

The Harmonizer

BRINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY TO LIFE • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019



JOE. BARBERSHOPPER.

One of the greatest Barbershoppers of all time, Joe Liles not only made a big mark on barbershop harmony, but made a huge impact on Barbershoppers themselves



NOTEWORTHY
THE GREAT MEL KNIGHT
REMEMBERING 9-11

TIP SHEET
HELP OTHERS WANT TO SING
BARBERSHOP HARMONY

INSIDE
WORK BETTER WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE LITERALLY WIRED DIFFERENTLY



PASADENA 2022

MIDWINTER CONVENTION

MIDWINTER

RELAXED FUN, SHOWS, TAGS, FRIENDS, MEMORIES

The late great Joe Liles directs
the AISQC Chorus at the
2020 Midwinter in Jacksonville

Shows,
afterglows,
and more

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barbershop
experience

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with all your
barbershop
friends

JANUARY 11-16, 2022

Schedule and safety protocols:
barbershop.org/midwinter

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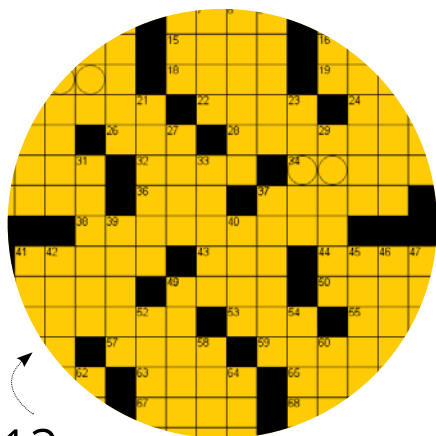
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"Joe Liles Tag" by Tom Gentry



"It can take a long time for me to map out what my face is supposed to look like," said San Antonio's Natalia Jasso (left), who fell in love with barbershop harmony and the Society while performing in her hometown with **Encore A Cappella** at the 2017 Youth Chorus Festival. Natalia's autism makes her part of the 15% to 25% of people who are "neurodivergent," meaning their brains are structured a bit differently than the norm. Many of barbershop's most popular singing and performance teaching techniques may not work for them.



Features

14 Joe. Barbershopper.

Everyone knew Joe Liles. Everyone sang his music. His heart, his amazing music gifts, his door—were always open to all. Meet the Barbershopper of the century—and maybe of all time. Whether you know it or not, you probably have been touched by Joe Liles and his musical contributions and the fruits of his long-range vision, whether by what you sing, by participating in youth programs, your barbershop education, and on and on and on ...

22 Wired Differently

Chances are good that at least one member of your quartet (15% to 25% of people) could be "neurodivergent"—having a brain that is "wired" a bit differently from the norm. Neurotypical people think and often behave a bit differently, and a lot of the barbershop world's most common teaching techniques don't really work for them. Yet, neurodivergent Barbershoppers arguably produce much of our peak creative output. Help your group's unconventional thinkers stop having to fake being "neurotypical," and instead help them unleash their potential superpowers.

On the cover: Joe Liles directs the San Antonio Chordsmen in 1970, *cover by Eddie Holt*

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The Harmonizer

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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 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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"We're proud to support Next Generation Barbershop programs. **It's the perfect way for us to pay it forward.** As former educators, we know that the future of BHS is with our youth.

Our goal is to have an educator or mentor introduce young people of tomorrow to barbershop music and our Society early in their lives, not to let them "stumble" onto barbershop like we did.

Please join us to "Show Them the Way" and invest in the future of our Society by supporting the Next Generation Barbershop program. We have confidence that our donations, made directly to BHS, will be efficiently utilized to support BHS programs both now and in the future."

Rich Knight and Peggy Leon
- Music Educators and
BHS Youth Donors



Support the BHS programs you love.

ENERGIZE
YOUNG SINGERS

PRESERVE
BARBERSHOP

BUILD THRIVING
SINGING COMMUNITIES

SUPPORT MUSIC
EDUCATION

BHS
MISSION



What it's like to be President of the Society right now

My first live chapter meeting of the COVID era didn't turn out as expected—it was a reminder of why we need to sometimes set aside the serious issues we are all facing and just remember the joys of barbershop harmony singing with our friends.



John Donehower

Over the last year, with the pandemic, no conventions, and all the drama going on, the question I probably get asked by Barbershoppers the most, is, "Does it suck to be President of the Barbershop Harmony Society right now?"

The answer to some questions can be complicated, while some are simple. Before I answer, let me share a little story about what it is like to be President ...

MY FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME WITH REAL, LIVE BARBERSHOPPERS

As I walked up to the building, I could hear them through the open window singing, and a wave of exhilaration

rolled over me. That, and I'll admit to a little bit of fear. Exhilaration from hearing barbershop in-person for the first time in more than a year, and a bit of fear from visiting a chapter, in this age of unrest, for the first time as Barbershop Harmony Society President.

Having been away from real live Barbershoppers for so long, and having only experienced leadership virtually, I was worried what I would be walking into last night. After all, judging by social media, everyone is mad about everything all the time. Would tonight be any different? What would people want to talk about? What were they upset

about? Would they yell at me? I was worried. The only thing that kept my worries in check was the fact that this was my chapter, the **Dubuque Music Men Chorus**, I was visiting. It would likely be a very friendly audience, but I just didn't know.

Upon walking in the door, I was overwhelmed by the sound. It was big and full and ringy. I was sur-

THEY TOLD ME HOW THEY SAID YES TO A SILLY PLAN TO RUN ALL OVER THE AREA AND REHEARSE IN PUBLIC. SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE FROM THOSE OUTDOOR REHEARSALS WERE NOW STANDING ON THE RISERS WITH THEM TONIGHT.



Get in Touch

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Marty Monson, CEO/Executive Director [CEO@barbershop.org](mailto: CEO@barbershop.org)

prised by how many singers were on the risers. There were the familiar faces like Sig, Merlin, Duke, and others, as well as a bunch of faces I hadn't seen before. Their Director, Pamela Mumm, a retired music educator, was working with them on their repertoire and it was obvious that the singers were hanging on her every word. They sang almost non-stop for 90 minutes, only taking time to greet us as we came in the door. Upon seeing them, I was struck by the lack of frowns, furrowed brows, and angry glares in the room ... the expressions which I have seen too much of in the world of virtual meetings. Last night, I saw nothing but warm, welcoming smiles ... and joy.

LEAVING THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND TURNING STRANGERS INTO MEMBERS

At the end of the evening, I was invited to say a few words and I kept it simple. I told them how much I missed all of them. How much I missed singing. How much I missed barbershop. None of the negative things I usually am asked to speak about came up. None of the drama. None of the worry. The only thing they wanted to talk about was the last article I wrote for *The Harmonizer*, which was about them, the Dubuque Chorus, a life-changing memory, perfect imperfection, and the importance of saying YES to opportunity. In keeping with the theme of my story, they told me their own.

They told me about how they, out of a desire to sing, had gone out of their comfort zones last Spring and began rehearsing outdoors. They told me that they decided, just for the fun of it, to go to a different outdoor public place each week to rehearse. They told me about the individuals and crowds which gathered to watch

I WAS STRUCK BY THE LACK OF FROWNS, FURROWED BROWS, AND ANGRY GLARES IN THE ROOM ... THE EXPRESSIONS WHICH I HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH OF IN THE WORLD OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS.

them. Some for moments, some for hours. They told me that some of those people from those outdoor rehearsals were now standing on the risers with them tonight. They told me how they said YES to a silly plan to run all over the area and rehearse in public.

WHY THEY SHOWED THE WORLD WHO THEY REALLY WERE, WARTS AND ALL

As I thought about what they did, I realized that, by rehearsing in public, rather than just performing, they showed the world who they truly were, wonderful warts and all. They showed themselves to be imperfectly perfect and showed others how fun it could be to sing barbershop. It took great courage but it brought great joy, and more singers! In a scary time, they did a scary thing ... but always safely with masks and social distancing. I'm proud of them!

At the afterglow at a nearby establishment, Dick Wepking, a 60-plus year member of the Society, who is closer to 90 than to 80, summed up the last few months as some of the greatest he has seen as a Barbershopper. Every week was a new adventure. The more places they sang, the more comfortable they became.



John & Marty's Virtual Meetings

Nov. 3, Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
Nov. 14, Society Board Meeting (4th Quarter)
Dec. 3, Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

John is attending

Wednesday Nights: The Good Ol' Boys Quartet rehearsal;
Dec. 11, Ambassadors of Harmony "Sounds of the Season" Show

John is reading

John Adams, by David McCullough

John is binge-watching

History of the BHS Contest & Judging System with Kevin Keller





STARTING PITCH

A conversation with our President and CEO

AS WE DEAL WITH THE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY, WE'VE GOT TO BE REMINDED FROM TIME TO TIME ABOUT WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR ... THE REASON WE DO IT. THESE ARE ALSO THE TIMES WHEN WE NEED THE JOY OF SINGING MORE THAN EVER.

Dick said he hasn't been so happy being a Barbershopper in ages. In truth, he didn't need to say it, I could see the happiness in his eyes.

REMEMBER WHY WE DO THIS ... AND THEN GO AHEAD AND DO THIS!

After a night like last night, it's easy to see what there is to love about barbershop, and about Barber-shoppers. It's also easy to see that, as we deal with the important issues of the day, we've got to be reminded from time to time about what we are fighting for ... the reason we do it. These are times for serious people to fix serious issues, but these are also the times when we need the joy of singing more than ever. Let's do the work, let's sing whenever we can, and let's remember the joy!

So, getting back to the original question, "Does it suck to be the President of the Barbershop Harmony Society right now?"

Well, as I said earlier, the answers to some questions are complicated, but not this one. This question has an easy answer.

Does it suck to be the President of the Barbershop Harmony Society right now?

Hell, no! It's an honor to serve! ■



Reader Feedback

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

September/October issue: Our Happiness Machine

@ Best. Harmonizer. Ever. That's the entire email.

Bill Colosimo

Fredericksburg, VA

@ Thank you for doing such a beautiful job with *The Harmonizer*. It's always a pleasure to read it cover-to-cover. It certainly has changed since my first copy arrived in November, 1960.

In the latest issue, I couldn't help but notice 38 names from NED in the Chapter Eternal section. I didn't recognize many of them and investigated to find that 23 of those names passed away between 1999 and 2019. That may be because in June I showed NED Chapter Officers how to mark members deceased in Member Center; some chapter secretaries went way back and reported the deaths of members from long ago. It would appear that *The Harmonizer* lists anyone whose name has been reported to Member Center, regardless of their expiry date. Is this true?



David Patterson

NED VP for Chapter Support

David, your guess is correct. Chapter Eternal is a record of members who have been reported as deceased either to our customer care associates or via chapter or district secretaries. The date upon which they passed away does not determine their inclusion—only the date they were reported as deceased. Thank you for alerting us to one additional issue: Some of those names also appeared in prior issues. We have found the reason, and that issue has been resolved.

@ What a wonderful informative, uplifting, and exciting issue! The positive and hopeful message supported by examples of the Happiness Machine in action was so welcome and well done. I actually started reading it again this morning and realized how critical this issue will prove to have been when we look back on the days of struggle and strife of the last few years. ■

Dick Powell

Barbershop Harmony Society President, 2019-20



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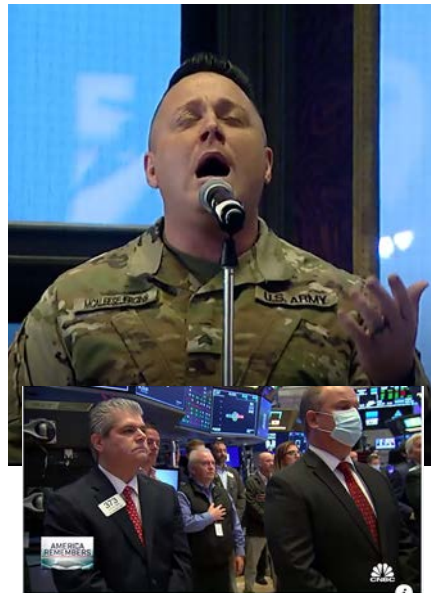
● BARBERSHOPPERS REMEMBER

New York members in big 9/11 tributes

As the world remembered 20 years later, Barbershoppers provided a soundtrack

The tragic terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 set off a long chain of events that will not and cannot be forgotten. Some of New York's remembrances were provided by well-known Barbershoppers and chapters.

KJ McAleesejergins opened trading on the New York Stock Exchange with a solo performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" that was broadcast on national television. The baritone of 2019 International Bronze Medalist **Midtown** was a U.S. Army paratrooper for four years, and for the past 12 years has been a vocalist for the U.S. Army National Guard.



Members of the **Westchester Chordsmen** performed at ceremonies in New Rochelle, N.Y., which were held at dusk so that the twin towers of light would be visible.



WATCH ONLINE Watch CNBC video of KJ McAleesejergins singing "The Star Spangled Banner." Link is at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

VIRTUAL HARMONY UNIVERSITY DELIVERS ONCE AGAIN THIS PAST SUMMER

Although VHU 2021 was strictly Bring Your Own Ice Cream, it racked up some pretty fat stats:

- The all-online model this year boasted a stunning 264 unique course offerings across all learning modes—lectures, labs, panels, coaching sessions, virtual choir, and general sessions.
- Live courses ran for 22 consecutive days, which must be some kind of record!
- The month-long full-replay option notched 8,600 additional views, with one student signed up for more than 160 courses! As one student noted, "Being three weeks long, I felt like I got to do more, experience more, and learn more than I would in person. Having things recorded and viewable later meant I could sign up for more than one class in a time slot and be able to see all of them!"
- 41% of VHU Students were new to Harmony University—and they're eager for more! "I had an absolutely wonderful time at VHU!" wrote a first-timer. "The participants were always so nice and patient. If anybody ever wanted to get into barbershop, VHU is a great place to start! Can't wait for HU in person!"



Why all the bragging now, weeks after it's over? Because BHS brought this immense amount of education to the barbershop world at insanely low prices, thanks to the 119 faculty members whose gifts of knowledge, time and passion fueled the growth of so many individuals and singing communities.

Updated COVID-19 resources from BHS and partner organizations

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Society has stood alongside leading choral organizations in bringing best-practice information to all singers. Shared statements, and dozens of guidance articles and background research on COVID-19 to singers from the combined efforts of the Society and National Association of Teachers of Singing, Chorus America, and American Choral Directors Association. Find links to new research and approaches to safely gathering, with recent updates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at barbershop.org/harmonizer.



Maria Christian, Zachary Materne elected to BHS Board

The two new Directors at Large will start their three-year terms in January 2022.

Eight new Acaville Radio Hosts

Acaville Radio, the 24/7 home to a cappella singing, recently saw Mark Holdeman and Ed Howard retire as hosts of the long-running "ShopTalk" program. Four teams now share hosting duties:

Amy Rose & Don Rose
Fatima Whelan & Bill Colosimo
James Pennington & Matt Parks
Mason Eubank & Roman King

Hear it free on acaville.org every Wednesday at noon Pacific, and check the site for replay times. Plus, get another hour of great releases and rarities on the Barbershop 7th Hour with Jeremy K. Gover every Thursday at 5pm Pacific.

● ASK A STAFF MEMBER

Access for leaders



VOLUNTEER LEADERS ASK: WE'VE JUST CONDUCTED OUR ANNUAL LEADER ELECTIONS, HOW DO I MAKE SURE OUR NEW AND RETAINED LEADERS HAVE MEMBER CENTER ACCESS?

Your leaders are not only administrative leaders but also your music leaders at the chapter and chorus level. We send communication and resources as well as provide elevated access to chapter records based on the listed roles. The only way that we can continue to do so is if the information is reported via the Member Center.

When adding or reinstating an officer (or member) to your singing community, you will be guided through a page by page screen flow, only seeing the necessary fields for each path. Please ensure this information is updated as soon as possible after your annual elections. Most chapter roles expire at the end of the year, and you will no longer be able to access the necessary information or make these updates. Chapter Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers can update chapter leaders. Chorus Manager and Chorus President can update chorus leaders.

An in-depth tutorial for this process and many others can be found in our Document Center (members.barbershop.org/s/document-center; member log in required).

– Caki Gray, cgray@barbershop.org

The great Mel Knight

Mel Knight passed away from cancer this past August, but the arranger, judge, director, quartet singer, coach, and educator had a personal style to shine the spotlight on everyone enjoying the music together. His focus was on doing good work, sharing that wealth of talent, and letting the results speak for themselves.



Mel enjoyed a notable career as a high school music educator and a barbershop director of distinction, before joining the SPEBSQSA staff in 1985 as a music specialist, later succeeding to Director of Music Education and Services until his retirement in 1993. In that time, he oversaw the dramatic expansion of Harmony College to an annual sell-out event, and the founding of Directors College. Mel's numerous compositions and arrangements span barbershop, concert band, and jazz. In his rich retirement years, he sang with **Over Time**, BHS 2000 international Seniors Quartet Champion, and continued directing, including the Evergreen District Seniors Chorus.



Decades served: a director sendoff

Robert Seltzer was supposed to get a send-off worthy of the effort he had put into the chapter for decades. A 56-year BHS member, he recently finished a 15+-year run as director of the **Pretzel City Chorus** of Reading, PA. The chapter had a big party planned for Robert, who was one of the chapters heaviest lifters for years long before that as well. An avid quartetter, three-time Barbershopper of the Year, and show chair/co-chair/show director too many times to count, the chapter had a big celebration all planned out before the COVID-19 Delta variant canceled indoor rehearsals. That party might still happen later, but Gary Mishler, Ron Fabian, Steve Curtis, and Ron Davidheiser stopped by to sing with Robert and deliver a card and plaque until the bigger celebration takes place.



DISTRICT CONVENTIONS!

After a spring and summer filled with vaccinations, optimism, and a whole lot of live singing, COVID's Delta variant began to fill ICUs and spoil a lot of gatherings. All but four districts were forced to cancel their fall conventions, but the Illinois District was able to implement health protocols and receive the support of enough chorus and quartet competitors that the show could go on. Three other district events were still scheduled as of press time. Below: in September, the judging panel for the ILL Fall Contests produced the first fresh set of BHS score sheets in nearly 20 months.



2022 CONTESTS

CHARLOTTE 2022 QUALIFYING

Qualification for the 2022 International Convention in Charlotte is now underway. Some highlights:

- This will be the first contest to include all competitors classes: men's, women's, and mixed groups, all quartets & choruses.
- The automatic qualifying score for quartets is 76% and for choruses is 78%.
- Chorus Contest invitations are extended to all choruses that qualified for 2021 Cleveland, regardless of whether they had accepted the invitation.
- Choruses may apply for video qualification by Dec. 1, 2021 to submit videos in spring 2022.
- Next Gen Varsity Quartets maximum age limits have been increased to age 27 for the 2022 contest, 26 for the 2023 contest, and 25 for 2024 onward. The top 20 among men's, women's, mixed quartets will be invited to compete.

For more information about qualifying for the International Contests in Charlotte, go to barbershop.org/2022-qualification-process.

BACK IN THE OLD ROUTINE



BACK IN NATIONAL ANTHEM ACTION FOR THE ISOTOPES

ABQ, a quartet from Albuquerque with Orbit, the mascot of the Albuquerque Isotopes, prior to the singing of the National Anthem to great acclaim. There is nothing that beats the great Val Hicks arrangement of our National song! Richard Grady (Bs), Bill Biffle (Br), Joe Vertrees (L), Hal Ratcliff (T).

— Bill Biffle

A thank-you comes 4 decades later

Doug introduced Bill to barbershop. Four decades later, Bill thanked him properly

In 2020, 64-year BHS member Doug Cassie passed away due to COVID. While tidying up Doug's affairs, his son, Robert, came across a Christmas card from names he didn't recognize. He tracked down Bill and Jan Grace to tell them about his father's passing and learned that they'd maintained a long correspondence with Doug. Forty years earlier, Doug introduced Bill to barbershop in the **Manchester, CT Chapter**. When Bill and Jan first started dating, Bill learned that Jan's father, Jim Ferris, happened to sing in the famed **Top Hats** quartet with Doug.

Fast forward to 2021, Robert was looking for a quartet to sing at his father's Celebration of Life in July. He connected with **Off the Chart** quartet, all members of the famed **Silk City Chorus** of Manchester, CT. Quartet contact Craig Minor said the quartet would show up, but only if they could find a back-up bass. After a week, they did.

The name of that bass that showed up? Bill Grace, Doug's Man of Note from 40 years earlier. After an array of Polecat songs, peeks of smiles through the happy tears in the crowd, the spirit rose amongst those gathered that only four-part harmony can bring to life. "I think I even heard my dad, singing from above," said Robert, "as he belted out the tag like only a true woodshedder can do!"



(Above) Top Hats quartet. (Left) Craig Minor (Br), Bill Grace (substitute bass), Dick Moriarty (L), Neal Kellogg (T)

START PLANNING FOR 2023 MIDWINTER TODAY!



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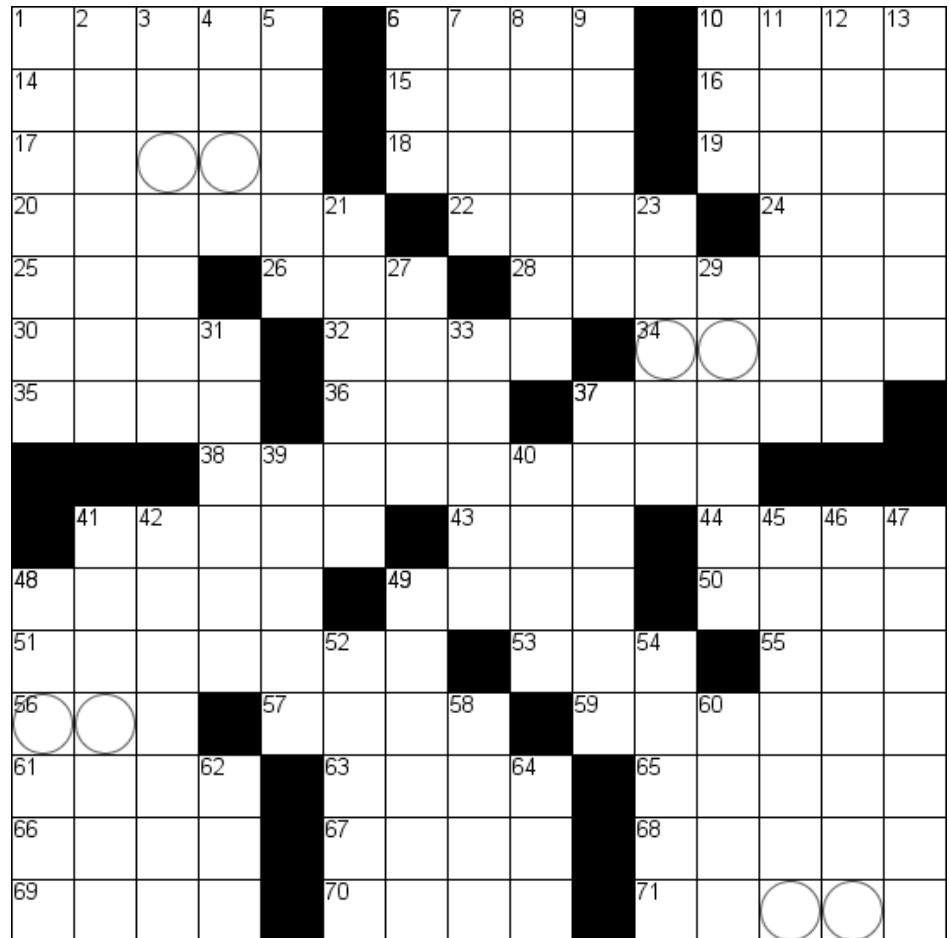
A barbershop-themed crossword puzzle by Michael Black; answer key on page 28

Across

- 1 Histories
6 Arranger Reimnitz, Scott, or Bock
10 Annual chapter award, for short
14 "...and the rocket's red ____"
15 MasterCard alternative
16 Height: Prefix
17 Set one's sights
18 Long-held note
19 Slightly
20 Two-time champ John Miller's profession, for short
22 AIC member Knapp or Knight
24 Rink surface
25 British ref. work
26 Subway scurrier
28 Vibrate, as with heat waves
30 Gas or electric: Abbr.
32 Nincompoop
34 Swimming competitions
35 Flower mentioned in the title of four Polecats
36 Bro's sibling
37 Sculpted figure
38 One of the Polecats, or a hint to 14-, 28-, 51- and 68-Across
41 Occupy, as a diner booth
43 Environmental prefix
44 Shadowbox
48 River mammal
49 Paying close attention
50 "Like a ____ at it's ebb..."
51 Champagnes do this
53 Belle of the ball
55 Turkey drumstick, e.g.
56 Arranger Knight
57 Signature tenor Paul
59 "What can be fair in farewell, dear, while one ____ star shines above?" ("Sincere" lyric)
61 Singer Redding
63 Tuxedo shirt fastener
65 Harmonizer editor May
66 In the neighborhood
67 Peeved
68 Quick reflection
69 First James Bond movie
70 Kind of exam that's not written
71 Chair designer Charles

Down

- 1 Organization that awards the Jack Nicklaus Trophy
2 Aware of (something)
3 Busy barbershop convention nights, en français
4 Fearsome dino



- 5 Passover observance
6 Georgia chorus directed by Clay Hine, for short
7 Gucci competitor
8 Lend a hand
9 Swedish ____ (2010 International Collegiate Quartet Champion)
10 Cry repeated in "The Whiffenpoof Song"
11 Champ quartet prominently featured in "American Harmony"
12 Identify the source as
13 Rural Route 4's lead and bass
21 Keep tabs on tabbies, say
23 Sign in the bleachers at a football game
27 Any of the members of 2020 Junior Quartet champions Singing Double, for example
29 Most trifling
31 With 49-Down, tenor of Four Voices
33 "____ little silhouetto ..." ("Bohemian Rhapsody" lyric)
37 Gov't securities
39 Pays attention
40 Law enforcement agency to which the Flat Foot Four belonged
41 Heavenly gatekeeper
42 Language that gave us Bel Canto and A Cappella
45 Traveler on the Mayflower
46 Ain't she sweet?
47 1974 International Quartet Champions
48 The ____ Brothers (1986 Society Honorary Life Members)
49 See 31-Down
52 Rodeo rope
54 Nonsense
58 ____ Lee
60 Home of South Rampart Street and Basin Street, for short
62 Four-time Intl. quartet medalist in the '90's
64 Home of the Atlantic Harmony Brigade: Abbr

Michael Black (Guelph, Ont.): "As a barbershop fanatic since 2009, it was a no-brainer to make my first puzzle one aimed at Barbershoppers." He's a section leader with the **Toronto Northern Lights**, sings lead with 2015 Youth Silver Medalist **'Shoptimus Prime**, and is president of the Ontario District. ■



TIP SHEET

Katie Macdonald, Recruitment & Retention Manager
✉ kmacdonald@barbershop.org

● RECRUITING TIPS

How to help others want to sing barbershop

Once you've helped someone learn that they love the sound of barbershop harmony, it's time to show them that there are no barriers to trying—and to show them the friends who mean the world to you

Hello again! Katie Mac here, your BHS Recruitment and Retention Manager, with the next step to creating new Barbershoppers! A small reminder: I'm not talking about getting people to sing with you, not even a tag ... yet! In this step, we're focusing on how you talk about barbershop. Step 1 (November/December 2020 issue) focused on sharing incredible performances with them, like **Ringmasters**, **Signature**, and **Double Date** to peak their interest. Great job! You did it! I bet they were impressed—who wouldn't be?

YOU'VE GOTTA TELL THEM HOW EASY IT IS TO SING IN THIS INCREDIBLE HOBBY.

Barbershop was developed for amateur singers, and over the years we've really made it easy for people with little experience to start singing. A lot of newbies miss that and assume barbershop is too hard for them.

YOU SHOULD SAY, "YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ MUSIC!"

I truly believe that the culture of learning tracks and learning music by ear is one of the most equitable concepts in our hobby—not being able to read music literally doesn't matter. Send your friend a part predominant learning track of your



If your friends believe they could never learn four-part harmony, they may change their tune after you tell them about learning tracks.

favorite chorus song, and they'll see just how easy it is to learn their part.

YOU SHOULD SAY, "MY FRIENDS IN MY CHORUS MEAN THE WORLD TO ME—WE HAVE FUN!"

I'm in **Parkside Melody** out in Hershey, PA, and I sometimes get choked up talking about how much I adore my chapter. The bond that we've created, especially in COVID times will literally stick with me forever. They're the friends I socialize with and count on. The social/emotional connection that barbershop brings

STEPS TO BECOMING A BARBERSHOPPER

1. I like barbershop.
2. I want to sing barbershop. *This issue* ←
3. I will try singing barbershop.
4. I AM SINGING BARBERSHOP!

will always be the thing that makes a chorus last. It's the music that brings us together, but it's the friendnnnnnnshiiiiipppssss that make us stay! (See what I did there?!)

YOU SHOULD SAY, "YOUR VOICE IS BEAUTIFUL—YOU'RE IMPORTANT!"

Time and time again, the first objection I get to newbies singing with me is "I can't sing." Debbie Cleveland's advice keeps coming back, friends: **everyone's voice is beautiful**. It's our job as inclusive leaders in our choruses to ensure the following:

- There's a range of difficulty in barbershop—you can choose your own level.
- Our chorus rehearsals are basically a voice lesson. You will learn tips and tricks to being a better singer, speaker, and human!
- There is a space for everyone in barbershop.

YOU can be the person responsible for creating the desire to enter the hobby. You could be their Person of Note. Start small by getting them to like barbershop, and then wanting to sing barbershop. ■

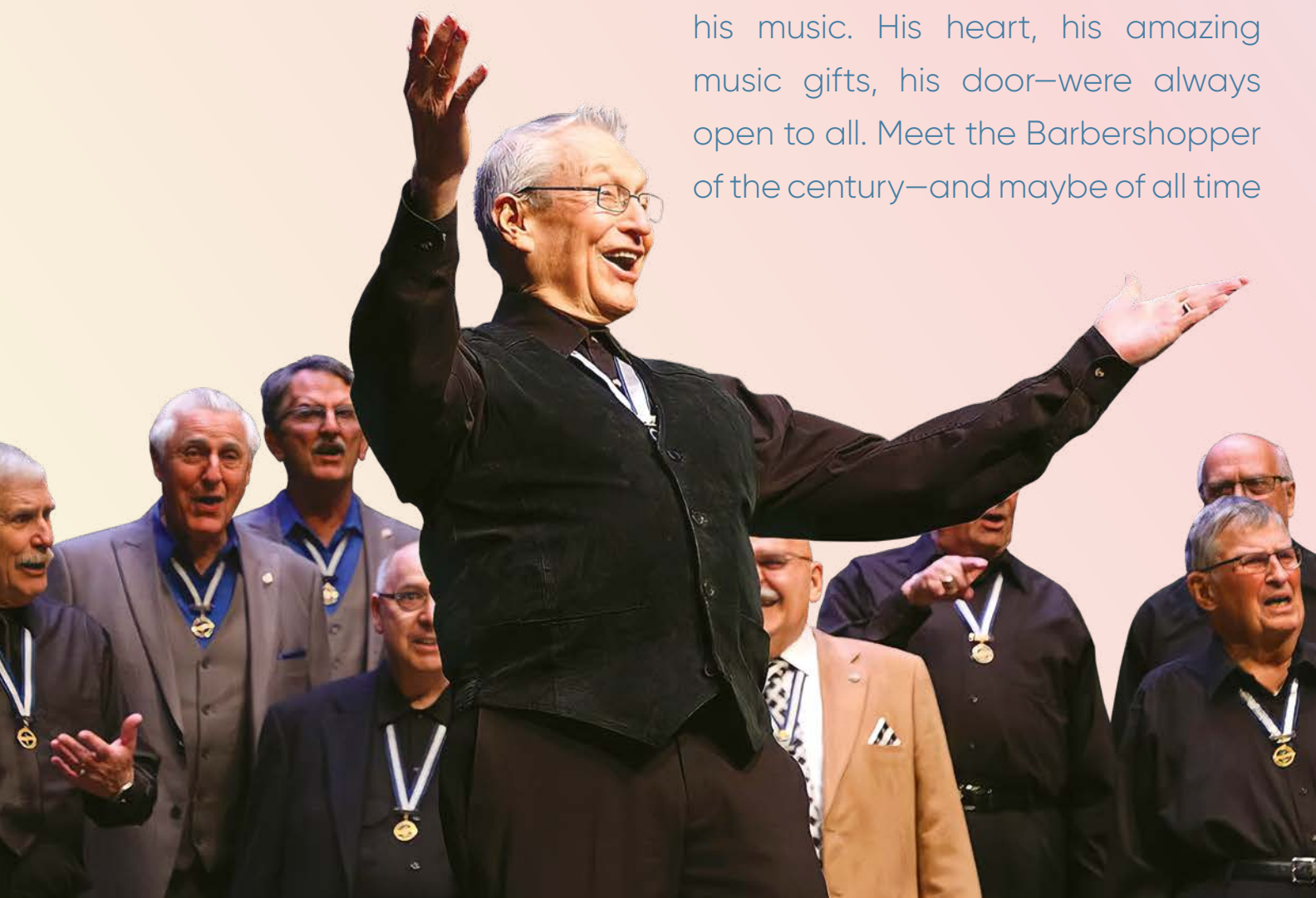


WATCH ONLINE Part1 covered some videos you can show your friends to spark their love of the music. Link to the Part 1 Tip Sheet (and videos) at barbershop.org/harmonizer.

JOE.

BARBERSHOPPER.

Everyone knew him. Everyone sang his music. His heart, his amazing music gifts, his door—were always open to all. Meet the Barbershopper of the century—and maybe of all time



Everyone has a Joe Liles story, whether you know it or not. If ever you have ...

- sung any one his hundreds of compositions and arrangements
- purchased electronic sheet music or learning tracks from the Society
- been a part of harmony College or Directors College
- been in a youth quartet contest, or a camp supported through BHS service projects
- Been involved in a men's chorus directed by a woman
- or ... on and on and on ...

... then your barbershop life has been touched by Joe's passion, creativity, long-range vision and unlimited energy.

Joe Edward Liles, who passed away in August 2021, certainly sits in the pantheon of Greatest Barbershoppers Ever. It's not a title one can earn by checking boxes, although he certainly did check them all, as a leader, singer, arranger, coach, director. No, it's by being the barbershoppiest barber-shopper imaginable — by treating all singers with the same care and attention, from first-time tag singers to world champion quartetters.

In his last month on Earth, at age 90, Joe composed a new lullaby as a gift to a neighbor's grandson, gave technical advice on arranging with Finale software to a near-stranger, walked several miles a day, wrote an original, customized tag for the September/October *Harmonizer* (fittingly on the theme of happiness), which ended up being his final tag in a 22-year run as the magazine's Tagmaster.

For all these reasons and more, Joe was not just a great Barbershopper. He was, truly, JOE. BARBERSHOPPER.

A top-end musician discovers four-part harmony

Joe Liles was born in Abilene, Texas in 1930 to a family of church singers. Joe often spoke of how singing childhood hymn, "His Eye Is On The Sparrow" to his aged mother roused her to moments of clarity from the twisting corridors of advanced dementia. Listen to Joe's "I Miss Mother Most of All," and you can almost hear them singing together.

A horrific motorcycle accident in high school crushed both his leg and his Baylor track scholarship. Recalling when he pursued his music degree, Joe often told of sitting down at the piano with a music professor to demonstrate his "discovery" of a series of chords in which the fifth of one chord became the root

Note: In March of this year, Joe decided to retire from his duties as Tagmaster, the back page column he wrote for the past 22 years. A feature story on his life and achievements had been slated for this issue since this spring—it was supposed to be an interview. And then came his sudden passing in August.

“

He was generous, classy, professional, creative, inquisitive and my GOD was the man FUNNY! He was at the absolute top of his class in everything he ever engaged in, as a musician, a leader, a director, a teacher, a singer, an arranger, a songwriter, and an incredibly positive role model for thousands. At a time when we desperately need MORE "Joe Liles" in everything we do and say, I hope that this profound loss will remind each of us to take a moment to act with a little more "Joe Liles" in his absence. Joe is one of the few giants we cannot afford to ever forget!

— Joe Cerutti

”



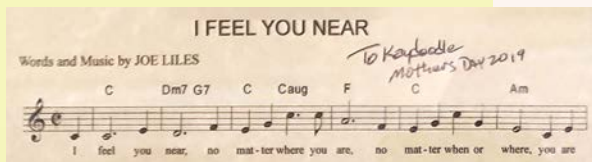
On July 22, a sharp, energetic, and seemingly healthy Joe Liles (center) shared old times with former co-workers in a Kenosha, WI restaurant. One week later, he entered the hospital for a relatively routine procedure, but experienced serious complications from which he never recovered. He passed away on August 19. Above: Ruth Stamm, Kay & Joe Liles, Gary Stamm, Brian Lynch.



Brian Lynch is Public Relations Manager for the Barbershop Harmony Society
blynch@barbershop.org



Four decades into his life, Joe was a dissertation away from a music doctorate and working as a professional church musician when Kay walked into his life at a chapter afterglow. While he never exactly gave up on Gospel songs, Kay became the muse for the next five decades of Joe's signature musical output—scores of love songs.



of the next chord. In short, he had independently derived the circle of fifths! It illustrates his natural musicianship and the lifelong cornerstone of his arranging and composition: his music always brings the singer home, naturally, without forcing things.

Certainly the many hours he spent playing piano for religious tent revivals and as church organist reinforced his love of improvisation—and his impish sense of humor. (Accepting compliments after one communion service, Joe inwardly chuckled that he had only drastically slowed, transposed, and embroidered “Mairzy Doats and Dozy Doats.”)

A Master's degree in conducting at the University of Kentucky followed, then 30 hours toward a doctorate in composition at the University of Texas. He stopped before undertaking his thesis; “I didn't need to be called Doctor,” he would say.

A few years later, living in San Antonio and doing church music in a large Baptist congregation, he was cajoled into attending a rehearsal of the **San Antonio Chordsmen**, with

1969 champ **Mark IV** conducting his singing audition! They thought he was just fine. The next week, he became the chorus director. In years to come, Joe would lead

the Chordsmen to multiple International Chorus Contest appearances.

Joe & Kay: A Love Story

Hipp's Bubble Room served as the Chordsmen's afterglow place, and young Kay Warren came with another Barbershopper one night. She requested “Summer Sounds” from a pickup quartet; they spotted Joe as the fourth singer ... and the rest, as they say, was history. The next day, Joe showed up at the boutique where Kay worked to ask her on a date. “I had to work until five o'clock,” Kay chuckled, “but he was happy to hang around until then.” (Suggested musical pairing: “I Found A Million

ACCEPTING COMPLIMENTS AFTER ONE COMMUNION SERVICE, JOE INWARDLY CHUCKLED THAT HE HAD ONLY DRASTICALLY SLOWED, TRANSPOSED, AND EMBROIDERED “MAIRZY DOATS AND DOZY DOATS.”

Dollar Baby (In a Five and Ten Cent Store).”)

Kay proposed to Joe first, which, considering it was 1972 in San Antonio, was pretty progressive. “Aw, I'd just give you nothing but headaches,” he told her, but eventually, he proposed to her, too. “He came into my shop on a Wednesday, grabbed me by the hand, and said, ‘We've got to go get our blood tests,’” recalls Kay. “I said, ‘Oh, really?’ Two days later, on Friday, I bought my dress after work, as we were on the way to the home of our friend Franklin Spears, a judge (and tenor of the Mark IV). His wife made my bouquet and our wedding cake.”

Kay proved to be more than his soulmate. They have been musical partners, co-directors of a Sweet Adeline Chorus, and the most adorable pair of lifelong newlyweds you could ever meet. And Kay was his muse, too. All those love songs Joe wrote or arranged? All for Kay. Every one of them.



Music made for people to sing

By Kevin Keller

Joe had a wonderful gift of making everything singable for any level of performer. My first chorus always sang Joe's music. He always arranged with the singer in mind and yet had such creative musical ideas that performers of all levels wanted to sing. What a gift. It seemed like every year he had created a new song with an overlay that made for wonderful openers and closers involving all performers on a show.

After he retired as the Society's Executive Director, he worked on the Music Publications side. He was decades ahead of his time. He saw the vision of online music purchasing long before the rest of us. (Never say a man of that age can't master

a computer and the internet!) He drove the shift in what sort of music the Society would (and does) publish. He moved us towards publishing songs and arrangements that people wanted to sing. He gave a young Tim Waurick an opportunity to start recording learning tracks for the Society. He constantly saw opportunity and pushed us towards it.

Joe was always driven by both his love of barbershop harmony and Barbershop-ers, as well as his strong faith. Every original song spoke of fun, hope, musical harmony, harmony amongst all people, the joy of music, and of love. His humanity constantly poured from his soul in his music, his words, and his actions.

How big was Joe Liles? Consider that the Barbershop Harmony Society, which Joe discovered just before age 40, decided to name one of its highest honors after him—the "Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award"—long before his own lifetime or achievements were over. Below, Joe is inducted into the Barbershop Harmony Society Hall of Fame in 2007.



Joe was a wonderful man. He gave me a chance to create learning tracks for the BHS when I was basically a kid.

— Tim Waurick

I remember calling about potential arrangements for my quartet. I was on the phone with him for no less than 45 minutes while he talked about different ones, their pros and cons, even singing many of them to me. So kind.

— Sheri Watts Hart

In the barbershop world I'm just another guy, but Joe Liles knew me by name.

— Lee Franks

The Kenosha years and beyond

Tapped by Bob Johnson in 1975 to join the Harmony Hall staff, the newlyweds headed to Kenosha—a bit of a climate shock for natives of Texas and Oklahoma. Joe spent 25-30 weeks each year on the road as a staff music specialist. Within a year or two, International President

A week after attending his first-ever chapter meeting in San Antonio, Joe (in white, two years later) was named director of the Chordsmen. Two International medals followed soon after.



Pummer Collins wrote to the Board, "Does anyone have any idea where we could find about a dozen more like him? Yep. So let's raise the dues by 25 bucks and get all 12? Yeah, that's great. I honestly believe he can even get along with [Bob] Johnson." Collins urged all to keep an eye on Joe as a future leader of the Society.

Joe was promoted to Director of Music Education in 1982 upon Johnson's retirement, and succeeded Hugh Ingraham as Executive Director in 1988. The 1980s saw dramatic expansion of music programs and staff, and the growth of Harmony College and the creation of Directors College, cornerstones of the Society's musical maturing.

Joe survived a "widowmaker" heart attack in 1995, and was thereafter the most meticulous of vegetarian and fat-avoidant eaters, exercising regularly and hale and vibrant up to his final days. He returned to work for BHS in the late 1990s, where his impact on music publishing has been felt ever since.

Understanding Joe Liles by arbitrarily dividing his life into conve-

nient boxes would miss how all parts of his psyche were integrated. For Joe, composing and arranging were the same thing as loving everyone and unselfishly sharing his time and gifts. Those in turn were the same thing as leadership and vision, in helping all people exult in making music together. There was truly no line between them—they were all Joe’s mission as a Barbershopper and a human.

Joe Composer. Joe Arranger.

Anyone who knew Joe knew that look in his eye, that moment when suddenly a fragment of melody began to coalesce in his mind. See his hands come up, chording things out. His head shakes a moment, then, “AH!” and he had it. “I’d be talking

“I’D BE TALKING WITH HIM,
OR WE’D BE DRIVING, AND
ALL OF A SUDDEN HE WAS
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with him, or we’d be driving, and all of a sudden he was gone,” said Kay. “He wasn’t listening anymore. He wanted to, but the music inside was louder.”

Song spotlight

“Teach The Children to Sing”

In the early 1990s, the Society began

a long and sometimes contentious shift in its charitable mission. Propelled by Marketing Committee Chair John Krizek and SPEBSQSA Marketing Director Gary Stamm, SPEBSQSA joined with MENC (now NAFME) and ACDA in asserting the importance of music as a key component in a well-rounded education. Under the banner of SingAmerica/SingCanada, the Society adopted a new unified service project ... and who do you suppose was inspired to develop a theme song?

The flourishing relationship between MENC and the Society brought about an unprecedented opportunity. In 1992, the four professional music teachers comprising **The Ritz** (1991 champion) had received the MENC Music Educator Award. In 1996, for the annual Music In Our Schools Month, The Ritz led

Elegant Simplicity

By David Wright

Joe Liles’ music displays an elegant simplicity, as he did not indulge in any complicated agendas, making his songs and arrangements accessible to groups of all levels. That said, they were sung successfully by top quartets and choruses.

Though his songs were not elaborate, they were never trite. Every song had some twist or feature that made it memorable and unique, and Joe often dared to write things that stepped a little beyond the standard practices of barbershop at the time.

One of the earliest of his original songs that I learned was “Goodbye Means the End of My World”. It was at Harmony College, early ‘80s, and Joe was directing the full student body in the theater. When the chorus of the song arrived at the climactic major triad on “world”, I nearly jumped out of my seat. That kind of usage of triads was not at all common then, but it served the music perfectly in this context.

Joe’s songs always had a “hook” (a word he often used) that set them apart, often some aspect of the harmony. This had a

powerful impact on me as a young arranger.

Many of Joe’s works were uniquely his, but he also collaborated with others, especially on lyrics. He developed a productive working relationship with barbershopper Frank Marzocco that resulted in quite a few original songs, including “I Miss Mother Most of All,” “Fun in Just One Lifetime,” and “Bring Back Those Vaudeville Days.” His collaboration with Val Hicks gave us “I Didn’t Want to Fall,” sung at all levels by male and female ensembles, and winning gold for Jokers Wild in 1994.

His songs could be somber as in “I’ll Never Write A Love Song Any More” (a wonderful song) and “My Heart Is Aching for You,” or light and funny, as in “I Can’t Recall Her Name” and “I’m Still Having Fun,” the latter a huge favorite senior’s quartets. He wrote numerous songs for more than four parts, usually double quartets, such as “Sing Out, Sing Out,” “Let There Be Music, Let There Be Love,” and “Teach the Children to Sing.”

One of his most successful songs was

the delightful earworm “The Moment I Saw Your Eyes,” featuring an unusual seventh chord in its main strain “heaven” and an unusual major triad on “saw your eyes.” It was sung by The Gas House Gang and countless others. In this way Joe Liles provided hours of pleasure to Barbershoppers everywhere.

And that was his gift to us. Joe was a strong believer in the power of music and its promise to heal the problems of mankind. He wanted to get more people singing. He was a promoter of barbershop in all organizations worldwide, for people all ages, races, nationalities, genders, and economic classes. In this sense he was an early advocate of Everyone in Harmony long before it was an official policy of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Joe Liles loved to see people singing and enjoying barbershop harmony. It was his life’s goal.

I loved Joe Liles. To me he was an inspiration not just as an arranger and musician, but as a leader and, most of all, as a friend. We won’t soon find another like him.

The brush strokes of Joe's artistry

By Tom Gentry

Joe was a marvelous composer and arranger. His artful use of words—some of them of his own creation—and word sounds was unsurpassed in the barbershop world. So here are some examples of Joe's lyrical creativity.

Quite a while ago Joe arranged the Roy Clark song "Think Summer" for our 1969 quartet champ, the Mark IV. Each A section ends, "Come on, come on, think summer." To the last one, right before the tag, Joe added "because it's funner." Clever, eh? (Though this is not really a pun, Joe was widely known as the punniest guy around.)

In-rhymes were one of Joe's trademarks. His "America the Beautiful Overlay," which was written to be sung along with "America the Beautiful," featured these quick-hitters:

"Let freedom ring, awakening"
 "Standing tall, with one and all"
 "So we're together for the good and building brotherhood."

And from the soaring "Teach the Children Sing":

"A bird with no wings, a harp with no strings"
 "Joy, transcending, sets ev'ry ear bending to hear voices blending so strong."
 "Radiant faces, a rainbow of races"

(By the way, in this song Joe called what would normally be labeled the Verse and Chorus the Preamble and Vision. How strong!)

In addition to rhymes, Joe liberally employed alliteration, assonance (repeated vowel sounds) and

consonance (repeated consonants). We just had a fine example of this: "Radiant faces, a rainbow of races. . ."

Most folks would agree that Joe's biggest hit was "The Moment I Saw Your Eyes," introduced and popularized by The Gas House Gang in the men's barbershop world and Rumors in the women's. When Joe and future wife Kay met at an after-glow, neither one in the market to settle down, the sparks nonetheless flew. He described his feelings with this spark-ling use of word sounds, including another made-up word:

"Gosh-o, seems so"
 "magicality"
 "What was once"
 "Well, when did it"
 "I'm hot to handle, human candle"
 "To explain, my brain's on fire, and the flame is burning higher."

These are just a few examples of Joe's masterful use of the English language. But to what end did he employ this skill? These song titles tell the story:

"Fun in Just One Lifetime"
 "Sing Out, Sing Out"
 "America the Beautiful Overlay"
 "I'm Still Havin' Fun"
 "Teach the Children to Sing"
 "The Moment I Saw Your Eyes"
 "Let There Be Music! Let There Be Love!"

The last word of the last title on this list pretty much sums things up: love. Very few people, inside or outside barbershop, have spread as much love as Joe Edward Liles did—and continues to do through his music and our memories. So let us be inspired by his loving example.

Also, with Joe on your mind and in your heart, be sure to make your life fun—or better yet, "funner"!

In 1995, a massive heart attack prompted Joe's retirement as Society Executive Director (CEO) at age 64. Three years later, a much lighter and healthier Joe "unretired" to serve as staff Director of Publications until his second retirement in 2010. (Below: Joe and Kay at his final retirement party at Harmony Hall in Nashville.)



As a candidate for the Singing Category, I got to sit on a practice panel and work with Joe and watch him conduct evaluations. He was remarkable in his ability to break things down into easily understandable concepts, and every competitor walked away excited to come back.

— Chad Wulf

Joe Edward Liles was a giant. A soft-spoken, kind, gentle, angel, he always wanted to hear what was going on in my life and he constantly encouraged me to keep going. Joe had wisdom that was joyous in every way.

— Chelsea Michelle Asmus

I will never forget sending him my first attempt at writing a barbershop tag and he sent it back with the loveliest compliment on the melody and idea, then included THREE alternate versions, each one far superior to my meager attempt!

— Scott Harris



LORIN MAY

“

What I loved about Joe is that he didn't have a "My way or the highway" attitude about his arrangements. You could write him and explain your problem, and hours later you would find some new measures.

– Sue Thompson Middleton

Joe may be the kindest man I have ever met.

– Scott Hoge

The world has lost one of the kindest people I have ever known in my life. Joe was an absolute icon in the world of barbershop and taught me the first tag I ever sang. But it's not my personal joy I will remember him most for, but his belief that the world and humanity could be healed through song. Everything he did was through that lens, using his gift of music to make the world better.

– Justin Fermenich

”



In a prominent spot in Joe and Kay's living room is one of his last compositions, a song called "Bennett's Lullaby," which he wrote and performed for a neighbor's newborn son. Joe's very last composition? Probably the tag for the Sept/Oct issue of *The Harmonizer*, which sat on his home computer the day he left for a fairly routine surgery. (From his literal deathbed, Joe phoned Tom Gentry and Lorin May to ensure it was published.) Joe's last words and notes to the barbershop world summed up his lasting legacy. The title? "Happiness."

the World's Largest Concert, recorded at Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan and distributed live via satellite to thousands of classrooms nationwide.

"Joe's preparation of children's chorus music was just phenomenal," said bass Ben Ayling. "It was so well written, within a very good range for the kids. He was just right in the meter where the kids could sing. It was a real coup for Joe, and for us, and for barbershop. This was live all across the country. In music classrooms, and gymnasiums and large halls, there were hundreds of thousands of kids singing "Teach The Children To Sing."

Song spotlight

"The Moment I Saw Your Eyes"

Joe's original song and arrangement was a smash hit after **The Gas House Gang** blew the roof off the Superdome with it in 1992. True to Joe, his best work was for everyone.

"Our coach, Joni Bescos, told us, 'You're definitely singing that because it rings the most chords!'" said bari Dale Syverson of 1999 Sweet Adelines Queens of Harmony **Rumors**. "Over time, I've more than once cussed Joe for that baritone hanger. It was unusual for a baritone to begin with, and right on my

What Joe knew about "winning"

By Mike Lietke

Joe began directing the **Milwaukee Festival City Chorus** in the late '80s and was making it a thriving endeavor. Around that time, a number of quartet singers were forming the more contest-oriented **Midwest Vocal Express** and attracting many premium singers from nearby chapters — especially Milwaukee. (I have been a member of that **Greendale Chapter** since 1989.)

How did Joe change to combat this potential assault on his Milwaukee chapter's membership rolls? Pouting? Threatening? Playing on loyalties?

He combatted it by NOT changing. Every Tuesday, he would be leading these unadorned men in terrific old songs ("Back in the Old Routine"? How passe! "Mother Machree"? Don't even!) He also led them with the most intensely terrible, elfin puns ever mustered. Scorn for self was inevitable when you realized you were laughing at those puns.

Visual complement in performance was not always stellar given the community chorus nature of the group. Rehearsals were in a church with a bingo hall in the basement, which meant singers needed not leave for libation afterward to accompany their tags. And who often would lead those tags? Do we need to say?

So, did that chapter survive under Joe,

against the potential headwind of "all of our good singers" going down the road to greener pastures?

No. It did not survive. It thrived.

That vibrant Milwaukee chapter under Joe Liles saw its ranks grow to over 100 members. It would regularly pack its spring shows at the large Milwaukee Performing Arts Center. It earned the right to compete in some Buckeye Invitationals. (Remember those?) It even leapfrogged the upstart Greendale chapter to take second place in one memorable district contest in the early '90s. How did it do that? By Joe's focusing on the pure fun of this hobby, and *caring for the chapter atmosphere ahead of the chorus atmosphere*.

I recall going to the Milwaukee rehearsal hall "just for the tags" when college homework did not interfere. In fact, for a couple of years I took out a dual membership in the FCC just to be hot-dipped in everything that Joe represented as a man and to this hobby.

Joe inspired every week. Reminiscing with a long time FCC member recently, the member stated that Joe helped more "average" guys realize their musical talent than possibly anybody the Society has known. Can you think of a better way to be remembered?

FOR JOE, COMPOSING AND ARRANGING WERE THE SAME THING AS LOVING EVERYONE AND UNSELFISHLY SHARING HIS TIME AND GIFTS. THOSE IN TURN WERE THE SAME THING AS LEADERSHIP AND VISION, IN HELPING ALL PEOPLE EXULT IN MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER.

passagio—one of the worst notes in my range!”

“My Buddy”: “A very emotional chart, and we made some changes to it before the contest,” Dale continued. “In the middle of a song, I saw Joe in the second row and I thought, ‘Oh, no—I never told Joe!’” Anyway, he called me at work a week or so after to congratulate me, and I thought, “Okay, here it comes. I’ve just lost a friend.” He said, “I’ve had so many requests already for ‘My Buddy,’ but everybody wants it the way you did it. Would you share the changes you made?” I just thought, “How gracious he is!”

Joe. Unifier.

At a distance of 25 years since a heart attack ended his duties as Executive Director, it would be easy for most Barbershoppers to have never known of the transforming impacts Joe made—and again, they all intimately intertwine his devotion to bringing more people together singing more music.

As an arranger, coach, and director in Sweet Adelines, he had long appreciated the crossover appeal of his own works. By the mid-1990s, whenever he created a new chart, it became his personal practice to develop both TTBB and SSAA versions.

Later, as Music Publications Editor, this became a BHS publishing practice, and Joe was a powerful mentor and advocate for other arrangers to take the same approach.

His tenure as Executive Director was not without controversy. Seeing so many small chapters struggling for lack of a director, Joe was an early advocate for women directing men’s choruses. This won admiration from men and women alike ... and hostility in about equal amounts from both men and women. He persevered, though, and in 1994 the Society Board cleared the way for women to direct on the contest stage, providing official permission for a practice already taking place in many chapter shows and rehearsals.

Which perfectly sums up Joe’s life. Whether as a spouse and family man, or as a leader and director, or as a composer and arranger— it always finally came down to bringing people together to laugh and sing and shine in their own ways and be happy. And Joe would be right alongside, gleefully slipping in another groaner of a pun and making up a fifth voice to sing in counterpoint, and a fresh tag, and wouldn’t it be great if we could get some more people to sing this with us ... ■

Cutting room floor

“I can’t believe you published a story about Joe without mentioning...”

- Seniors Quartet Champion, Harmony, 2001
- BHS Hall of Fame, 2007
- BHS Lifetime Achievement Award in Arranging, inaugural class, 2019
- An absolutely terrifying driver
- Loved his food spicy—the hotter, the better! Carried his own hot sauce.
- So many fond old Harmony Hall anecdotes ...

MORE ONLINE

barbershop.org/joeliles

Everyone had something to say about Joe— much more than fit into the magazine.

- Watch Joe sing his last song, “Bennett’s Lullaby” to the title baby boy
- Get learning tracks for the Joe Liles tag in this issue
- Listen to our playlist of great performances of Joe’s music
- Read full-length transcripts of stories from Kay Liles, David Wright, Kevin Keller, Tom Gentry, Brian Lynch and others



DIFFERENTLY *Wired*



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The Harmonizer
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Between 15% to 25% of people are “neurodivergent”—having a brain that is “wired” a bit differently from the norm. A lot of the barbershop world’s most common teaching techniques don’t really work for them. Yet, neurodivergent Barbershoppers arguably produce much of our peak creative output.

Help your group’s unconventional thinkers stop having to fake being “neurotypical,” and instead help them unleash their potential superpowers.

A skilled coach is helping a quartet deliver an emotional ballad. “Put yourself in the same emotional space as the lyrics,” the performers are told. “How would you express this phrase if you had just lost your spouse of 50 years?” Three members of the quartet nod their heads as they ponder the input. For Fred Tyrrell, an effervescent British barbershop arranger who is studying mathematics at Oxford University, such instructions might as well have been delivered by Navajo code-talkers.

“It’s as if someone has asked me to fly unaided!” he exclaimed. Unlike his “neurotypical” quartet mates, **Fred’s autism (one of many “neurodivergent” conditions) leads to him to process human behavior more through analysis and less through emotion or intuition.** He has nothing in common with sociopaths; his concern for others and morals are fully intact. But Fred compares his ability to read and comprehend others’ emotions—and even his own emotions—to reaching the line of text during an eye exam that is too blurry to read.

It also doesn’t help that Fred is only 20 and has never been married, let alone lost a spouse. “Neither have I,” you might think, “but I can still imagine how such a loss would feel.” Well, Fred cannot. He might run errands to help a newly widowed man, but **asking Fred to navigate a new song through that widower’s eyes is like asking a blind person to navigate a new city using a standard paper map. Success will require different tools.**

“Just tell me when I should smile or frown my brow,” he said with some exasperation. The puzzle of Fred’s emotional optics will not be resolved during a coaching session. For now, Fred just needs to know what the audience should see, expressed in plain English. “I’m told I’ve performed well when I’m left to my own devices.”



London native Fred Tyrrell performs an arrangement of his own on his YouTube channel. He sings with Lost & Found quartet and leads a funk jazz band at Oxford University.



This is about having a culture of inclusion, about when people don’t fit into our prescribed way of behaving. The neurodivergent feel normal until we’re told we are not. Remember that we are in a creative organization—don’t enforce structure for structure’s sake. Value people who don’t go with the flow. Everyone needs a safe space in a creative world. – Mo Field

THINKING

Differently

You already know that people think differently because of their upbringing, their decisions, opportunities, past traumas, culture, etc. Fred brings all of those variations to the table plus one more: his brain structure is not typical. Neurodivergence is the product of variations in the human genome that result in divergent brain function.

While only 1 in 54 people (1 in 31 males) are on the autism spectrum, between 15% and 25% of all people are likely neurodivergent, a catch-all term that includes both autism and a large variety of other conditions rooted in brain function that differs from the norm. (See sidebar.) **You likely have neurodivergent members in your chorus—and perhaps a neurodivergent singer in your quartet. We’ve all rung chords together—let’s learn to understand each other a little better.**

DIVERGENT THINKING: THANK GOODNESS!

Neurodivergence is a spectrum that runs from mild to severe, the latter often presenting significant challenges to a person’s mental health and ability to function in life. But it’s likely that some of the performers and leaders you already admire are neurodivergent, and it is likely that they cannot imagine

giving up some of the traits that make them different.

“The most creative, fantastic things you’ve ever seen in barbershop, once you look at the people in that group, you’ll see that someone who is neurodivergent is driving it,” said Mo Field, director of the **Great Northern Union Chorus**. Like some high-functioning neurodivergent people, Mo’s demeanor offers few overt signals that she is on the autism spectrum, as well as having ADHD and the chronic anxiety and depression often tied to these conditions. She said the barbershop world is filled with big-name performers, leaders, arrangers, and “creatives” who are either diagnosed with or who clearly exhibit neurodivergent traits.

Many don’t particularly stand out because they work hard to fit in. But world history and our artform’s history are filled with icons who blazed new trails by thinking and behaving unconventionally while strongly exhibiting neurodivergent traits. Even when the past and present’s Einsteins, Mozarts, and Elon Musks have been remembered as peculiar or polarizing, their genius is undeniable.

“We have superheroes amongst us,”

Mo continued, speaking of neurodivergent figures she knows in the barbershop world. **“Thought leaders, people who see 10 steps ahead, people who see things from the other side, dropping little ideas for other people to pick up and run with.”**

“We’re out there faking being neurotypical, but we do exist,” said Shanno Wilson, who administers a private Facebook group for neurodivergent Barbershoppers. Hundreds, including many major figures in the barbershop community, seek support as they experience mental health challenges in a barbershop context. (Contact Shanno at omshanno@gmail.com if interested in joining.) The group name is secret and access is tightly controlled for good reasons, unfortunately.

“It’s extremely dangerous to be vulnerable in the barbershop world,” said group member Chaz Chesser, an Arizona bass who has appeared with two quartets on the international stage. He has ADHD and, like a lot of neurodivergent people, struggles with severe anxiety and depression as well.

He described a small but occasionally loud minority among neurotypical Barbershoppers who question whether some of these conditions are overblown or even real. Anything other than neurotypical conformity could be mocked as delicate minds that need to toughen up.



Shanno Wilson of Toledo has chronic migraines that are paired with chronic depression and anxiety.

“Being in pain all the time affects your musical experience,” she says. “You get in the habit of saying you feel fine when you don’t.”

WHAT IS NEURODIVERGENCE?

Neurodivergence is a catch-all term for a large and often unrelated group of conditions wherein one’s brain behaves, processes, or learns differently from what is considered typical. Most of those interviewed for this article had among the most common conditions: autism, ADHD, anxiety disorders, and depressive disorders.

Autism is a broad spectrum of conditions resulting in social challenges, repetitive

behaviors, narrow interests, and sometimes speech difficulties. They tend to be excellent at details, focus, creativity, and visual learning.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) inhibits attention or focus for long periods, but often with sustained hyperfocus in other situations. May be restless, have difficulty organizing, and often zone out, but they are out-of-the-box thinkers

and often great problem-solvers.

Other neurodivergent conditions include dyslexia, hyperlexia, Tourette’s syndrome, dyspraxia, synesthesia, dyscalculia, Down syndrome, epilepsy, and chronic mental health illnesses such as bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety, and depression.

—Adapted from verywellmind.com

WHO IS DEFINING “NORMAL”?

A neurodivergent perspective

Viewing the neurodivergent as delicate is ironic, because a lifetime of swimming against the tide may lead to an unusually thick skin and remarkable resilience. Neurodivergent traits may also be more relatable than you imagine: about 30% of neurotypical people share one or more traits associated with the autism spectrum, and additional numbers exhibit traits from the dozens of other neurodivergent conditions.

Like asthma or Type 1 diabetes, neurodivergent conditions are permanent. Medicines and therapies offer help for many conditions, but a brain cannot be rewired to become neurotypical. And let's not forget about those potential upsides.

“The really social people did not invent the first stone spear,” suggested famed autism advocate Temple Grandin. “It was probably invented by an [autistic person] who chipped away at rocks while the other people socialized around the campfire. **Without autism traits we might still be living in caves.**”

What follows is a view of our performance/social world through the eyes of eight barbershoppers who have ADHD, anxiety, and/or depression. What's true for one may not be true for others. Some of the offered advice may resonate with neurotypical performers as well.

One clear take-away: “normal” defines how common a trait is, not whether it is “better.” For example, it may be hard to understand why an autistic person cannot read your face or adjust to your emotional state; but **autistic people can't understand why neurotypicals are so blinded by egos and etiquette that they resist logic or won't explore innovative solutions.**

By the same token, why attach negative labels to someone who zones out during a long, meandering show planning meeting? (Only for the team to come around to the great idea that a “creative” proposed hours before, if not months before ...) Maybe that's reasonable behavior for someone who's stuck in a room with people who—as long as we're labeling thinking styles—appear to have Creativity Deficit Disorder or Obsessive Process Adherence Syndrome.

MORE TEACHING TOOLS WILL BENEFIT EVERYONE

Coaches and leaders need to educate themselves on what other people need. A lot can fall into their routine of “This is what I do.” But there are a lot of different learning styles. – Shanno

Don't just talk about what you want me to do – model how you would sing these words or how you would visually communicate something. – Chaz

There is no one right way. Some think this one big paintbrush works the best because it works with most people. But you might need a new tool every time you meet someone. – Mo

WE CAN BE VERY ANALYTICAL— ABSTRACTIONS MIGHT NOT HELP

Sing as if aiming the sound out of your forehead?”—what does that even mean? I have vocal training. Tell me how to produce sound mechanically, not metaphorically. – Cavan

Don't tell me to “have presence.” I need more concrete definitions and examples on what things are supposed to look like. – Natalia

I can't stand when they say, “Sing triumphantly” or whatever. Use music terms—I understand them. – Fred

FOR SOME OF US, FACES—BOTH OURS AND YOURS—CAN BE A STRUGGLE

Even though I think my face is engaged, it can come off as “deer in the headlights.” – Parker

I can either pretend that I'm listening or I can listen, but I can't do both. – Natalia

I was always struggling to interpret someone's face and know they were feeling a certain way, and people were so disappointed. I can't bring myself to do eye contact—it feels horrific. – Fred

YOU ARE SOOOOO SLOW ...

"I'm constantly struggling to not be seven steps ahead of the chorus. People with ADHD can hyperfocus on problems that interest us, but we can't do the same passage for an hour. If the delivery is too slow, or you're coaching one section without giving the other sections something to do, I'll check out." – Chantel

We want to solve problems lightning fast. Neurotypical people want order, but we neurodivergents accept chaos into our order. I can't stop seeing this thing that needs to change. I can't see why people can't see what I see. – Mo

I can't just stay stock still on the risers. I might need to stretch or bend over, or even walk away for a minute. I'm doing that not because I can't pay attention but because I want to pay attention.

–Chantel



Chantel Parsons was a BHS director before moving to Great Britain, where she is now a Performance Category judge with BABS. Her ADHD helps her thrive in as a teacher in the often-chaotic music education environment, but presents challenges when she stands on the risers.

... EXCEPT WHEN YOU ARE TOO FAST

I'm always taking one little piece of advice and explaining it to myself in 10-20 different ways I can process. I'm always trying to catch up with other people. – Parker



Parker Rognrud of Phoenix has ADHD and depression, and has many traits of high-functioning autism (previously known as Asperger's Syndrome). He spends a lot of time in his head "translating" abstract performance tips into more concrete actions.

Even if it seems like I'm getting it, I need a lot of processing time and space.

– Natalia

We don't have your filters and can get sensory overload. Don't do everything at once. Only concentrate on one or two skills at a time. – Cavan

THE FACEBOOK POST THAT STARTED THE CONVERSATION

The genesis for this article was a question from BHS Performance Judge Sandi Wright on the "Let's Talk (barber)Shop" Facebook group. After a virtual coaching session in March, a member with autism spoke with her about his performance challenges.

"We teach our singers to connect with the audience, be vulnerable and sing through the eyes of a character," Sandi wrote. "I recently encountered an extremely good singer who admitted to being on the autism spectrum, and he/she said it was very difficult for him/her to make eye contact, "feel" emotion visually, and the thought of becoming a character was a very foreign (almost frightening) concept."

Sandi felt unqualified to respond and

solicited input. (She also brought the post to the attention of The Harmonizer.) While neurodivergent Barbershoppers drove many of the 175+ comments that followed, a lot of what they shared resonated with neurotypical commenters as well. Some of the feedback from neurotypical commenters was particularly sharp:

"Before contest we have coaches and directors manipulate us into feeling deep, manufactured emotions," said one commenter. "I think the sheer amount of performance judges/theater teachers giving emotional and mental health advice with no actual mental health training/education is kind of damaging."

"Spending less time turning performance coaching into an impromptu—and often

uninvited—therapy session would be so refreshing," said HU Performance coach Amy Rose. "Barbershop has developed serious tunnel vision about performance techniques."

Others suggested that a focus on making the performer feel something could divert focus from delivering what the audience needs.

"A performer can have intense feelings but not show those externally," said Glenda Lloyd. The *audience* needs to feel the emotion of the song."

"Our job as performers is not to feel the performance but to help the audience feel something," echoed David Wallace. "If a performer is ill, or sad, or never had experienced the heart of a song, they can still lead an audience to an emotional place."

WE CAN'T ALWAYS PUT YOUR COMFORT FIRST

I am bluntly honest and aggressively genuine. I am incapable of manipulation or lying or deceit. It feels like lying to pretend you have emotions that you aren't really feeling. I cannot "fake it until I make it." – *Cavan*

This is about valuing people who do not go with the flow. If I'm climbing a ladder and see another one that gets us closer to our goal, I'm climbing that ladder instead, even if that's not "the process." We waste a lot of energy doing the heavy lifting for neurotypicals' anxiety and comfort instead of working toward the solution. Some things are more important than egos. – *Mo*

Natalia Jasso discovered barbershop as a San Antonio-area youth performer at Midwinter in 2017. Experienced in musical theater, her autism helped her develop an "innate ability to perform, because I'm performing neurotypicality all day."



Cavan Potee sings with Parkside Harmony and Heart of Maryland. He has autism and is moved by music but not by lyrics. Because he cannot fake what he does not feel, he must get into the emotional space of a song by revisiting relevant experiences of his own.



WHAT'S OBVIOUS TO YOU ISN'T ALWAYS OBVIOUS TO US

Growing up, I had troubles with recognizing social cues, boundaries, and appropriateness. I was always frustrated that others could read my emotions and I couldn't read theirs. – *Cavan*

Everyone else has this instruction book to life that we didn't get. – *Natalia*

A lot of these social rules we live by, nobody had to explain them to you. There are instincts you have that I don't. Explain the behavior you want me to have. It helps if I understand the "why" instead of only the "what." – *Cavan*

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY CAN BE OVERWHELMING

A lot of the people dealing with these issues are directors or other leaders. They often put their mental health on the backburner because they don't want to let you down, and then they crash. If someone looks like they might be burning out, mention it. Suggest that they scale back. – *Chaz*

A lot of us are chronically ill, fighting battles that neurotypicals will never see. We need to know our leadership cares about our mental health as much as it cares about a member in the hospital. We need to feel safe to talk about it. – *Shanno*

Sometimes during coaching or rehearsals, your inner critic gets really loud. I'd get a little overwhelmed and need to step away. My quartet was great. They'd say, "Do your thing, come back when you're ready." Or during an eval, I'd have to stop and say, "I know this isn't literally the case, but right now I feel like the worst singer of all time. Please provide evidence to the contrary." And they would. And then we'd move on. – *Chaz*



Chaz Chesser of Phoenix (third from left) sings with Average Joes. He has ADHD, anxiety, and depression, and may be on the autism spectrum. His most believable performances come after watching and mimicking recommended facial expressions and bodily inflections from videos.

WE NEED SPACE— AND PROOF THAT YOU CARE

Many mask what they are feeling. They're taught, "You can't bring that on risers!" and are expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. But we need to peel back the mask and acknowledge that each member may not have the same journey as those around them. – Parker

The singer who comes in late may be your ADHD person with time blindness. Being yelled at for it might not make it better. – Chantel



Mo Field is a full-time musician who has led multiple high-level barbershop groups; she is currently director of Great Northern Union Chorus. Many are unaware of her autism, ADHD, anxiety, and depression due to some secondary traits that present as neurotypical, such as her expressive face, her comfort with eye contact, and her ease in social engagement.

I need the ability to sometimes step down quietly from the risers and find a place to breathe without anyone commenting or acknowledging it. – Chaz

If you give feedback in a way that might be okay for a normal brain, realize that we catastrophize a lot. We might skip rehearsals if we think someone is upset at us. Sometimes it's easier to just retreat. – Chantel

We don't need kid gloves. It shouldn't take knowing the diagnosis to help someone. – Natalia

Now what?

Guidance for both the neurotypical and neurodivergent

Neurodivergence is not a "problem" to be "solved." People are people, with distinctive interior ways of seeing, hearing and feeling the world. Everyone in Harmony means opening ourselves to sincerely seeking to understand all people—and the Barbershop Harmony Society has only begun to fully bring to the fore the ways we can celebrate, engage, and empower everyone who finds joy in making music together.

A rule of thumb: **If you've met one neurodivergent person, you've met ... one.** Nobody is the same. Some neurodivergent people would relate to a lot of the preceding statements, while others would relate to fewer.

What comes next? Whether you're leading a chorus and need to expand your teaching toolbox, or just a neurodivergent person trying to adjust to a neurotypical chapter, hopefully, some conversations and self-reflection come next. Let's hear from Mo

Field, who has decades of experience in both camps.

For the neurotypical: "Value autonomous thinkers. We've got to have neurodivergent people, who will go to the end of their world with their task and they won't stop until there's success. **If the conditions are right, the same trait that is a liability can become a superpower.**"

For the neurodivergent: "We often patiently wait as we figure out how to fit into this chapter mechanism. But don't expect neurotypical people to just say, 'I can see that you're having a feeling' and know what to do. They can't feel what you're feeling. **If you're neurodivergent, you need to come out of the closet with it and advocate for yourself.**"

Finally, if you heard echoes of yourself in the conditions and solutions offered here more than you previously imagined, that doesn't necessarily mean you are neurodivergent. But what if it does? Talk to your

doctor—you may learn some things that help you better understand some of your past victories and struggles, and gain the tools to put more experiences in the victory column.

Who knows, you might even learn to unleash your superpower! ■

From page 12



DIRECTORS WANTED

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

Merrimack Valley Chorus The award-winning Merrimack Valley A Cappella Chorus, in Andover MA, is seeking a dynamic director to lead a vibrant, fun-loving community of SAI women in their musical and artistic growth. Please submit a resume to directorsearch@merrimackvalleychorus.org, or visit www.merrimackvalleychorus.com for more information.

The Paradise Coastmen Chorus (Naples, FL) seeks a dynamic front line musical director. A 45-year-old chorus with 40 singers and three

registered quartets meets Thursday evenings. Salary and expenses are negotiable. Contact Gray Poehler at grayp@aol.com.

West Sound Chorus (Bremerton, WA), is seeking a talented replacement to extend the 25-year successful trajectory of retiring director, Mike Menefee. This competitive 35-man chorus placed 5th at the latest EVG district contest while still hosting two public shows each year. Contact pr@singkitsap.org.

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FRIENDS IN HARMONY

- Harmony Foundation International
harmonyfoundation.org
- Sing Canada Harmony
SingCanadaHarmony.ca
- American Choral Directors Association
acdaonline.org
- Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
sinfonia.org
- World Harmony Council
worldbarbershop.org
- National Museum for African-American Music
nmaam.org
- Sweet Adelines International
sweetadelines.com
- Harmony, Incorporated
harmonyinc.org
- Barbershop Quartet Preservation Association
bqpa.com
- National Association for Music Education
nafme.org
- Chorus America
chorusamerica.org
- Nashville Songwriters Association International
nashvillesongwriters.com

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THE TAG

Tom Gentry, Tagmaster

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Long live Joe Liles

This isn't how it was supposed to happen. Early this spring, Joe Liles decided he would retire as Tagmaster at the end of this year and asked if I would succeed him. (I say succeed, not replace. Nobody can replace Joe.) I was thrilled, and *Harmonizer* Editor Lorin May okayed the change.

This tag was supposed to be a surprise for Joe, printed along with an article honoring him. A tag of Joe's choice would have appeared on this page as usual, and my duties would not have begun until 2022.

When Joe's health took a turn for the worse, I sent this tag to his wife, the wonderful Kay, to show him. No way was he not going to know that tens of thousands of Barbershoppers would see, and many would sing, this tribute to our hero.

The chord in measure 2 is a bit unusual, a barbershop seventh with flatted fifth. It just feels like "sad times." Leads, be sure to return to the tonic in measure 3 rather than going down only a half step.

Probably the most challenging spot will be the first note in 7 for the basses. Sing it a half step higher than you are tempted to, listening for the baris, with whom you are in unison.

After Joe died, I briefly thought of changing "love you" to "loved you." But since Joe will long have such a special spot in our hearts, would that have made much sense? So gather with some friends and sing this with love in your heart and perhaps a tear in your eye. And if you hear what sound like overtones, you know who is really singing them, don't you? ■

BONUS: get tracks for this tag at barbershop.org/joeliles. (Thanks to Adam LeFebvre!)

Joe Liles Tag

TTBB voicing

SSAA voicing

Tom Gentry 2021

SATB voicing

Tom Gentry 2021



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