for success post-pandemic.

Priorities include:

- Direct support and services for our members, singing communities and the larger barbershop ecosphere, including thousands of singing communities that engaged with the Society over the past year. Customer service, insurance, copyright and clearance services, *The Harmonizer* magazine, and music and merchandise sales will continue.
- Continuation of many programs that premiered in 2020, such as Virtual Harmony University and Barbershop Live @ Home. Staff will continue to support and engage music educators and youth.
- In collaboration with district leaders, the Society will engage new and existing volunteer leaders (chapter, club, quartet, etc.) to ensure they

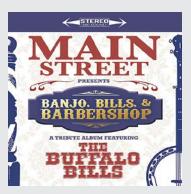
- have the tools and skills to return to a "better normal" of gathering.
- Working with singing community leaders, especially district/chapter officers, to make the Member Center a lively, easy-to-use hub for barbershop business and sharing ideas.
- Working on summer and fall events, while preparing for the first post-COVID, fully in-person international event next January, the 2022 Midwinter Convention in Pasadena. "There's much to be done, and the

BHS team will rally," Monson said.
"This pandemic will steal nearly two years from us and change the composition of our team, yet we will honor our teammates by building on their work—laser-focused on goals and priorities for 2021, 2022, and beyond."



#### The Bills sing with Main Street!

The Buffalo Bills with Banjo was an instant classic from the 1950 champion, who redefined barbershop musical entertainment and enjoyment with the addition of a band. Last July, 2017 champion Main Street honored the Buffalo Bills with a short film featuring their music. That spark inspired Main Street to record a new album entitled Banjo, Bills and Barbershop, partnering with music composer and creator Kyle Mattingly, banjo player extraordinaire Randy Morris, and master arranger Clay Hine. Through production magic, both quartets sing together on several songs. Find the new album at www.mainstreetgt.com. Main Street's short film, Happy Days! A Tribute to The Buffalo Bills has been selected by film festivals and will be playing in theaters later this year.





WHEN COVID GIVES YOU LEMONS ....



# Valentines go virtual

The Mankato, Minn. Riverblenders Chorus overcame restrictions to deliver safe and satisfying Valentines in 2021

n November of 2020, longtime Mankato Riverblender Dwain Fraze and his wife Margaret, reported that the planned 35th year for Mankato Riverblenders' Singing Valentines

was in doubt due to the pandemic. But it didn't take long for our own Oh, Brother! quartet to decide they wouldn't be deterred!

"We bet we could

deliver live Virtual Valentines," suggested quartet brothers Tim (Bs) and Thom (Br) Schubbe. Dwain and the Riverblenders' Board green-lit the project, but were left to wonder whether the product would be high enough quality, how the chapter would find customers, and whether we could recover our expenses.

After several months of experimenting, O'Brother and Riverblender technical guru Dr. Leon Tietz brought back an offering for the Board to review. The Board was overwhelmed with the overall quality and that Valentines could be done "live" on Zoom! On Valentines Day, Oh, Brother! quartet (Thom Schubbe, Matt Strum, Tim Schubbe,

Jerry Morton) and Magic quartet (Doug Peterson, Jeff Grimmer, Stan Bruss, Wayne Hughes) sang beautiful love songs to almost 30 recipients in Nebraska, North Carolina, California, and Minnesota. Magic quartet even sang across seven time zones all the way to a woman in France. Wow! How's that for expanding your market?

> My wife and I were also recipients of a Live Virtual Valentine. It was as if the guys were standing on the other side of our dining room table!

Sight and sound were fantastic as we were beautifully serenaded. Even eye contact was fantastic as they joked with us and we all laughed.

The Riverblenders are anxious to return to our Live and in-person Singing Valentines next year, but we will definitely offer the Virtual Singing Valentine option as well. I have buddies in Portland, Scottsdale, and Orlando lined up to give their wives a Singing Valentine next Valentine's Day.

If your chapter would like technical information as to how this was done. please contact Dr. Lion Tietz (leon. tietz@mnsu.edu) or Tim Schubbe (t.schubbe@comcast.net). ■

- Gary Schmidt, Chapter President

# HARMONY MARKETPLACE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

The Harmony Marketplace is your one-stop-shop for all of your barbershop needs, featuring the largest collection of custom merchandise, and the largest catalog of barbershop music in the world.





SSAA	ARRANGER
1 Good Luck Charm	A. Dale
2 Sing	Grimmer
3 Change the World	Sharon & Wright
4 Lazy Day	Wright
5 When I Fall in Love	Wright

SATB		ARRANGER	
1	Sing	Grimmer	
2	Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You*	Rector & Bergman	
3	A Whole New World	Hicks	
4	Africa	Morris	
5	If There's Anybody Here From out of Town*	Briner	



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TIP SHEET
Rob Macdonald, Leadership Operations Team

▶ bassrgm@gmail.com

CHORUS LEADERSHIP

# Feedback on cue: for People out Front

Most leaders already know the importance of clear feedback to their fellow chapter members and singers—but often we are less clear than we think, and need to put more consideration into the timing of our feedback

eople out Front, we deliver the same information and corrections, week after week, and often scratch our heads in disbelief when it doesn't seem to take. Consider the possibility that the folks on the risers actually have been paying attention—and what they are often hearing and seeing are mixed messages from the People Out Front.

Chorus members, have you:

- Been praised for something you are pretty sure you didn't do well?
- Been criticized after correctly following an earlier instruction?
- Been unsure about what was being asked?
- Been told we'll "work on it" next week?
- Been singled out (or your section singled out) for something?
- Been confused after being told

PEOPLE OUT FRONT, YOU MUST BE "CONGRUENT" WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION, OR PEOPLE WILL RECEIVE MIXED MESSAGES.



"good" when the body language said "not good"?

People out Front, you are the mirror of your chorus: how you look, your attitude, your body language, your choice of words, your tone. You must be "congruent" with your communication, or people will receive mixed messages.

People out Front, are you getting what you asked for? How do you close the gap between your expectations and what you are getting? Here are some time-worn "strategies" we can unfortunately fall back upon:

• Do nothing, and accept whatever

The Cape Breton, Nova Scotia men's chapter in late 2009, with Hal Higgins in front. The chapter's explosive growth that year was credited in part to the style and messages of the "People out Front." Learn more about this chapter's explosive growth that year (also mentioned on page 22 this issue) in the Jan/Feb 2010 issue. barbershop.org/harmonizer.

you are getting.

- Get angry periodically to keep people on their toes.
- Have people read your mind about what you want.
- Hope that people will eventually figure it out with repetition.
   Or instead ...



**MORE ONLINE** Another great article, "Isolation vs. Unification" by Christopher Loftin, can be found at *barbershop.org/harmonizer*.

Set specific expectations about performance that everyone can strive toward and achieve. Explain how each expectation fulfills the goals and mission of the chorus, and that they are not just impositions. As members of ensembles, we all want to do our part, but we need to know what's expected of us. After giving an expectation, don't layer in new, unspoken expectations. Let your people focus on one concept at a time, master it, then layer in the next.

Give motivational feedback when a specific expectation is met or exceeded. Timing is important! Give this feedback as soon as possible after the expectation is met, and that can happen while the group is still singing! Thank them by mentioning that specific expectation. ("Good job" is not specific!) It may sound like:

"Thank you, basses, for singing that low E-flat in unity."

"Good accuracy on that key change!"

MOTIVATIONAL FEEDBACK CONTAINS SHORT, AFFIRMING COMMENTS THAT BUILD CONFIDENCE IN PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY NOW KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE EXPECTATION FEELS AND SOUNDS LIKE.

"Leads, you have mastered that swing beat in the verse, thank you!"

Motivational feedback contains short, affirming comments that build confidence in people, because they now know exactly what the expectation feels and sounds like. It's a better world when we are confident singers!

Give corrective feedback when effort is required to close the gap to the specific expectation. Timing is most

important! Give Corrective Feedback when singers can do something about it. It may just involve identifying the gap ("Tenors, we need you to breathe here"), suggesting a solution ("Tap your feet to feel the timing") or training ("Please practice the notes in this phrase in your section rehearsal").

Corrective feedback contains a short, specific need to close the gap at a time when singers can act. Done well, corrective feedback builds competence in people. Don't we all want to become better singers? We love to build our singing competence!

People out Front, you can see how corrective feedback and motivational feedback work together. As the identified gap closes, you can thank people for their achievement. Together, with increasing confidence and competence, you are creating great value in singers. You also create a great relationship between singers and you.

#### FOUR WAYS TO KEEP BARBERSHOP ALIVE IN 2021

ow do we keep our choruses alive until we can safely sing together in person again? Here are four things you can do to keep your group connected as we wait for in-person meetings to become safe again.

Support your chorus leaders.
Do you miss singing with your friends on the risers? You are not alone. Your directors miss you too. Send them your ideas for things to do, ways to connect, reasons to stick with it. Tell them how much you appreciate the work they're doing. They didn't sign up to lead a

chorus virtually; acknowledgement and solidarity go a long way.

Ask for help. COVID has separated us, but it's also allowed us to connect with people anywhere in the world. Reach out to people that inspire you. Visit a virtual rehearsal of a favorite chorus. See how other people are doing things, and stay open-minded. Seeing other people innovating and trying new things can inspire you to do the same.

**Be kind to yourself.** We are all figuring this out as we go along, and we are failing our

way forward. When everything seems like it's falling apart and nothing is going right, remind yourself that you're not alone, that this is tough, and that you're doing your best. Treat yourself like you would a dear friend that's struggling.

Create a goal. It's easier to swim in any direction than it is to tread water. Put on a virtual show and invite other choruses to be part of it. Learn some polecats together. Find a buddy who sings another part and learn to love duets.

The music is what brings us together, but the relationships

we forge as we go through tough times are what keep us together. When we are all able to get back together and sing, the experience will be better for all the time we spend building those relationships now.

> by Drew Osterhout and Kathleen Petersen drew.osterhout@gmail.com Kathleenrp@msn.com







SPOTLIGHT
Christian Hunter, BHS Board of Directors

☑ njbbslead@gmail.com

# Manny Lopez: true encouragement

From tagging to directing to leadership, San Antonio native Manny Lopez has made encouragement his personal mission

## WHAT BARBERSHOPPERS DO YOU ASPIRE TO BE LIKE?

People like Dr. Jim Henry. I was in St. Joseph, Missouri when he gave his "Gold Medal Moments" speech, and it was just so inspiring. Not only because he was a music educator, but the passion he had for the craft of barbershop.

YOU ARE DIRECTING A MIXED BARBERSHOP CHORUS, YOU'RE MUSIC VP OF ANOTHER MIXED CHORUS, AND YOU'RE A YOUNGER LATINO MAN IN A CULTURE DOMINATED BY CONSIDERABLY OLDER WHITE MEN. IN LIGHT OF ALL OF THIS, WHAT DOES "EVERYONE IN HARMONY" MEAN TO YOU?

That you're accepting of everybody and anybody. You know, whether it's race or age or gender or anything else, it doesn't matter as long as you're accepting.

## HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN BARBERSHOP?

In my freshman year as a music major at Texas State University, I saw a flyer with flames and all this stuff for a "HOT Chorus" concert. Attending would fill a class credit, so I went, and I saw a familiar face singing a solo—my then-roommate and soon-to-be director of **The Marcsmen**, Brent Dunavant. After the show, he told me that "HOT" meant **Heart of Texas**, a barbershop chorus. A month later, I asked him about barbershop. I joined the chorus and the rest is history.

HOW SOON DID YOU START SINGING IN QUARTETS?



It didn't take long—you sing in a quartet as part of the chorus audition. It was the most exhilarating and nerve-wracking thing I'd ever done, and by then I'd already been in an opera. But I thought singing in a quartet was more exciting.

#### HAVE YOU FOUND IT HARD TO GO BETWEEN THE WORLDS OF OPERA AND BARBERSHOP?

I didn't, but a lot of young classically trained barbershop singers find it hard to switch back and forth and find their voice. However, I found classical training enhances my barbershop performance. I do sing with a vibrato and I use it more for color texture.

#### WHAT PART DO YOU SING?

I've been a tenor in my four registered quartets and had some lead experience, but I wanted to have a challenge and move to baritone. In my current quartet, **Southern Stride**, I started at baritone and Peter Cunningham was lead, but we later decided to swap voice parts. Peter, Wallace Stan-

Southern Stride quartet in Montana, shortly before what turned out to be their most recent pre-COVID chapter show. Wallace Stanley (Bs), Diane Stanley (T), Peter Cunningham (Br), Manny Lopez (L).

ley, and I were all fraternity brothers with Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the music fraternity. Diane Stanley (married to Wallace) is Sigma Alpha Iota, the sister sorority. Wallace is the music director of our choir at Grace Church in New Braunfels, Texas. Diane is the soprano section leader. I'm the alto section leader. We were always a trio, and when we added Peter and started singing barbershop, Diane said, "This is what I want." From time to time, Peter comes to our church and we'll sing for our congregation.

## HOW DID THE PANDEMIC AFFECT SOUTHERN STRIDE?

The first week of March, 2020 was probably the last "normal" week in North America, and we were in Montana with the **Bozeman Chordsrustlers**. We also joined a local high school band and choir on a city tour, where we sang



**WATCH ONLINE** This article is a fraction of the full video of this interview. See the unedited video at *barbershop.org/harmonizer*.

for at least 10 schools. Because of the pandemic, the Chordrustlers show was very sparse, but we sang our hearts out to the people who came. We haven't rehearsed a lot since then—we have been very mindful of our families.

# YOU ARE A HIGHLY SOUGHT-OUT SOURCE OF REALLY FUN, ENTERTAINING TAGS AND SO WONDERFUL IN YOUR INCLUSIVE WAY OF BRINGING PEOPLE INTO TAGS. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON TAG CULTURE?

When you are teaching somebody a tag, whether they are new or shy to singing, remember the E of encouragement without being pushy. How would you feel if you were in this person's spot? Vulnerable? Unsure? Internalize that feeling and let it guide you.

# SPEAKING OF ENCOURAGEMENT, TELL US ABOUT THE AMAZING BARBERPALOOZA EVENT YOU ORGANIZED.

San Antonio has three BHS chapters





and a lot of Sweet Adeline chapters, but we weren't getting together a lot except at district conventions. My idea was to organize a late September 2019 festival for San Antonio and surrounding area groups featuring a local venue, free admission and a chance to "tune up" for upcoming contests in front of other Barbershoppers. We especially wanted the non-competing chapters to perform. It was free, but our San Antonio Chordsmen organized a silent auction, a bake sale, and a suggested "love offering" from participants, with proceeds going to go to local Youth in Harmony and Young Women in Harmony. We had 300 Barbershoppers from 11 chapters in South Texas, some traveling more than four hours each way, plus hundreds of other communitv members.

## THE MARCSMEN DID AN AMAZING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE





Encouraging others to achieve greater success is pretty much a 24/7 endeavor for Manny. His successes in chapter and interchapter development have landed him as a certified facilitator on the Leadership Operations Team, where he works with multiple chapters to help them achieve greater success. Encouragement is his day job, too, where he works to maximize the number of middle school students who are inspired to apply for and graduate from four-year universities. Ultimately, maintaining close ties with family and friends means everything to Manny. Show are his mother, sister, and father, as well as friends Will Rodriguez and Dan Walz, bari and bass of 2019 Quartet Champion Signature.

#### PERFORMANCE OF "YOU DON'T KNOW ME" AT INTERNATIONAL IN 2019. WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THAT?

It was a team effort. I had the idea to use ASL to step out of our comfort zone, then Matthew Cassi brought in his ASL teacher friend, and then a lot of us got to work.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN BARBERSHOP?

All the friends I've made and the amazing connections barbershop brings.

#### ABOUT MANNY LOPEZ

BHS member since 2004 25+ Persons of Note Leadership Operations Team facilitator

#### **CHORUS DIRECTOR**

- San Antonio Chordsmen (2007-19)
- SWD Young Guns (2009-11)

#### **QUARTET**

- Exclamation (2005-07, 2009-11)
- Varsity (2009)
- Southern Stride (2017-present)

#### **YOUTH ADVOCATE**

- SWD Young Guns
- NED HXNE camp
- SWD YMIH
- Marcsmen (founder)

#### **FAMILY**

Lauro (father), Andrea (mother), Laura Sanchez (sister)

#### **EDUCATION**

Texas State University - San Marcos TX

#### **OCCUPATION**

AVID assistant at Nimitz Middle School, San Antonio

# ÚNIOR FERREIRA/UNSPLASH.COM, MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY, LORIN MAY

# THE BRIGHTER OF TW PATHS

AFTER COVID, THE STATUS QUO WILL NEVER BE MORE DANGEROUS, BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES WILL NEVER BE BIGGER. BE READY WHEN THAT BRIEF WINDOW OPENS!

Adapted from Kevin Keller's Keynote Address at the 2021 Virtual Midwinter Convention.

arbershop singing was saved in 1938 thanks in large part to O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall inviting their friends and colleagues to a meeting. Through the early growth of SPEBSQSA, barbershop singing was preserved. In the early issues of ReChordings and The Harmonizer, you will find that it was explicitly the duty of every chapter to sponsor other chapters. All of us were charged with the growth of the Society, not of preserving barbershop per se. Propagation ensured preservation.

Now, the internet is strewn with barbershop performances, and even if every Barbershopper disappeared, someone would stumble across one of those videos and find three other people to form a quartet and to replicate the performance. If you don't think that is true, look to Barberdrunk (Argentina), Oh, Boy (Belgium) and other quartets where the style gained a foothold where no prior barbershop

existed. Our style is incredibly powerful and appealing. People will sing it forever. Barbershop is preserved.

But do we think the Barbershop Harmony Society is worth preserving? Our actions as leaders in our chapters are directed towards preserving our individual choruses and chapters, which in turn preserves the Society. We have seen our membership decline over the last 40 years. We have seen once-strong chapters fall by the wayside. This alone doesn't threaten our Society; we find ways to adapt and succeed. But never in my wildest dreams did I foresee a pandemic would severely threaten our Society. If we can't meet and sing, how can we go on?

In 11 months of visiting your chapters on at least two Zoom calls a week, I have seen that choruses are doing whatever they can to keep their members engaged and connected, despite lower numbers than in-person rehearsals. Many are learning more than we would have normally. Choruses have had access to barbershop legends that they normally wouldn't have, and there are people who are as die-hard as I

am about barbershop and our future. Members who have moved away have been able to connect with their chorus and their friends, or visit the many chapters and quartets that have opened their doors to connect with others. Most importantly, we have seen people care about each other even more than they care about barbershop.

On the concerning side: (1) Typically, Zoom attendance is less than 50% of the active chorus membership and (2) there is a noticeable fatigue in moving forward virtually.

#### Path #1: the peril of the status quo

A couple of decades ago, I told David Wright I needed to take a break from singing with the Ambassadors of Har**mony** for a while. He said something that was profound at the time: "This is fragile. It takes all of us to continually invest ourselves to ensure that it keeps going. It would not take much for things to fall apart."

There is a universal truth at work: "The longer you are away, the less you miss something." They are always at



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Early on, it was explicitly the duty of every chapter to sponsor other chapters. All of us were charged with the growth of the Society, not of preserving barbershop per se. Propagation ensured preservation. Do we think the Barbershop Harmony Society is worth preserving?





Kevin Keller is a BHS Hall of Fame arranger, coach, judge, leader, and historian. He is a long-time Harmony University faculty member and a member of the Ambassadors of Harmony. kkbari@charter.net

We know that there is light at the end of the COVID tunnel, when we can safely return to singing together. We just don't know when. But that doesn't stop us from planning for that time. We can plan today, right now. We can do everything associated with that plan shy of putting down exact dates. We can plan today for an exciting tomorrow.

ne Harmonizer | May/June

risk of not coming back for years, if ever.

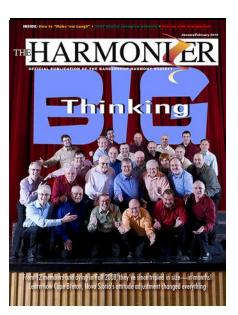
Because of my statistics background, I have performed two BHS membership studies in the past dozen yearsthe first was around 2008-09 and the last one was in 2018. Two years ago, the numbers showed that as people stay, the probability that they renew another year increases! After year one, we lose 33% of our new members. Of the 67% remaining, over 80% will renew another year. And it keeps steadily increasing until around year 10, where the retention of these members is around 90%. In the 2000s, members averaged just under five years of membership, but in the 2010s, it projects over seven years. We're getting better at retaining the members we have. Our value proposition is remarkably strong. Incredibly strong.

But we weren't recruiting enough new members. Firsthand, I saw choruses not actively working to fill their risers. When someone walks in the door, they'll see it is good. But we weren't selling ourselves, and we weren't competing actively for singers who were out there. Yet, as demonstrated by the actions of countless thousands of members, what we have in our Society is worth preserving.

I am no Pollyanna. Through my training in my career, I always plan for the worst and hope for the best. I see two paths to take going forward. I've seen many chapters taking path #1, but very few chapters discussing path #2.

Path #1: Assuming that when it is safe to return that everyone will come back. But I see "the longer you are away, the less you miss it" in the reduced participation on the calls. I hear it in the fatigue of those on the Zoom calls. There is a damage that this pandemic is taking on each of our choruses, overt as well as hidden. We can't leverage our strongest assets—our music and our ability to be human with each other.

Most of us die-hards will be back when it's safe, but those who haven't become invested in the same way might move on to something else. They



In 2008, the Cape Breton, Nova Scotia Chapter saw itself as a dying chapter, down to only 12 members, consistently low contest scores, and a tiny community footprint. Yet, with no change in director or chorus leadership, membership *tripled* in less than a year. It all began when member #13 joined and helped the others see what the chapter already had to offer. They finally began to dream, then executed a plan. lan/Feb 2010 issue, *barbershop.org/harmonizer*.

might have already moved on.

To not be actively planning in retaining and recruiting will spell the end of many choruses in our Society. I do hope I'm wrong about this, but I'm seeing all sorts of signs that many of our chapters and choruses are going to follow this path.

# Path #2: The exciting opportunity ahead—if you plan for it

Path #2, however, is an exciting future of new growth. If every member/chorus/chapter/district in our Society embraced Path #2, we would see an exciting new future with new growth.

We have the time in 2021 to decide which path to take.

I've always believed When the student is ready, the teacher arrives. In the early 1990s, I was becoming disillusioned with the path my life had been taking. I was considering all sorts

of changes in my life to "turn things around," including dropping my BHS membership. I wasn't accomplishing what I wanted to accomplish in barbershop and would not anytime soon, if at all. My participation was stopping me from pursuing other interests that might turn things around.

About that same time, I attended a motivational speech by Lou Holtz, the legendary national champion coach of Notre Dame football. He spoke of being fired as a coach early in his career, shortly after his last child was born. His family had no income, he had no job, and he was rapidly becoming depressed. He then told the story of what changed his life.

His life changed after he began writing down everything he wanted to accomplish in his life. This wasn't a bucket list of places to go or things to do. These were aspirational dreams. One was to become the head football coach of Notre Dame and win a national championship. The more he wrote, the more excited he became about his life, even while he was at an emotional bottom. I realized I was at an emotional bottom.

I drove home from that talk and began to write. And write. And write. When I finished I had four pages filled with dreams and aspirations, things I wanted to accomplish in my life. Being married. Having a family. Having grandchildren. Accomplishing things in my career. And so on. And just like Lou Holtz said, I became more and more excited as I wrote. I could feel the dark cloud lifting that night the more I wrote, because everything I wrote down was possible, and I felt like I now had a direction.

#### **How to use Design Thinking**

In business, companies employ a

**Your chapter's finest moment ever may start at a conference table.** Check out pages 24 and 26-27 for tips on turning your big ideas into realistic plans that energize and mobilize chapter members to produce success.

concept called Design Thinking to develop new products and services for their customers. There are four steps:

**Step 1. "What IS?"** What's our current state? Where are we today? That's pretty easy. Most of us can do this effortlessly.

**Step 2: "What IF?"** This is the exciting one, where you get to dream unencumbered by what's been done or not done in the past. This is exactly the advice of Lou Holtz.

- What IF we had 100 members?
- What IF we sang for 10,000 people next year?
- What IF we aligned with the local symphony orchestra for a concert?
- What if we did a concert and sold 1,000 tickets?

And so on. Only you and your chorus can write that list. Harmony Hall can't.

The Board of Directors can't. Your district can't. But you can. I promise you: it's fun once you get started!

Step 3: "What WOWS?" What can your members get behind and get excited about? You can't do it all, but the members are your resources to make things go. What wows them? Narrow your list to those.

Step 4: "What WORKS?" Perhaps not everything that wows can be done, but some can. Choosing a "wow" that can actually happen inspires us and gives us purpose; it fuels us, rallies us, and drives us forward.

Coming back to our current reality, we know that there is light at the end of the COVID tunnel, when we can safely return to singing together. We just don't know when, but that doesn't stop us from planning for that time. We can



plan today, right now. We can do everything associated with that plan shy of putting down exact dates. We can plan today for an exciting tomorrow.

#### **Chapters: Prepare to seize the** coming moment before it's over

There's nothing that is good about this pandemic. Many lives have been lost; careers, businesses, and finances have been seriously disrupted. But it has provided some insight and an opportunity for our Society to grow in unprecedented ways.

We have learned that we are social creatures. We need to affiliate. Even being a self-proclaimed wallflower, I can't wait to be with people again.

But the inability for people to affiliate has created a tremendous opportunity for us going forward. People will

be looking for something to participate in when the pandemic is over. There is pent-up demand to participate in something meaningful outside of the home. People need what our Society has to offer. Even though Everyone in Harmony was not planned to handle a pandemic, the infrastructure is in place for us to expand our own chapters and Society in any way we see fit.

But here's my prediction: The win-

#### So, now what? Tips for developing and implementing successful plans

have been overwhelmed by the response from my Midwinter address-not just, "Great job, Kevin" but from people and groups that are actually taking some action.

The key is to define your status quo and view it as a problem to be solved. You are either "green and growing" or "ripe and rotting," and status quo is the start of "ripe and rotting." Change is inevitable, and we must all plan for it constantly. A "problem" is merely the gap between where you are today and where you aspire to be tomorrow. Whether you instead call these "opportunities for improvement" or "even better if," you must apply problem solving methodologies to determine how to close those gaps.

Step 1: "What is the problem we are trying to solve?" This is the "What Is"—your current state of affairs; your baseline. Where are you today? You may already know what problem(s) you wish to tackle, or you might

Leaders despise not having all of the answers; yet, this is the time *not* to have answers to 'Okay, what's the plan?'

benefit from the Lou Holtz writing exercise. The "What If" and "What Wows" are merely ways to generate and winnow down potential ideas to isolate what you are going to work on.

Step 2: Set SMART goals. This is vital to any project's success. Most industries use SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound. Nebulous goals will fail. SMART goals have a chance because everyone understands the end-state, which keeps all focused on the target and helps determine which actions help you toward your goal. A couple of points:

- Measurable. A goal like "improving morale" is not measurable, but "increasing attendance from 50% to 80%" certainly is (and is also specific). Attendance could be a proxy for morale.
- Attainable. If a goal is too small, improvement can happen by chance and chance alone; no one works on it. If it's too large and overwhelming, people give up before they get started. Determine a healthy stretch that is doable; however, it will require that you do things differently. This causes you to rethink how you have done things in the past and what you must do to achieve the goal.

Step 3. Engage your resources. Typically, "Leadership" goes off and comes up with ideas, and then communicates what is going to happen. Reactions are almost always negative: "It's not broken; why are we trying to fix it?" or "That's really a bad idea." At this point, the game is lost. You've lost buy-in from the very people who are needed to create change.

Rather, the correct step is motivation. You need to work with the "troops" to explain the gap in performance and create a sense of urgency that all of us must address the problem. What will happen if the gap is closed? What will happen if the gap isn't closed?

Leaders typically despise not having all of the answers; yet, this is the time not to have answers to "Okay, what's the plan?" The answer is, "We don't know yet. We are looking for your input." Only once your members see that they are truly being called upon to provide solutions will the phone calls and emails filled with innovative ideas begin.

4. Set up quick potential failures that test your assumptions. As you begin to accumulate the ideas and thoughts, themes will emerge that can be tried and tested. Historically, chapters then create a huge program that will "fix" the problem; however, these programs are typically based upon all sorts of assumptions about the nature of the problem to be solved and how to address it.

Design Thinking asks that we identify and test these assumptions. If a program built upon correct assumptions fails, a better program built on those assumptions might succeed; however, if your underlying assumptions are wrong, not only is a program more likely to fail, but you are less likely to understand why it failed.

What assumptions are you making? Can you test those assumptions? If so, do that first. In either case, don't create large programs. Create a series of small solutions and see which work. For example, if you have identified 10 easy-to-implement ideas related to publicity or recruiting (newspaper, social media, outreach, etc.), implement all of them rather than placing all of your eggs into one basket. Those that are "sticky," develop and expand further. Have a mindset of failing quickly and trying something else.

5. Seek for near-term, tangible consequences. People are motivated by immediate and certain consequences, not by futuristic and uncertain possibilities. As you look at solutions, do they create immediate and certain consequences? If not, don't be surprised if you don't get the buy-in you expect.

Sounds complicated? It can be. Between resources at the chapter, district, and/or International level, there are people who understand these fundamentals and can help you navigate solving your most pressing needs.

- Kevin Keller





dow of opportunity will be open for a short time. Once time passes after it is safe, we will return to a world where we soon forget the events of 2020. After some time, we will fall back into predictable and comfortable patterns. That window will close.

The time to dream is now, not later. The time to plan is now, not later.

This is Path #2. It could lead to a Society previously existing only in our dreams. But it is up to you and me. Not to Harmony Hall. Not to the Society Board of Directors. Not to our district leaders. For years, I've heard chapters wanting Harmony Hall to help them solve their problems. Here's the truth: They don't want Harmony Hall to help them with their problems. They want Harmony Hall to fix their problems. Sorry, that isn't happening. You have to do it. All that Harmony Hall and the districts can do is provide resources. but they can't fix it. We have to do more at this time to preserve and grow our chapters.

#### Your personal post-COVID goals

I have been guilty historically of not recruiting members. I do anything to avoid being a salesman. Everyone knows I'm involved in barbershop and they kind of know what that is, but I don't actively invite people. That will change when it is safe. I've already identified four people that I will actively recruit and I won't stop there.

I have fond memories of great Barbershoppers availing themselves at conventions and other activities singing songs, woodshedding, teaching tags and just hanging around with Joe Barbershoppers like me. I have been guilty the last couple of decades of not teaching tags like I used to. At conventions, rather than singing in the lobby or hanging out I would just crash and go to sleep.

All of that will change when it is safe to return. I will aspire to be like those people that I idolized in my barbershop youth. I will be available, not unavailable. I will continue to be of service to those who ask for my help, but I now have a new perspective. For me, this is about preserving and growing the Society that I fell in love with almost 43 years ago and will be thriving long after I'm gone.

For whatever reasons, last year I was humbled beyond words to be inducted into the Barbershop Harmony Society's Hall of Fame. I feel totally unworthy of such an honor. Anything I've done has been attempting to give back what our Society gave an awkward and lost 16 year-old. It literally has given me everything in life from that point on.

Now, it could be really easy for me and likely several of you to say, "I've done my part. I've given a lot over the years and I've had a great run."

However, you have my word on this: Whatever I might have done in the past to promote and preserve barbershop will pale in comparison to what I will do going forward.

I ask all of you to join me in that pledge, in your own way. It is time to not just preserve our Society—it is time to grow our Society. It will take all of us; everyone giving in our own ways. If we all commit to Path #2 and use this time to plan our future, individually as well as collectively, we will see a future that will engage in ways we never dreamed. I believe with all of my heart that if we choose a bigger future and commit to it, it is there for us.

In closing, I love all of you, I miss you beyond words, and I can't wait to see you once again and sing. ■

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Whatever I might have done in the past to promote and preserve barbershop will pale in comparison to what I will do going forward. I ask all of you to join me in that pledge, in your own way. It is time to not just preserve our Society-it is time to grow our Society.



The full Midwinter Keynote Address is available on the Barbershop Harmony Society YouTube page: *YouTube.com/barbershopharmony38* 



he SMART approach to goal setting (Kevin Keller, page 24 this issue) provides a strong intent to deliver success, not only for the targeted project, but also for the tangent success components that tend to bloom and thrive in the course of the journey. A critical part to achieving all of these successes is to write down everything that is part of the goal-setting plan.

Members must own the plan as soon as possible. While it would be wonderful if all or even the majority of the membership were involved in the dream and design phase, that seldom occurs. The plan often originates at the table of the chapter leaders, perhaps a brainstorming session ignites a call to action and the rough design of a plan. But as soon as possible, the dream must be shared with the membership, allowing it to percolate in their minds. Seek the members'

input, questions, and advice. It is imperative that they feel part of the process of creation rather than simply told what is expected of them. The target—the goal—and the plan to get there must be owned by everyone involved. It is not the chapter president's plan. It is not the chapter board's plan. It is the chapter's plan, and all members are part of the chapter. Proper communication, both written and verbal, brings everyone together under one umbrella of intent.

Write it simply. Once the goal has passed the SMART test, it must be

**Reaching Goals 101.** Page 1 of a goal-setting worksheet from BHS Leadership Curriculum. Section headings: (1) Goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Tanglible—stated positively, stated in the now; (2) Benefits from Achieving this Goal; (3) Possible Obstacles; (4) Possible Solutions.





Area	Area Today's Date		Final Target Date	Date Achieved						
Goal (Specific, Mea	Soal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Tangible									
Benefits from Ach	Senefits from Achieving this Goal:									
Possible Obstacle	s:	Possible Solutions:								
		_								

BHS Leadership Curriculum: Setting and Achieving Goals Participant Packet | Rev. 12-2016 Page 5 o



written in as easily constructed a sentence as possible. This is not the time to elaborate on the goal with ancillary thoughts of things to also consider. This is a statement for which you seek buy-in, constructed in the present and stated positively.

Prepare for some to resist change.

When you speak of a goal, some members will hear only the word "change"—oftentimes a difficult word to swallow. Members want to know how achieving the goal will affect their routine involvement. Let's not forget that some members are always comfortable with the status quo. Again, showing in print the targeted benefits in achieving this goal, and displaying them as a constant reminder, will build endurance and





#### **Goal Setting Worksheet**

Specific Action Steps for Achieving This Goal:	Who is Responsible?	Target Date	Review Date	Completion Date					
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
Method	of Tracking	g Progress							
Is it worth the time, effort and money to reach this goal?									
YesNo Yes, but later									

Showing in print the targeted benefits of achieving your chapter's goal, and displaying them as a constant reminder, will build endurance and stability into the plan and maintain a unified focus.



stability into the plan and maintain a unified focus.

Neutralize the skeptics' concerns. Skeptics rarely stand in front of the chapter to proclaim their pessimism—rather, they turn to the person next to them and "riser grumble" about how the plan won't work. Sadly, some of these individuals carry verbal weight. Therefore, anticipate and address any possible obstacles and cite possible solutions. Much of the "riser grumble" will then be nullified in the beginning.

Keep action steps clear and in the foreground. Action steps must be written as concisely as the goal itself. These are the stepping stones to measure along the way. Do not keep

Page 2 of the goal-setting worksheet from page 24. Column headings: (1) Specific Action steps for Achieving This Goal. (2) Who is Responsible? (3) Target Date; (4) Review Date; (5) Completion Date.

those who are entrusted with each of the action steps in quiet reserve. When only a few members are aware of part of the plan's success, obstacles, or adjustments, that negates the true ownership by all chapter members. It is much better for everyone to be involved in every emotion of the plan as it unfolds. Celebrate immediately the successful completion of an action step. Cheer on the attack of the next action step. Embrace as a group if an action step didn't go as planned and needs to be revisited.

Develop leadership among task managers. Those who manage each task may regularly demonstrate their readiness for chapter leadership down the road. A successful goal setting plan can do much to construct a solid line of succession planning.

A truly healthy and vibrant chapter or singing community shares ownership of all chapter processes, intents, and goals with each of the members. All members need to feel their involvement. While it is the chapter leader who encourages the heart, the pulse of the organization beats through each of the members.

**Steve Wyszomierski** (photo below), chair of the Leadership Operations Team, has decades of involvement in chapter officer and leadership training. He has held numerous chapter and district offices, including JAD District president. *sbw@zoominternet.net* 

# Contact the team that's trained to help your chapter succeed

The Leadership Operations Team of the Barbershop Harmony Society is the conduit to the Healthy Chapter Initiative. Programs available under the team's guidance aid chapters and singing communities in discovering their identity. Once a group learns its "why" for existence, the team stands ready to assist in any way possible to help achieve growth. It is hoped that healthy singing communities become healthier and struggling communities improve their quality of life. For more information or to possibly engage the services of one of the team's 17 trained facilitators, contact *leadershipopt@barbershop.org*.





# OUR FIRST-EVER EVENT IN A VIRTUAL WORLD FELT TANTALIZINGLY CLOSE TO THE REAL THING

f you couldn't read the expression on the face in front of you—kind of like when someone is wearing a mask—the tone told you that the voice behind the avatar was smiling. "Well, I needed that," Michael Kelly told a barbershop-themed Facebook group shortly after the Society's first-ever convention held in a virtual world. "I think after a year of not

singing I nearly forgot that feeling of family that is our barbershop world. ... In some ways it was my favorite convention of all time."

The 3D world of Virtual Midwinter 2021 was no gimmick—it was *the* element that immersed us in a strangely familiar social vibe that's impossible on a Zoom meeting: the pleasure of running into a friend or barbershop hero

It was common to see groups attempting a tag or even a dance. Movement throughout the virtual world became second nature within minutes, and speaking with or hearing any person or group was like natural conversation—one simply needed to walk within speaking distance and start talking.





2019 International Bronze Medalist Midtown joined 2018 Champion After Hours among more than 20 groups that hosted live or recorded afterglow performances, which included live audience interaction.

by chance and just stopping to enjoy a chat. And sometimes a tag. And, more frequently that you might have imagined, quite a bit of "dancing."

The cartoon-like aesthetic and controls became second nature in almost no time and unleashed an unrestrained four-day offering of high-quality classes, high-definition concerts, inspiration, and hours of unstructured conversations and silly play as avatars. And let's not undersell the pleasure of enjoying an entire convention without having to sneak a furtive glance at anybody's name tag!

#### A big gamble that paid off

This January convention was only green-lit in October, leaving three months for staff, volunteers, and performers to prepare for a virtual version of an event that typically enjoyed a seven-year lead-up. At the first live Virtual Midwinter pre-convention event, a BHS donor gathering on the virtual campus, "my biggest concern was that people were going to get there and think it was stupid," said Dusty Schleier, BHS Director of Events and Conventions. But as the attendees socialized and raved about the great sound and

We enjoyed a strangely familiar social vibe that's impossible on Zoom: the pleasure of running into a friend by chance and stopping to enjoy a chat.

natural human interaction, it was clear that the event would more than live up to its billing.

"This one was a home run," said Lance Lubin (L) of Dewey, Singum & **Howe** quartet. "Of everything that's happened during COVID times, this was the best. You filled up barbershop tanks that had been running on fumes for months."

The total of 1,125 registered attendees was on par with a typical Midwinter Convention (before counting Next Generation youth attendees). For nearly half of Virtual Midwinter attendees. this was their first-ever Midwinter.

#### How it came about

As Society staff pivoted toward virtual events last year, Virtual Harmony University and the Legacy Quartet Contest became the big summer offerings. District and chapter events would take up the rest of 2020. Dusty began examining how to create a big



Some of the dozens of Harmony University classes were standing room-only throughout the four-day event. Thanks to the virtual environment, there was no such thing as a poor view of the screen nor the possibility of sitting too far away to hear instructors. Audio was always crystal clear at classes, concerts, and afterglows, and a full-screen view of the main screen (above) was always a single click away.









(L-R) A staff and attendee Meet and Greet at the BHS membership booth. 2020 Seniors Quartet Champion Hearsay on one of several concurrent afterglow stages. The packed "139th Street Theater" where attendees enjoyed a full show of never-before-seen videos that were recently unearthed from BHS archives.

#### **Testimonials from Facebook**

I found myself laughing, crying, and starstruck. An A+ overall.

– Steve Hanft

This [platorm] is an absolute gem that BHS has found. The hysterical exploration of the capabilities, from melding mobs inside a single "away" avatar to attempting a synced line dance killed me! Would I do another this way? Absolutely!

Kevin Williams

So many of my Harmony Brigade friends from around the world stopped me and said hello!

– Joseph Gurreri

I have found my people. This having been my first BHS convention of any kind, I haven't smiled and laughed so much for four consecutive days in a very long time. It was life-changing. I promise, that is not hyperbole.

- Michael Testa

I'm extremely new to the barbershop circle, and what happened was the best four days of my life. I can't wait to attend my first in-person one.

– Max Coxon

splash in 2021, which meant offering something members weren't getting on Zoom every week or at prior events.

He had learned about virtual event company Virbela at a pre-pandemic meeting planner's convention. After he visited a live music festival on the platform, a contract was signed in mid-October. Virbela partner Event Farm began an eight-week process of building a BHS-sized virtual world.

While staff, leaders, volunteers, and performers finished each day very exhausted from managing the convention (Dusty was far more tired than after a live event) four days of enthusiastic activity left attendees laughing and smiling. Dusty stated that feedback from social media and post-convention surveys delivered even higher enthusiasm than a typical live event-in part because the virtual event actually felt so much like a live one.

"The fact that voices would fade in as you approached, fade out as you walked away, and you would only hear nearby discussion while others farther away were out of 'earshot' made a vitural world seem so real!" wrote attendee Kevin Williams to a barbershop Facebook group.

"We realized how much we need to communicate with each other in more ways than Zooming," wrote







(Top Left) BHS Board member Blair Brown delivers one of three Keynote addresses during Virtual Midwinter. An article based on that address is scheduled for an upcoming edition of *The* Harmonizer. (Top Right) Henry Beecher Hicks, III speaks with audience members following his Keynote address regarding the National Museum of African American Music that recently opened iust around the corner from BHS Headquarters in Nashville. While many party-goers enjoyed the shows on the beach, others enjoyed racing the nearby boats.

Evergreen District Webmaster Judy Galloway in *The Timbre* e-newsletter. "There were distinct times where I genuinely felt like I was actually there. I see a healthy blend of live and virtual [events] in the future."

#### What is the future of this platform?

Considering that a virtual event's biggest strength is in how well it mimics the experience of an in-person gathering, its potential future roles will be uncertain once in-person events recommence. Will the virtual world's appeal wane, or will it transition to certain niche offerings?

The other consideration is cost. While the virtual world eliminates travel and hotel costs, it is not inexpensive to set up and run, even



There were slick nightly shows and afterglows, and during the day there were Harmony University classes as well as formal "Meet and Greet" events with famous and knowledgeable Barbershoppers. But like an Island-sized convention hotel lobby, it was never too late at night or too early in the morning to find friends catching up after nearly a year apart. After the formal end of the convention (celebrated by a fireworks show), hundreds of attendees stayed around for hours more.



though the sizable investment to set up this virtual campus has already been paid for. While the Society purchased a year-long Virbela contract, per-event and per-user costs still apply. It was such a hit that districts and other BHS partners are exploring the option of hosting their own

events under the BHS contract.

Stay tuned. If you missed Virtual Midwinter, you may yet get the chance to dust off your pitch pipe and get your groove on at a future virtual event! ■

- Lorin May, editor of The Harmonizer harmonizer@barbershop.org





# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by O. H. King Cole

In a recent exchange of correspondence with one of our District officers, it was a distinct surprise for me to learn that some of our members apparently question the value of choruses within our Society. Let me be so bold as to remark that any chapter which doesn't make full use of its possibilities for developing a chorus, is not getting all the benefit out of barbershopping that it should.

While, originally, Chapters were primarily concerned in developing quartets, it is only natural that this interest should expand to include the development of fine choruses. The aim of our Society is to preserve and encourage barbershop quartet style singing and this may be through the medium of both quartets and choruses.

I firmly believe that the reason some of our older chapters have lagged in spirit, has been due to the fact that they were only interested in developing quartets, whereas, if they had been thinking in terms of putting all of the members to work, singing in a chorus, individual interest would have been stimulated. Any chapter that has a good chorus is not going to run into too much difficulty. It will maintain a good attendance and membership record. To keep people happy, you have to keep them busy. It's the chapters that don't provide sufficient ac-

tivity for all of their members that run into trouble.

Many members who hesitate to sing in a quartet are anxious to participate in a chorus. After they learn their parts and acquire a measure of self-confidence, they are willing to try their part in a quartet. The principle advantage of a chorus though, is the interest it engenders in all members. It enables everyone to participate. It makes the individual member feel that he is an integral part, active in the affairs of the chapter.

The Land O'Lakes District has taken the lead in promoting chorus competition between chapters. Three annual contests have proven that better Inter-Chapter Relations have resulted from such events. For one thing, more barbershoppers will assemble for this event than will gather together for a Parade. Reason—they are participants, not merely spectators.

It is interesting to note that the Indiana-Kentucky District has adopted the idea of holding chorus contests. Their initial contest held at Indianapolis on September 26th was highly successful from every angle. It is hoped that more Districts will follow suit and it is not unlikely that in the near future we will have Inter-District Choral Competition which in turn will pave the way for an International Event similar to our present International Quartet Competition.

By all means—let's encourage every chapter to build a good chorus which automatically will serve as a source for more quartets.

At an annual dinner sometime back,

attended by many Railroad Executives, traffic men and large shippers—I happened to be seated next to the Vice President of one of the large railroad systems. As the evening wore on, several barbershoppers from my chapter gathered around to do some woodshedding, and you should have heard the bass voice coming from this Railroad Vice President. He confided to me that he would stop talking business anytime to join in some good old barbershop quartet singing. I would mention his name but it might constitute a plug for his line. The moral is . . . Sing anything . . . anywhere . . . the chances are the fellow next to you will like it better than what he may be doing.

Which also reminds me that I attended a convention in Atlantic City this past summer (it's not unusual to hold a convention in Atlantic City), and several of the large suppliers took over the ballroom and invited the conventioners to a cocktail party. A strolling unit consisting of a violinist, accordionist, and guitarist made the mistake of playing and singing "I Had a Dream Dear," and in no time at all, individuals deserted groups with whom they had been conversing and converged on the music. Yesyou are right-I looked at some lapels and sure enough I was among a group of barbershoppers. From that time on the complexion of the music changed to barbershop style and it stayed there. Everyone had more fun and we felt we were among friends. Moral — more barbershoppers should wear lapel buttons all the time to identify themselves.

From the December 1948 issue of *The Harmonizer*, page 4.

Why are we running this article? See Bill Biffle's letter in the "Reader Feedback" section on page 6 of this issue. More to come.



**READ BACK ISSUES ONLINE** BHS members can access all back issues of *The Harmonizer* from 1941-current by logging in at *members.* barbershop.org and clicking on the "The Harmonizer Online" on the front page. For a PDF of the current issue and all internet links referenced in this issue, go to barbershop.org/harmonizer.

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Need a director? First 50 words are free for BHS chapters. marketing@barbershop.org. See the most current postings at barbershop.org/directorsearch.

Atlanta Vocal Project. Multi-time district champion and International competitor is seeking a new musical director to lead us on the next chapter of our journey. We seek an enthusiastic team player with a proven track record. This is a paid position. Please direct inquiries to directorsearch@atlantavocalproject.com

Bucks County Chapter, Country Gentlemen Chorus. Enthusiastic men's chorus looking for a front line director. We're a vibrant chapter that focuses on community sing-outs, annual show, quarteting and competition—a "throwback" chapter that has a ton of fun, yet sings well and wants to improve. We meet weekly on Tuesday evenings in Doylestown, PA. Contact: Andrew L Gensey Jr at njmadhungarian@ yahoo.com or 215-639-7108.

The Marcsmen (San Marcos, TX), a six-time international competitor and current SWD Chorus champion, are searching for an experienced musical director. Go to marcsmen.org/director-search to make inquiries or submit an application.

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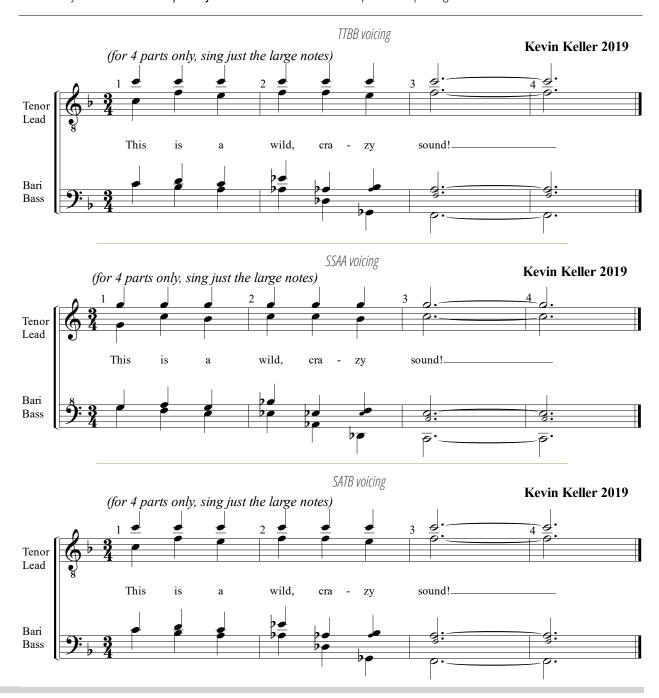


# "This is a Wild and Crazy Sound"

evin Keller is, most of you know, an exceptionally wonderful arranger, coach, Music Category judge, teacher, historian, quartet singer and a worldwide barbershop icon. I asked him for a tag for *The Harmonizer* and he sent a fine tag from a Cole Porter song. We're very careful not to print tags of songs still under copyright. He immediately complied with another that fit the bill.

Back story: Someone from the **Space City Sound** chorus had seen

a truck with the numbers 11315 on it and posted on Facebook, "I would love to see a tag where the last chord ends like this." Kevin wrote back, "If you sing it and record it, I'll write one for you." He did, and they did! The lyrics were, "This is the Space City Sound." They were herein altered for *The Harmonizer*, but Kevin invites you to create your own lyrics, if you wish. You can sing this as either a four-part or five-part tag.



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