

# The Harmonizer

BRINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY TO LIFE • JULY/AUGUST 2025



YOUR PATH TO  
**GROWTH**  
STARTS HERE



## THE GROWTH MINDSET

Attract more members, connect with your community, grow your audiences



### NOTEWORTHY

HONORS: MARK HALE IN HALL OF FAME  
TONY DE ROSA RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

### TIP SHEET

CREATING CHORDS FROM THIN  
AIR: JOYS OF WOODSHEDDING

### SPOTLIGHT

"SQUEAK" TILTON: OUR MOST  
ACTIVE 77-YEAR MEMBER



"This show will  
introduce the world  
to the power of  
barbershop!"

-Tim Waurick, Hall of Famer and  
2006 International Champion

*Off-Broadway 2026  
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Photos by Joan Marcus

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# The 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 our vision

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

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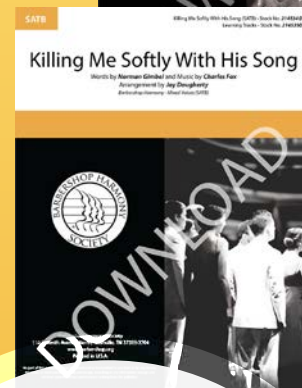
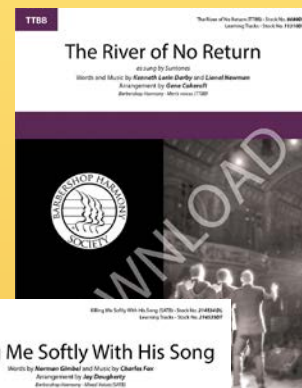
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# NEW MUSIC

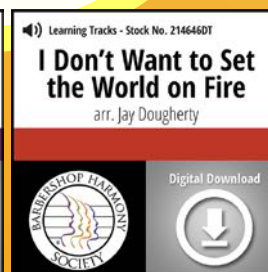
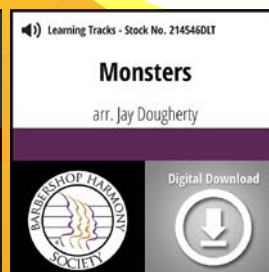
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# Are you “green and growing” or “ripe and rotting?”



We can easily be seduced into coasting once we reach the peak that comes from achieving a significant chapter goal. But the state of being “ripe” will inevitably lead to “rotting” unless we maintain a growth mindset and continually move toward new goals and achievements.

In the early '90s, famed Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz was a popular motivational speaker. My company bought a block of tickets for a speaking engagement in St. Louis and I was lucky enough to attend.

Lou said so many worthwhile things that night, including a couple that transformed my life! But one thing he said took hold with me later on. From a business perspective, he quoted Ray Kroc: “You are either ‘green and growing’ or ‘ripe and rotting’.”

What I’ve discovered in my later

years is that most Barbershoppers believe there are actually three states of a barbershop chapter:

- Green and growing
- Ripe
- Rotting

I always counter that “ripe” and “rotting” are actually connected, and I almost always receive a heated rebuttal!

One area of my professional career was in product lifecycles. Just as in human life, product life can be described in its infancy (just introduced), adolescence (initial market growth), maturity (peak growth), decline (old age) and obsolete (death).

On the opposite page is a simple picture of this concept. You’ll find variations of this on the internet, but the principles are the same.

Now, a variety of factors determine a product’s peak and how long the product is alive: quality, effective

advertising, ongoing support funds, reinvestment, reinvention, and so on. If a company does not invest, then the product will peak and then go into decline and death.

It is dangerous to believe that *ripe* is separate state from *rotting*. When you are ripe, everything is great and everyone is happy. You stop working on things. “Why are you working on something that is great?!” “It’s not broken ...”

You believe your state of ripeness has a momentum of its own, but

IF YOU’RE HAPPY WHERE YOU ARE, GREAT! BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO KEEP WORKING JUST AS HARD TO STAY WHERE YOU ARE, MAYBE HARDER, BECAUSE NATURE IS WAITING TO TAKE YOU DOWN AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.



## Get in Touch

**Kevin Keller, Society President** [bhspresident@barbershop.org](mailto:bhspresident@barbershop.org)

nature always takes over. Without continuing support and investment, “everyone is happy” is a recipe for rotting. What is ripe now will begin to decline. Once it declines, it loses energy and fun. Everyone longs for the old days. People leave, and it decays further.

What each of us cares about in barbershop is quite varied. Sometimes, it's higher membership numbers, but many are happy with 20 people showing up each week. Maybe it is ticket sales. Maybe it is the number of performances you do. Perhaps your charitable work and/or the amount? What every chapter cares about can be different.

Let's just use membership numbers. (It does not have to be this!) You started at 12 people. You got serious about recruitment and exposure, and now it is 20. *Yay!* Big improvement. Members are happy and having a great time. You stop working your recruiting push because you hit your goal. In the next year, you gained two new people. Then in a blink of an eye, you lose four. Now down to 18. *Okay*, 18 or 20. About the same. Then you lose your director, and now you drop to 15. People aren't quite having the same amount of fun, so you lose a few more. The momentum builds towards a sad ending.

Thinking *ripe* is its own state is a fallacy because nature is inevitable. It takes constant work to merely *maintain* that level. You must have a growth mindset in order to contin-

ue to *grow* whatever it is you love. At the peak of any goal, you have the most energy and enthusiasm. Everyone is having fun and you have more people to do the work to keep it growing. If you don't continue with that growth mindset, nature steps in.

How do businesses manage a product lifecycle? It starts at the beginning. They invest in growth and improving the product. As more people buy the product, they invest more. They are investing hard at the beginning to get that peak as high as possible. The lower the investment, the lower the peak, but not necessarily vice versa. Now, the savvy businesses who get it don't look at merely the numbers that are growing, but they look at period-over-period growth (growth rate). Are you growing faster or slower than before? If you are growing faster, you keep pouring more in to grow that eventual peak. If the growth rate is slower, that that should be treated as an alarm bell. The peak is coming. “Ripe and rotting” are just around the corner. What serious actions do you take?

What deceives and seduces any of us into not taking action is the misleading fact that the actual numbers are still going up, even if the rate is slower. However, your future decline is destined unless you take new action.

“*Yeah, Kevin, stop talking business. This is barbershop!*” True; however, all of us care about our weekly

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experience. We want it to be good or even better way off into the future. I have seen this play out time and time again over many decades:

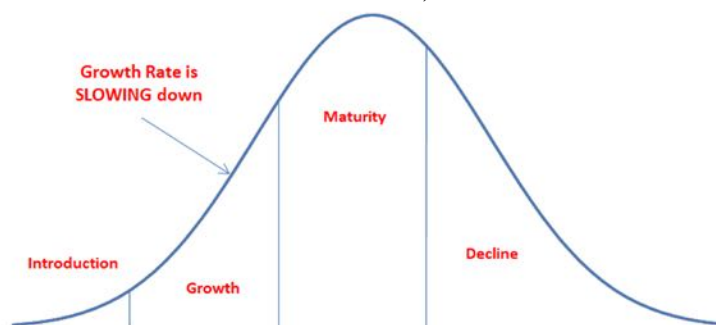
- “We used to sell 1,000 tickets for our annual show. Now we can't get 200 people to show up.”
- “We used to have pubic performances every month. Now we're lucky to have two a year.”
- “We used to have 50 people on the risers. Now we're lucky if we have a tenor.”

And so on...

There are some chapters doing incredible things out there because they are motivated to continually change their experiences. I applaud them and cheer loudly. But I raise the caution—don't stop the finish line of one particular goal. If you're happy where you are, great! But you still have to keep working just as hard to stay where you are, maybe harder, because nature is waiting to take you down at the first opportunity.

My challenge to all members, quartets, choruses, and chapters: Pick whatever metric you wish that is important to you. Make a plan to grow it in 2026. You don't have to wait until next year. Then when you are successful in 2026, make a plan to grow it further in 2027. Don't stop. Have a growth mindset.

Are you “Green and Growing” or “Ripe and Rotting”? ■





# Look at what truly happens when we gather

While our shared love for the music is a major reason we gather together, what keeps us coming back are the connections we share with each other.



**J**uly is that special month when we gather to sing and listen to some of the best quartets and choruses in the world during the International Convention. And at month's end, we gather at Harmony University with those who seek immersion in eight days of fun and intense barbershop learning

**WHY ARE WE SO EXCITED ABOUT BEING WITH BARBERSHOPPERS WE'VE KNOWN FOR YEARS—AND THOSE WE'VE LITERALLY MET JUST NOW (!)—THAT WE SING TAGS UNTIL THE WEE HOURS?**

experiences. They want to know *more*—how to sing better, lead better, and live more thoroughly the magic of enriching lives through singing.

The pure joy of it! We love bringing people together from all walks of life, talent levels, back-

grounds, and from all across the world. We love fueling the sense that as barbershop singers, we're all part of something really big and life-changing.

## WHAT HAPPENS: IN YOUR WORDS!

What truly happens when we gather? Why are we so excited about being with barbershoppers we've known for years — and those we've literally met just now (!)—that we sing tags until the wee hours? (Maybe fitting in a nap before the next day begins.)

We've asked a few people what the pursuit of harmony means. We say that phrase often. Now, let's contem-



[barbershop.org/join/in-the-pursuit-of-harmony](https://barbershop.org/join/in-the-pursuit-of-harmony)

plate what it means. Each answer is unique in the midst of common themes.

Consider these examples:

"It means coming together, putting our personal selves away in the pursuit of something more than us."

— Kyle Howard, *Music City Chorus*

"In pursuit of harmony means using music as an avenue to spread love. And joy. And acceptance. And friendship. It means using harmony to build bridges across all divides.

— Maddie Larrimore, *Parkside Melody*

"To me it means something like ... "presenance." Being present and being resonant at the same time. It means identifying dissonance and adjusting your own position to match what others are presenting."

— Shane Ownby, *Music City Chorus*

Is your barbershop heart just bursting?!

Please add your voice to the chorus! Shoot me an email at [sdenino@barbershop.org](mailto:sdenino@barbershop.org) and let me know how YOU explain what the pursuit of harmony means?

*STEVE*



## Get in Touch

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## **Thank you to our dedicated HFI donors!**

By supporting Harmony Foundation, you're enabling singing programs like BHS's Harmony University & NextGen Barbershop Choruses and Quartets, as well as the AIC Outreach program and the Power of Harmony project to flourish

Contact your HFI representative for more information or to make a donation! They would love to talk to you!



All annual fund giving levels support ALL these life-enriching programs: **BHS Mission, BHS Next Generation Barbershop, Harmony University, HFI Mission, AIC Outreach, & Power of Harmony**

**HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG**



● 2025 HALL OF FAME

# Mega-influential Mark Hale now a BHS Hall of Famer

A man who has done virtually everything there is to do in barbershop has left an indelible mark on barbershop history in multiple areas

**M**ark Hale was overcome with emotion at the end of **Michigan Jake's** UN-Convention show set after hearing Interim CEO Steve Denino's surprise announcement that Mark would be inducted into the 2025 class of the BHS Hall of Fame. Mark has distinguished himself as a pioneer and pillar in nearly aspect of barbershop harmony.

Having joined the **Louisville Thoroughbreds** in 1983 at age 16, Mark Hale first rose to fame in the 1990s as co-founder and director of the **Louisville Times**, a pioneering smaller, younger group with a pristine sound that opened up new chorus singing possibilities—a forerunner to the sound soon adopted by **Toronto Northern Lights**, **Westminster Chorus**, and many others.

Around the same time, Mark became lead of eventual 2001 champion **Michigan Jake**, an innovative tempo and rhythm-focused group with a bright and agile sound that continues to influence countless quartets. In 2000, he became director of the **Masters of Harmony**, leading them to four consec-



utive International Championships, and he later directed Denver's **Sound of the Rockies** to two chorus medals. Very active in Youth in Harmony efforts, Mark's support for potential cross-town rival Westminster Chorus was key to its formation and growth, a that turned out to benefit the Masters as well.

As the main coach for groundbreaking 2008 champion **OC Times**, the quartet considered Mark their biggest asset due to his indispensable role in developing their identity as well as

their widely-imitated performance style and repertoire. Perhaps most significantly, Mark connected both the quartet and Westminster chorus with his past arranging protege, the then-little known but brilliant arranger Aaron Dale, a connection that greatly raised the profile of both the pioneering Hall of Fame arranger and of the eventual 2008 champ.

For decades, Mark has remained in demand as a high-level coach throughout the barbershop world. Mark is also well known as a skilled arranger of many now-classic barbershop arrangements like "You Make Me Feel So Young." He has also served for decades as a Music (now Musicality) judge, becoming one of the Society's youngest-ever certified judges in the early 1990s. He is also an endless repository of barbershop historical knowledge, with stories and insights regarding every era. Mark Hale is widely known, respected, and admired by singers and ensembles around the world, and a shining example of what it means to be a Barbershopper.

## "CORNBREAD" PART 3: THIS TIME ON NETWORK TV

Tim Waurick's famous version of Roman King's "Cornbread" tag is the gift that keeps on giving. Already, millions watched on TikTok as tens of thousands failed in their attempts to keep up, then the Arizona Sun Devils played it at a New Years Day Bowl game. Now, millions have watched it appear in the inaugural episode of *America's Funniest People* on Sunday, June 15 on ABC. Of all the barbershop that's showed up online over the past two years, why does this tag keep going viral? Is it the easy-to-remember title? (Maybe) Its association with home-baked goodness? (Perhaps) The tag itself? (Definitely) Or could it just be the fun of watching Tim's lung-bursting, 37-second hanger defy both biology and physics? (Absolutely!) Anyway, congrats to Tim and Roman on their continued success!



● BHS BRAND

## NEW INFO RELEASED ABOUT ACCEPTABLE TASTE IN CONTESTS

New details have been added to the ongoing discussion regarding acceptable taste in BHS venues, which were sent to International competitors ahead of the Denver International Contests. The info addresses the ongoing tension between the needs and expectations of audiences in BHS venues and the desire of BHS performers to push artistic boundaries.

The below terms do not address the Contest & Judging system or scoring rules, but instead address both the BHS brand and audience expectations:

- **General audiences** expect to view content that is appropriate, accessible, and engaging for people of all ages, races, and backgrounds. BHS contest audiences (including Denver International) fall under this category, and all contest content should be addressed accordingly.
- **Mature audiences** are comprised of adults who are prepared for and capable of engaging with potentially challenging themes or language. Certain adult audiences and non-contest venues may fall under this category.

A volunteer group of BHS members who form the Acceptable Taste Team will continue to address these issues; they expect to release additional guidance prior to fall contest season. For more details, visit [barbershop.org/acceptable-taste](http://barbershop.org/acceptable-taste).

● JOE LILES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## Tony De Rosa wins Lifetime honors

**F**ive-time International Champion quartet member Tony De Rosa has been honored with the Joe Liles Life-



time Achievement Award for his extraordinary contributions to the barbershop art form as a chorus director, quartet singer, high-level teacher and coach, tagmaster, and internationally-acclaimed entertainer.

Already a chorus director and International quartet champion when in his teens, Tony has been dedicated to nurturing chorus singers for most of his life, from his work in the classroom and the Disney organization, to his leadership with 2024 International Silver Medalist **Heralds of Harmony** and numer-

ous Society chapters.

Tony inherited his love of harmony, music, and community from his late father, Joe De Rosa, and now shares it with his son, Joseph De Rosa, who sang tenor with his baritone father in 2024 champion **Three and a Half Men**.

As the only five-time BHS International Gold Medalist—three singing baritone and two singing lead over the course of 33 years—he set the bar for barbershop artistry and versatility. He helped shape the sound and success of numerous ensembles at every level, including many championship quartets and choruses.

Tony has earned deep respect from singers and colleagues alike, not only for his remarkable skill but for his generosity, humility, and unwavering dedication to the craft. ■



## What's Happening



### 2026 Midwinter ▲ Pasadena, California

Perfect weather, great shows and events, with a casual vibe [barbershop.org/midwinter](http://barbershop.org/midwinter)



### 2026 International St. Louis – June 28-July 5 ▲

It's not just one of the great barbershop cities, but one of the great cities to visit, with a vibrant downtown scene surrounding an unforgettable venue! [barbershop.org/events](http://barbershop.org/events)

**2025 International Denver**  
June 29–July 6

**2026 Midwinter Pasadena**  
January 13–18

**2026 International St. Louis**  
June 28–July 5

**2027 International Minneapolis**  
July 4–11

**2028 International Chicago**  
July 2–9

**2029 International San Antonio**  
July 1–8



## SPOTLIGHT

Dave Gibbons, Golf Capital Chorus  
gibbonsdave1@gmail.com

### ● LONGEST ACTIVELY PERFORMING MEMBER

# Bob “Squeak” Tilton: 77 years in BHS, still going strong

“Squeak” has been going full steam ahead ever since joining the Society in 1948, with the same energy and enthusiasm at age 94 that he brought at age 17

**B**ob “Squeak” Tilton is celebrating 77 years of Society membership, the longest tenure for any member who is still actively singing in both a chapter chorus and registered quartet. Squeak, still fully lucid and energetic at age 94, was recognized in early April at the Carolinas District Convention, hosted by the **Pinehurst Chapter** of which Squeak is a former President and current Board Member. Squeak helped form the Carolinas District, serving as its first President in 2010. He was later inducted into the District Hall of Fame.

Squeak’s 77-year barbershop career started in 1948, shortly after he and three friends were invited to a BHS chapter event. They all loved the music and joined that night. Soon they



“SQUEAK” ENJOYS THE LONGEST TENURE FOR ANY BHS MEMBER WHO IS STILL ACTIVELY SINGING IN BOTH A CHAPTER CHORUS AND A REGISTERED QUARTET

formed **The Six Foot Four** quartet, referring to all members being at least six feet tall. When their lead left, the soon-to-be legendary Buzz Haeger joined as tenor and Bob switched to lead. However, Bob had already

(Left): Squeak (far right) earned his nickname while singing with **The Four Tissimos**, a popular Chicago-area quartet that placed third at the 1955 International Contest. (Right): An avid lifetime golfer and a member of Pinehurst, N.C.’s **Golf Capitol Chorus** since 2001, “Squeak” has shot multiple rounds below his age.



earned the nickname “Squeak” while singing tenor, and it has stuck to this day! (As Buzz was only 5’11”, they changed their name to **The Four Tissimos**.)

The Four Tissimos won their first ever Illinois District Quartet contest and went on to place third at the 1955 International Quartet Contest. They became well-known in the Chicago

area, regularly performing on TV variety shows.

One of Squeak’s biggest performances came when he was singing with an ensemble in a Washington, D.C. hotel lobby during the 1954 International Convention. In walked President Dwight Eisenhower! They weren’t sure what to do and he motioned for them to keep singing. ■



### Bob “Squeak” Tilton Trivia

- At age six, met his father’s friend Cy Young, the legendary 511-win pitcher and namesake of the annual award for the best MLB pitcher
- Avid golfer who has shot under his age many times, most recently an 88 that is six strokes under his age
- Worked as a greenskeeper at the famous Chicago Golf Club, then a railroad diesel engineer, then as a logistics pioneer at Ryerson Steel and later at Jorgensen Steel and Aluminum, then as a consultant
- Korean War Sergeant who helped build South Korea’s Osan Airfield
- Moved to Pinehurst, NC in 2001
- Member of the choir at Community Presbyterian Church in Pinehurst
- Currently lead for the **Mashies & Niblicks**, the Pinehurst, N.C. Chapter’s most active quartet

# UPCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS



STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL UPCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS AT [BARBERSHOP.ORG/CALENDAR](http://BARBERSHOP.ORG/CALENDAR)





## TIP SHEET

Mike Ebbers, President of The Woodshedders

✉ mikeebb10578@gmail.com

# Woodshedding: discover the raw, creative side of barbershop

For the art form's first 50 years, woodshedding *was* barbershop harmony. Discover the under-appreciated art and joy of creating chords out of thin air!

If you've ever been to a District or International barbershop convention, you know the late night vibe—harmonies echoing from every hallway, tags being sung on repeat, and an energy that's impossible to ignore. Tags are fun, no doubt, but have you ever explored the freestyle side of barbershop? Enter: woodshedding.

Woodshedding is like the jazz improv of the barbershop world. One singer lays down the melody, and three others jump in, crafting harmonies on the fly—no sheet music, no arrangements, just ear, instinct, and musical chemistry. It's old school in the best way. Back in the late 1800s and early 1900s, this was how barbershop was always done. It wasn't until the 1940s that printed arrangements became the norm, and nowadays, most people don't experience barbershop in its raw, creative form.

So why woodshed in an era of polished arrangements and Spotify-perfect pitch?

Two words: *pure satisfaction*.

There's something uniquely thrilling about building harmonies from scratch—especially when that magical moment happens, and a chord locks in. It's spontaneous, collaborative, and incredibly rewarding. You don't need to be a pro arranger; you just need an ear and a willingness to experiment.

For the first 50 years of barbershop, the only way most people sang the style was for one person to sing



Charlie Gross, lead of 2025 NextGen Junior Quartet champion **Boysen Blue**, tags at the UN-Convention with **Freedom Rings**, a two-month-old Nashville-area quartet attending its first-ever barbershop gathering. When Charlie suggested tags for melodies they knew, they didn't always wait to be taught the notes. Several times, they leapt into singing the tune with improvised harmonies, suggesting that woodshedding may come naturally to those who never thought to only sing someone else's arrangements!

a melody while three other singers harmonized around that melody to the best of their ability. For the Society's founders, woodshedding *was* barbershop harmony. Quartets woodshedded and perfected most contest arrangements as well, until the **Chord Busters** (1941 champion) won using written arrangements. (Legend is that they were compelled to woodshed a song backstage before the medal announcements in order to prove that they were "real" barbershoppers.) Written arrangements quickly became the norm for contests, and today it is almost unheard of to sing without a written arrangement.

## TRY IT—YOU'LL LIKE IT!

So, you ask, why woodshed when so many good arrangements are available? There are at least two reasons:

- Singing by ear was considered an essential skill for the first 50 years of barbershop. Pure curiosity might lead one to experience the reason decades of barbershoppers considered learning to woodshed as essential as learning to sing.
- Early barbershoppers didn't necessarily sing by ear because there were no other options. Written arrangements existed, but they woodshedded because it was *fun*! It is ultra-satisfying when three others join and you together use

your creative juices to ring chords that you made up on the spot.

### FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

Instrumentalists use the term “woodshedding” to describe the act of practicing a difficult passage repeatedly, usually in private, until it can be performed flawlessly. The *woodshed* is any private place to practice without being heard by anyone else. Likewise, barbershop woodshedding is a type of practice that is satisfying for the singers but not meant for other ears.

Paradoxically, it’s easier to learn woodshedding than it is to teach it. Watch a group woodshed and you’ll probably pick it up on your own. You can also get some great ideas by watching a video created by a famous barbershop woodshedder, Paul Olguin: [bit.ly/olguin-woodshed](http://bit.ly/olguin-woodshed).

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EACH PART

There are general guidelines that seem to work when people are beginning to try out woodshedding. Here are some tips for each part.

- **Lead:** Sing the melody through at least once. Also, have the other singers sing the melody through. Make sure everyone has a starting pitch. While woodshedding, don’t try to maintain a strict tempo. Hold notes long enough to let people find their harmonies. And ... slow down.
- **Tenor:** Harmonize just above the lead, often a third above. Don’t go too high. If the melody goes low, leave room in the middle for the bari. Thirds and sevenths of the chord are common tenor choices.
- **Bass:** Normally sing roots, or 4–5 notes above the tonic. These are not always as low as you might expect. Don’t move if a note is working.
- **Baritone:** Choose the note that is left. Sing just below or just above



Woodshedding is learned by doing it, an experience that Barbershopper Paul Olguin gave attendees at the 2014 Harmony University. See it at [bit.ly/olguin-woodshed](http://bit.ly/olguin-woodshed).

the melody. Don’t make large jumps from one note to the next. Seek an internal note in the chord that avoids doubling the melody note and avoids doubling the tenor note an octave down. If the melody is going upward, the bari is likely going to go down, and vice-versa. When in doubt, try the fifth or seventh of a chord.

### GENERAL TIPS FOR ALL PARTS

- Get a starting chord that is in tune.
- Don’t move from your note until you have to.
- Move to the nearest note that works to create a barbershop chord.
- Take your time to find a new chord—don’t rush. The lead should hold the note until a chord is found.
- There are no bad note choices, but some choices do form chords that ring better than others. The goal is to have the most fun by ringing as many chords as possible.

### GETTING STARTED

If you have a group of four that is

singing tags, you have all you need to try woodshedding. Please remember that woodshedding is a very private and unpolished experience, so find a private corner rather than a high-traffic hallway. One person volunteers to sing a melody, the other three choose tenor, bari, or bass. Sing the chords that come to you using the guidelines listed here.

To accelerate your fun and learning, find the Woodshedders room at your local convention, where you’ll find a warm welcome and expert guidance. (See “The Woodshedders” sidebar.) With a little practice, you’ll learn to enjoy your woodshedding attempts as much as you enjoy tag singing—perhaps even more! For more information, refer to the article on woodshedding published in the November/December 2011 edition of *The Harmonizer* ([barbershop.org/harmonizer](http://barbershop.org/harmonizer)). ■

## THE WOODSHEDDERS

Since 1977, the Woodshedders (previously known as AHSOW, or the Ancient Harmonious Society of Woodshedders) has been dedicated to the old-fashioned pleasure of spontaneously ringing chords without printed arrangements. They provide a woodshedding room at each BHS Midwinter and International convention and at many district conventions. (If your district does not host a Woodshedders room, ask your district leadership if they would start one, or email [news@ahsow.com](mailto:news@ahsow.com).) You’ll find a warm welcome regardless of your level of experience, no charge, no prerequisites. Simply tell the facilitators what you would like to experience, and they will do their best to make it happen.

More information on woodshedding can be found at [ahsow.org](http://ahsow.org).

# UN-Conventional FUN!



Michigan Jake



First Take



Clever Girl

THE SMALL BUT MIGHTY MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND EVENT DELIVERED LOADS OF LAUGHS, DENVER'S FINAL QUARTET QUALIFIERS, AND THE FIRST MICHIGAN JAKE SHOW IN 21 YEARS!

We've never had an event like the UN-Convention before, or at least not all the same pieces at the same time. Maybe we could have called it the Memorial Day Jambo-ree, a hat tip to the Sunshine District's Labor Day weekend event. The intimate atmosphere, cozy feel, and great entertainment were similar, except the UN-Convention featured an actual International qualifying event in which the final four qualifiers punched their tickets to Denver.

The headliner for the weekend was 2001 Champion **Michigan Jake**, one year

ahead of the quartet's 25th anniversary year in St. Louis. (Spoiler: 20 years since their last performance, they've still got it!) Sharing top billing were 2025 SAI Queens **Clever Girl** and 2024 BHS Silver Medalist **First Take**. (Spoiler: less than a year after their latest achievements, they both still ... ah ... sound like two of the best quartets out there who haven't won BHS Gold!)

In addition to the Saturday and Sunday evening shows, attendees got to enjoy headquarters tours and laugh together with trivia games and *Family Feud* games. And tagging, 'till dawn! ■

## International qualifiers



Rooftop Records (SHD)



Party of Four (SWD)



Catalyst (NED)



Mischief (RMD)

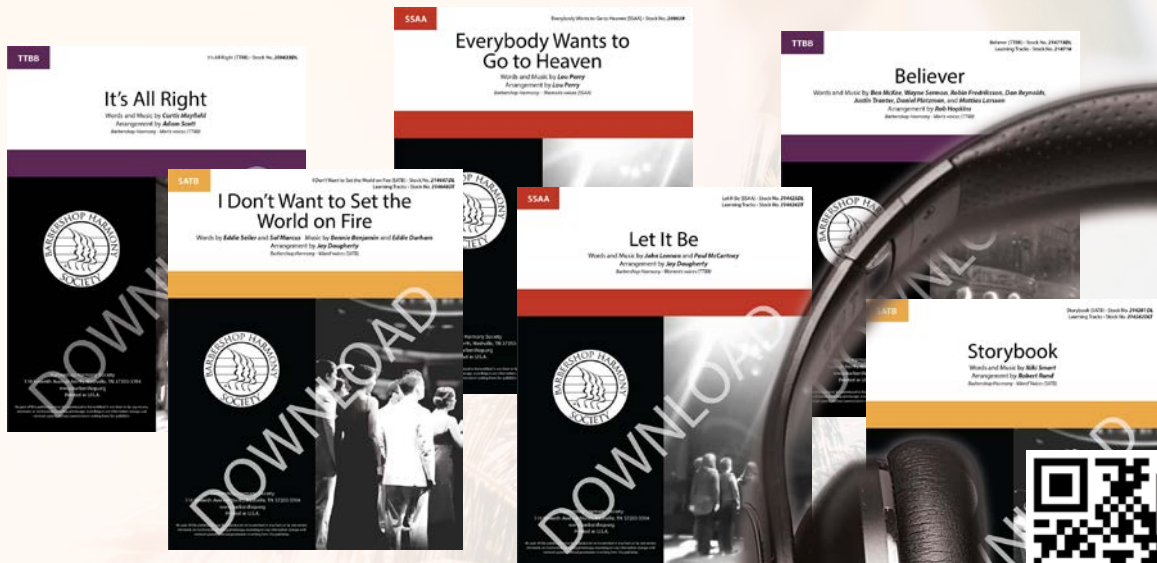




Attendees paid visits to Harmony Hall while enjoying the other sights and sounds of downtown Nashville. In addition to plentiful performances, audience members hooted while watching or participating in events that followed a gameshow format, including a trivia show and *Family Feud*. (Right: Winning "family" Brad and Ann McAlexander, Eddie Holt, Kathy Hawkins, Charlie Gross, Jay Hawkins.)



# SHEET MUSIC



LEARNING TRACKS AVAILABLE!  
[SHOP.BARBERSHOP.ORG](http://SHOP.BARBERSHOP.ORG)





herrenbesuch.net

# Guest night every week: 1 year, 21 new members

A former Amazon customer insights manager helped his German barbershop chorus upgrade its entire customer experience

In 2024, the **Herrenbesuch Chorus** in Munich, Germany acquired 21 new members, nearly doubling post-pandemic numbers to 50 members. Some familiar practices contributed to the explosive growth, which together added up to a complete overhaul of the entire guest experience. Amazon indirectly deserves some credit as well.

Sven Martens, a Munich-based innovation manager in the energy sector, didn't consider himself a singer before he fell in love with barbershop harmony three years ago and joined the Herrenbesuch Chorus. About a year later, Director Andrew Rembecki asked



Sven to lead chorus membership efforts, which until then had never been a formal role.

"Back then, we rarely had guests, and gained maybe one new member a year," Sven recalls.

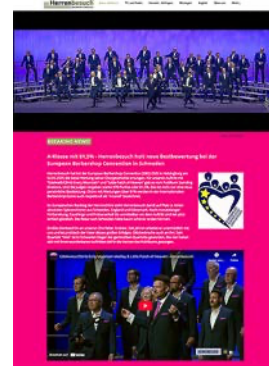
Sven had previously been a membership officer for a public speaking club; but, perhaps more importantly, he had recently wrapped up six years as a customer insights manager at Amazon, a company that centers every activity around the customer experience. With an engineer's organized and systematic approach, Sven began improving all the touchpoints of the visitor experience. Based on visitor/member data and feedback, he and his team tweaked every process, from awareness to first impressions to joining the chorus.

## UPGRADE ONLINE IMAGE

Improve the website. The chorus

website used to show only older members wearing traditional Bavarian outfits. Roughly translated, text and slogans

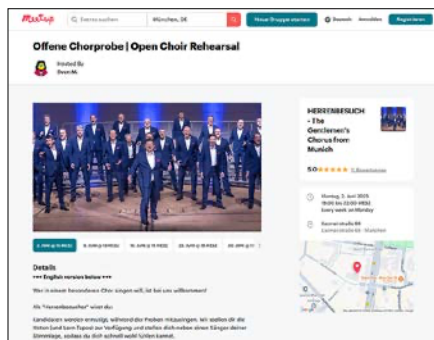
sold the group as "gentlemen suitors" and "singing Casanovas." Fortunately, chorus leaders had decided to update their online image about the same time Sven began his membership responsibilities. The webmaster updated photos to include younger singers, language was tweaked to appeal to broader, more modern tastes, and the chorus gave the site a more professional look that stood out





**Lorin May** is editor of *The Harmonizer Magazine* [harmonizer@barbershop.org](mailto:harmonizer@barbershop.org)

among the roughly 300 choirs in the Munich area. It is continually updated with current info about the chorus and other European barbershop news. *About 20% of visitors said they came after finding the chorus website, although Sven doesn't have data about what brought them to the website.*



**Appeal to hobby seekers.** “We decided to max out public channels to boost awareness,” Sven said. He updated and upgraded existing social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Eventbrite, Trip Advisor, and a few local pages. He put extra effort into developing a winning chorus profile on *Meetup.com* (also popular in North America), a website and app people use to find new hobbies and meet new people. Last year, 20% of new guests came via Meetup. *In total, social media brought in 30% of all first-time guests, although these visitors were less likely than other guests to become members.*



**Help potential guests visualize a visit.** Chorus media features brief YouTube videos that, for example, show guests learning a new tag. “They have a better sense of what our rehearsals are like,” Sven said. “It helps them realize that we aren’t too professional for them and that we aren’t unapproachable. They also help viewers to get a better sense of our togetherness.” ([youtube.com/@HerrenbesuchChor](https://youtube.com/@HerrenbesuchChor))

## MAXIMIZE COMMUNITY VISIBILITY



**Take every gig available.** The chorus took every public gig it could find, including unpaid gigs. In the past two years, the chorus has performed dozens of times at community concerts in public spaces—in fact,

nearly every weekend. At every gig, the chorus would hand out fliers and announce that they were looking for new singers, including inexperienced singers. *About 15% of visitors came from first seeing the chorus in public performances.*

**Grow in confidence, invite who you know.** Public gigs helped the chorus improve, and a second-place finish in the BinG! Barbershop Music Festival 2024 convinced members that they were a quality group that friends and family might want to join. *About 35% of visitors came via invitation by current chorus members, and these visitors were the most likely to join.*

**Invite past members.** Sven contacted them personally via email and text messages to ask if they would like to start singing with the chorus again. *Three former members returned for a visit and one rejoined.*

## PROFESSIONALIZE THE GUEST/NEW MEMBER PROCESS

**Actively pursue and encourage non-singers.** “We explicitly say we are looking for inexperienced singers also,” Sven said. “If they don’t initially pass the audition or need more help, we need to help them continue to feel welcome, even if they feel they are miles away from the average singer. It’s getting harder and harder to find experienced singers. If we exclude them, we can’t grow anymore.”



**Help guests feel like insiders.** Surveys showed that the strong bonds and friendships among the 19-year-old chorus's

longer-serving members had been intimidating to some. "I had the feeling when I joined that it's hard to become part of this community," he said. As a result, the chapter makes sure that "welcoming" is a major part of a guest's first and second impressions. A welcome table for new visitors includes blank name tags, and every member and guest wears a name tag every week. One of the membership team welcomes each new guest and introduces him to their director for initial voice placement. Guests are placed between two experienced members who are ready to help them.

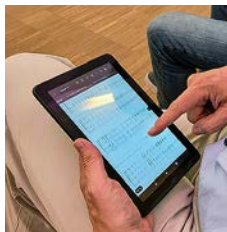


**Introduce guests early on.** Sven or another team member learns about guests during the warm-up, includ-

ing some fun facts, favorite foods, etc., then shares that info in an introduction right after the warm-up. That way, members and guests have something they can talk about during breaks.

### Turn sheet music from a pain point into a positive.

Each guest is issued one of five tablets that contain all current chorus sheet music. "It was once a burden for guests to find music in our folders and for the music team to keep them in order," Sven said. "Visitors tell us that the tablets are really professional compared to other choirs they had visited."



**Offer an invigorating musical experience.** "All our efforts would be in vain if we didn't have an attractive product, and that's singing together at a high level," Sven said. When asked why they decided to stay, "new members usually mention a strong sense of community and togetherness, and/or the musical quality that is mainly driven by our director, Andrew Rembecki," Sven continued. "He puts as much effort into it as his day job. You see it in the professionalism of the warm-up and how he records rehearsals so we can improve upon them."



**Make auditions quick, effective, and non-intimidating.** During the break, candidates practice audition songs either on their own part or "fifth-wheeling" with a quartet of four members. The first audition comes after a second or third visit. "They get in front of the music team



as early as possible to get feedback," Sven said. "It's more the rule than the exception that they don't pass the first time. But we want to see as early as possible if they have enough potential to become a good singer." Those that do not pass the first time keep learning with a training quartet during breaks in following weeks.

### FOCUS ON NON-REHEARSAL ACTIVITIES



**Hook them via tagging and after-glows.** Guests are invited to stay for a half hour or so after the rehearsal to sing tags. Many also join the 10-20 members who enjoy a weekly after-glow at a nearby restaurant. "Those who join us for the tag singing or restaurant usually convert to becoming members," Sven said.



**Build a sense of community.** "In the past year, we had a karaoke evening, two choir weekends, a summer



party, a soccer World Cup barbecue,” said Sven, “and, of course, our Christmas dinner.”

**Track and survey visitors and new members.** The membership team has the contact information of all 50 guests since the process started, and surveys new members as well. “We ask all our new members (1) why they joined us, (2) how they found us, (3) what they liked most about their first visit, and (4) how we can improve the experience,” Sven said. They tweak processes accordingly.

**Equip every member to become a “Welcome Ambassador.”** “We had to relearn how to be good hosts because we hadn’t had a lot of guests in a long time,” Sven said. A chorus Slack

channel shares news about guests, tells who passed auditions, and notes guests who didn’t return. A new guest/new member counter keeps track of progress. Once this channel started, “everyone was more involved, more excited about their initiative. Nobody would have believed we’d have 21 new members by the end of the year,” Sven continued. “People became better hosts and took initiative to help people feel welcome.”

**Follow-up with visitors.** Every guest receives a printed *Welcome Guide* with information about Herrenbesuch Chorus and about barbershop and the broader barbershop community. Sven’s team follows up with visitors via email, then text, then a call, in a low-pressure effort to answer questions, invite them back, and resolve any concerns. “The majority appreciated that we were still thinking about them and wanted them to be part of our singing community,” Sven said. “And if guests say, ‘I’m out,’ we respect that.”

**Build on momentum.** “There is now a whole new awareness of what it is like to be new or to be a visitor, so now more people are coming and more are converted to new members,” Sven said. Of 50 visitors in the past year, 21 became new members.

The chorus has now outgrown its old rehearsal space and is looking for one that can accommodate its next goal of reaching 80 members. Last, as no surprise to any of his fellow chorus members, Sven was named the 2024 Herrenbesucher of the Year! ■

## WILLKOMMEN BEI HERRENBESUCH!



Hallo! Ich bin Andrew Rembecki, der musikalische Leiter von Herrenbesuch. Schön, dass du heute bei uns bist! Singen ist, neben dem Unterrichten, eine der größten Leidenschaften in meinem Leben. Ich hoffe, dass du heute mit einer neu entdeckten Leidenschaft am gemeinsamen Singen in vierstimmiger Harmonie nach Hause gehst.

Ich entdeckte meine Liebe zur Musik, insbesondere den Barbershop-Stil, als ich als Teenager eine Chorprobe in meiner Heimatstadt Kansas City, Missouri (USA), besuchte. Seitdem ist es meine Mission, diese Begeisterung mit so vielen Menschen wie möglich zu teilen. Heute möchte ich diese einzigartige Erfahrung mit dir teilen.

In diesem kurzen Leitfaden findest du nützliche Informationen zu folgenden Fragen:

- Wer ist Herrenbesuch?
- Was ist Barbershop-Musik?
- Wie lerne ich ein neues Stück?
- Wie werde ich Mitglied?

Ziel ist, dass du dich schnell bei uns einlebst und viele schöne Erlebnisse aus deiner Zeit bei Herrenbesuch herauskriegen kannst.

Ich hoffe, du geniest die Probe und fühlst dich inspiriert, deine musikalische Reise mit uns fortzusetzen. Wenn du Fragen hast, stehen ich oder ein anderes Mitglied von Herrenbesuch gerne zur Verfügung. Lass uns gemeinsam singen und Spaß haben!

### Herrenbesuch – Der Barbershop-Herrenchor aus München

Herrenbesuch hat sich, wie kaum ein Münchner Chor, dem A-cappella-Gesang im Barbershop-Stil verschrieben. Unter Leitung von Andrew Rembecki aus den USA singen hier über 40 Männer aller Altersstufen.

Wir verstehen uns als echte Entertainer und lieben es, dass der Funke zwischen dem Publikum und uns direkt überspringt. Gesanglich auf hohem Niveau die Zuhörer verzaubern, große und kleine Gefühle in allen Schattierungen wecken, einfach charmant unterhalten – so ist Herrenbesuch. Das ganze stets flankiert von einer Moderation mit Augenzwinkern und feinsinnigem Humor.

Neben typischen Barbershop-Arrangements gehören Rock und Pop, Gospel, Swing-Titel und auch Weihnachtslieder zum breit gefächerten Repertoire. Auf Deutsch, Englisch, Bayrisch, und immer A-cappella.

### Barbershop – Eine besondere Spielart des A-cappella-Gesangs

Bei Barbershop handelt es sich nicht um eine Epoche, einen Musikstil oder ein Genre. Es ist eine besondere Spielart des A-cappella-Gesangs. Zu seinen musikalischen Besonderheiten gehören Arrangements in enger, vierstimmiger Harmonie. Im Gegensatz zu anderen A-cappella-Stilen, singen im Barbershop alle vier Stimmen den Text. Die Melodie liegt in der Regel in der zweiten Stimme, mit Harmonien darüber und darunter. Beim Singen entsteht eine charakteristische „Wall

Herrenbesuch e.V. – Welcome Guide – Version 1.1

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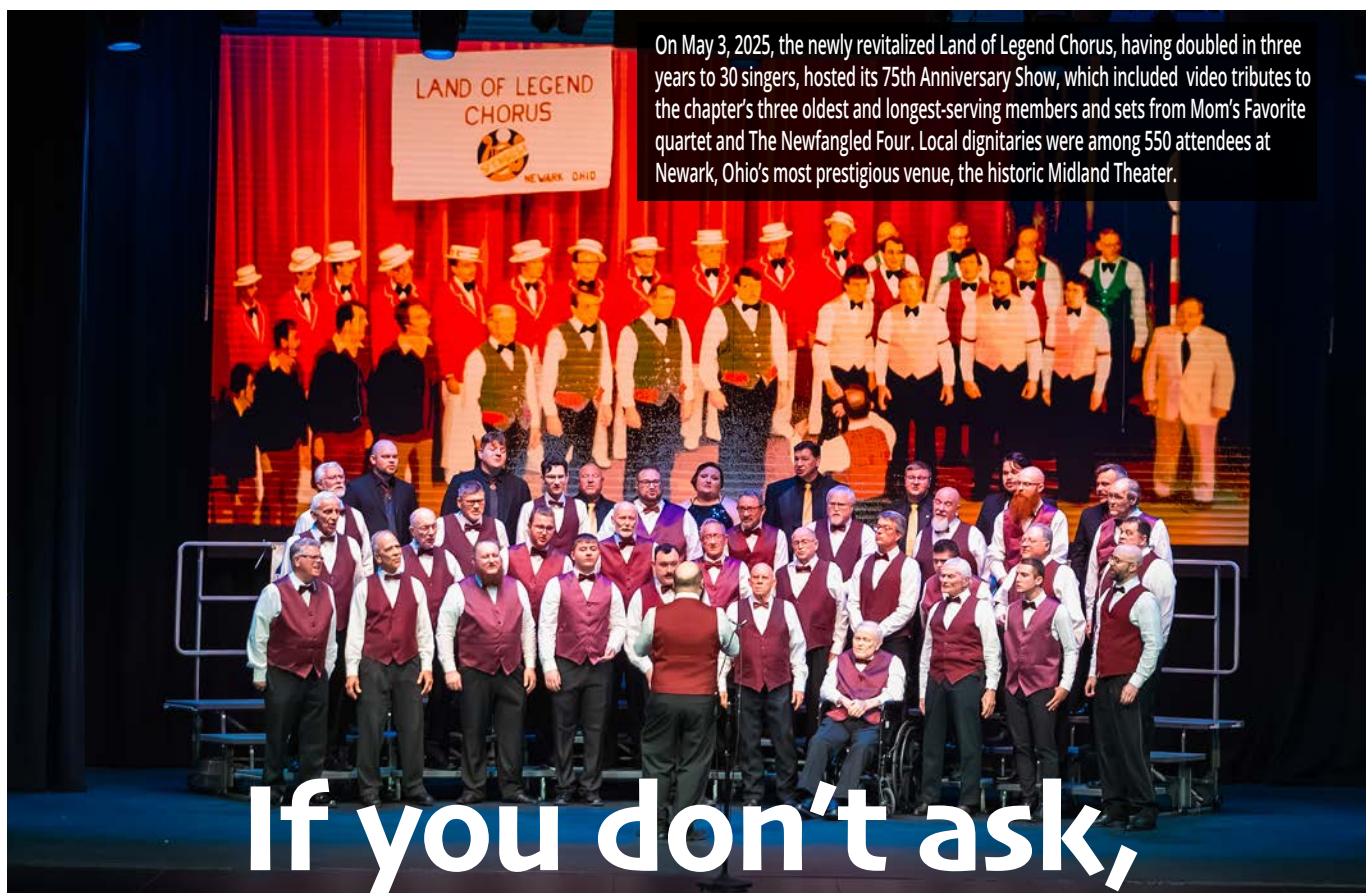
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**#DontBlowIt**



On May 3, 2025, the newly revitalized Land of Legend Chorus, having doubled in three years to 30 singers, hosted its 75th Anniversary Show, which included video tributes to the chapter's three oldest and longest-serving members and sets from Mom's Favorite quartet and The Newfangled Four. Local dignitaries were among 550 attendees at Newark, Ohio's most prestigious venue, the historic Midland Theater.

# If you don't ask, the answer is always no

How asking community members the right questions has the Land of Legend Chorus growing, thriving, and connecting in Newark, Ohio

**T**he Land of Legend Chorus (Newark, OH Chapter) doesn't compete, which is one reason you may not have heard of us. But our community certainly knows us, and our 30-man chapter may have something to teach other BHS chapters about post-pandemic thriving. Consider this:

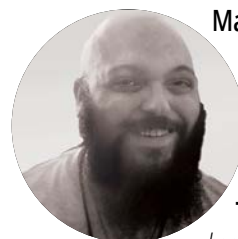
- We have doubled in size since the pandemic, growing from 15 to 30 members in the last two years.
- Our recent 75th Anniversary concert, with **The Newfangled Four** as headliners, dazzled more than 550

attendees and took in over \$30,000 in revenue before expenses.

- We enjoy growing visibility and strong connections throughout our city of 50,000 (150,000 in the county), with high visibility among area businesses and charities, who frequently contact us regarding performance opportunities. In 2023 alone, the chorus and/or quartets representing the chorus performed 46 times—three more performances than our 43 rehearsals that year!

We owe it all to the relationships

we've built within our community, basic block & tackle advertising strategies, and members who show both creative thinking and tireless dedication.



**Matthew Hopper** is co-director of **Land of Legend Chorus** and lead of collegiate medalist and 2012 JAD champion **The Con Men**  
hop0711@gmail.com

THIS SMALL CHAPTER  
BOASTS A TRUE SENSE  
OF GOODWILL AND  
FELLOWSHIP, AND  
ACTIVELY DEMONSTRATES  
THAT YOU DON'T ALWAYS  
NEED TO MAKE THE  
ABSOLUTE BEST MUSICAL  
PRODUCT TO CREATE  
VALUE IN OUR HOBBY  
THROUGH COMMUNITY.

#### PRINT ADVERTISING DONE RIGHT

Like most chapters out there, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Newark Chapter pretty hard, with many of the longest-serving members not returning after 18 months of virtual rehearsals, followed by many weeks in a row with fewer than 10 members in attendance. For a time, we feared that we were on the verge of folding.

Around that same time, Harmony Foundation started offering Covid Relief grants to chapters that had solid plans for the money. Chorus President Pat Scarpitti submitted a grant request (later granted) to help grow the membership exponentially through a large advertising campaign. The poster simply said, "Wanna Harmonize With the Guys?" and was distributed to anywhere with a cork board: post offices, gas stations, hardware stores, grocery stores, etc.

Soon, many knew that barber-shop harmony was still alive and active within our community. No auditions necessary, just show up, grab a guest book, and sing with the group. These posters have directly and indirectly

brought in 15 new members since 2022, which accounts for 50% of our current roster.

#### \$10,000 A YEAR SELLING INEXPENSIVE PROGRAM ADS

In 2022, my co-director Billy Edwards and I wanted to bring back our annual chorus show tradition after cancelling them in 2020, 2021, and 2022. At first, we found ourselves in a bit of a bind: the members who had previously organized program ad sales, ticket sales, and sold the bulk of the advertisements, needed to step away during Covid.

At our annual banquet, every chorus member received a packet containing the previous show program, 10 ad sale sheets, 10 posters, a guide for selling program ads, and assignments to contact certain businesses that had purchased ads in previous years. The goal was for each member to sell all his assigned ads plus five more. The members answered the call and have sold \$10,000 or more in program ad sales every year since 2023.

We've received complimentary local radio time from a classic hits station, where both directors and the chorus president have been interviewed extensively about the chorus' community involvement and the details about our next annual show.

We learned that if you don't ask, the answer is always no. Many businesses in the community happily advertised with us, and many that did not still displayed our poster in their building or donated goods for a door prize raffle.

#### CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Because of our visits to businesses regarding program ads and posters, we've seen improved relationships, growing connections, and additional perfor-



#### DIFFERENT APPROACHES FOR DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES.

While online approaches have the potential to be effective in casting a wide net within many communities, Land of Legend is located in a small enough community (50,000 in Newark, 150,000 in Licking County) that leaders believed an "old school campaign done well" approach made more sense. They doubled their chorus from 15 to 30 members in two years by putting the above poster everywhere in the community where they could find a corkboard or a willing business. Additionally, billboards on the three main entries into town now feature the Barbershop Harmony Society along-side other local pillar organizations. The visuals, more than symbolic of personal connections with area businesses and the Chamber of Commerce, have helped the chorus become one of the first calls many organizations make when needing entertainment at their events.





An anonymous chapter member donated all the funds needed to host 2024 Bronze Medalist *The Newfangled Four*, and another chapter member spent months on the Stonehenge set piece.

mance requests. We have developed a reputation as a group who will answer every request for entertainment in some way, and we'll try to send a quartet if the chorus cannot attend. Many performances have helped replenish our chorus treasury to help fuel even more advertising, but we are most proud of the events we offer for no cost.

Some of our recurring gigs include the annual Memorial Day Observance in the neighboring village of Granville, the annual Flag Day Ceremony at the Newark Elks Lodge, and the annual Veterans Day lunch for the Licking County Aging Partners non-profit.

Every summer, many of our members perform at a few churches in the area when church choirs often take

the summer off. All of the money that is given through love offerings at the services is redistributed to local food banks, scout camps, and shelters.

#### DEEPENING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Three major routes into town welcome folks to Newark, and on all three official welcome signs you'll see the Barbershop Harmony Society sharing space alongside the Rotary Club, Elks, Kiwanis, and Chamber of Commerce. The signs are there because of a private donor and because of a chapter member who thought to ask!

The "community pillar" visuals are part of a broader recent effort to deepen connections within the community. The chapter now belongs to the Chamber of Commerce and is listed in county directories.

Until recently, the chorus had never applied for any local grant money. That changed this year in 2025 after some community connections urged us to speak with the Licking County

Foundation. After a sit down with the head of the grants team, we were shocked to learn that both of our organizations had existed for roughly the same amount of time within the community and had never partnered. Once we described our mission and current community involvement, they encouraged us to submit a grant application, and the next month we were awarded a partnership grant of \$5,000 to use at our discretion for our community outreach efforts.

This small barbershop chapter in Newark, Ohio, boasts a true sense of goodwill and fellowship and actively demonstrates that you don't always need to make the absolute best musical product to create value in our hobby through community. Establishing active relationships with other local organizations, local political leaders, local radio broadcast stations, and local charities has done nothing but prop up this chorus, which like most organizations was on the verge of collapsing in 2020.

The word has spread, and co-director Matt Hopper presented the chapter's success to several chapter leaders at the Johnny Appleseed District Harmony College, showing committees how they can implement some of the Newark Chapter's practices into their own yearly planning. The main takeaways from these presentations are "If you don't ask, then the answer is always no," and "When you invest in your community, your community will invest in you." ■



In 2023, the Newark, OH Chapter (or quartets representing the chorus) performed 46 times, three more appearances than their 43 rehearsals that year. Both Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb and Newark Mayor Jeff Hall appeared on the chapter's 75th Anniversary show this year simply because they were asked!



# Memorial Giving

## KEEPS A MELODY RINGING

For barbershop singers who dedicated a significant portion of their lives to singing, Harmony Foundation offers the *Keep a Melody Ringing* program.

Memorial gifts create a lasting impact by supporting the barbershop programs. Once memorial gifts for an individual total \$1,000, the individual earns a place among the honored on the Keep a Melody Ringing plaque.



Keep A Melody Ringing ensures that those who were memorialized by their friends and family in this way have a place to be remembered.



[HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG/MEMORIAL-GIVING](http://HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG/MEMORIAL-GIVING)

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*TODAY'S YOUTH ARE TOMORROW'S FUTURE*



**CONTACT US TO SUPPORT BHS NEXTGEN!**

**[HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG/DONATE](https://HARMONYFOUNDATION.ORG/DONATE)**



# A new chapter show model

Somerset Hills Harmony netted \$14,000 for a concert in which hundreds of attendees saw their tickets paid for by area businesses

**T**he Somerset Hills Harmony (ironically SHH) chapter show story begins about three years ago. “We emerged from the pandemic as a small but motivated chorus,” said chapter president Chris Staffin. “We hired an exciting young musical director, committed to vocal excellence and growth, and we identified a goal: our 75th Anniversary was less than three years away, and we wanted to create something special.”

## A NEW KIND OF SHOW

Show audiences at many chapters have been shrinking and aging. Even many top choruses have challenges filling a venue and turning a profit. Finding a way to pack the house *and* make the event a financial success was a tall order. SHH chapter shows typically

**MANY PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES WHO NEVER PURCHASED SHOW TICKETS IN THE PAST WERE HAPPY TO PURCHASE SPONSORSHIPS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO ATTEND.**

## THE TAKEAWAY

The key elements of this show model are:

- Engage the teachers early with recognizable songs.
- The ticketholder and the purchaser can be different people.
- Sell ticket sponsorships. Ads are the byproduct.
- Involve the whole chapter.
- Get high-quality guest acts.
- The chorus immersion and jamboree experience create camaraderie and energy.
- This can be replicated by virtually any chapter, with or without the grant.

drew 150, about 500 short of a full auditorium.

**The first task was to design an unforgettable musical experience that would appeal to non-Barbershoppers.** This meant top-shelf guests, so we contracted multi-International Medalist **Parkside Harmony** as the guest chorus. Then we submitted a grant application to AIC/HFI for a gold medal quartet. Fourteen months before the show, we learned that the grant had been awarded, and 2008 champion **OC Times** would be the featured quartet.

There still needed to be a way to

entice hundreds more people to pay money to sit in the seats, unless ... what if there was a way to find a bunch of people who would come to a concert and a bunch of *other* people to pay?

We decided that the answer was to combine the chapter show with an educational event. We didn’t want a youth explosion camp where kids sing together in a festival chorus. We set our sights on a choral immersion experience as follows:

- Embed students in the adult choruses to experience big ringing chords.
- Engage school choir directors to teach the songs in advance.
- Pick recognizable songs that appeal to all ages.
- Engage the adult choruses to provide a morning workshop to link students and adults.
- Invite younger students and their



**Don Staffin** is VP/Artistic Director of **Somerset Hills Harmony** and a Board Member of the **Hershey, PA Chapter (Parkside Harmony/ Parkside Melody)**  
donstaffin@gmail.com



Musical guest Parkside Harmony



2008 champ OC Times visits area students

parents to attend the concert free. The Bridgewater-Raritan High School choir director immediately pledged his support for the project, and other schools later signed on.

**Next challenge: secure the donors.** We all knew how difficult it is to sell ads. So instead, we sold student sponsorships. For \$15, individuals sponsored ticket(s) for a program shout-out. Businesses bought student sponsorship bundles of 4, 8, or 12, which came with a quarter, half, or full-page ad. Many people and businesses who never purchased show tickets in the past were happy to purchase sponsorships for someone else to attend—60+ individual and commercial sponsors received an ad or shoutout in the program as a thank-you for sponsoring others to attend our show!

### THE PREP

At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, we delivered three pieces to the teachers:

- “Desperado” (arr. Tom Gentry), for younger students, SHH, and OC Times.
- “Go the Distance” (arr. Aaron Dale),

for older students and Parkside Harmony.

- “The Parting Glass” (arr. Steve Tramack), for everyone.

Simultaneously, the chapter, now 40 members strong, put maximum effort into planning every element: advertising, tickets, programs, decorations, food, afterglow, hosting OC Times—every SHH member had a role.

### THE EVENT

OC Times visited two New Jersey high schools on Friday: Manville and Carteret. The students and teachers loved the performance and workshop, and many of them planned to attend the concert the next day.

- On Saturday morning, the participating students workshoped with SHH and Parkside Harmony. After a joint lunch provided by SHH, senior citizens and young schoolchildren enjoyed a free pre-show.
- The main show was Jamboree style. Performers all watched/cheered for each other. This required logistical planning, but it increased the camaraderie.
- The show played to a packed house

(over 600 seats filled). Students cheered wildly for every performance, which energized the adults.

- Both choir/student pieces went smoothly, creating the big sound experience.
- “The Parting Glass” finale featured more than 150 performers and moved audience members to tears.
- The event touched 250+ students from seven schools. Total revenue (not including the AIC/HFI grant) was over \$19,000; net was approximately \$14,000.
- Students received cards containing their sponsor’s name and were encouraged to write a Thank You.

“There was an energy that was evident the moment I stepped onto the campus, said Parkside Harmony musical director Vince Sandroni. “Each element—chapter show, youth outreach, and guest spot—was one of the best I have ever experienced. And all three happened in the same event. It was wild!”

For more information, contact [info@shhchorus.org](mailto:info@shhchorus.org).



Since 1949, the Somerset Hills, NJ Chapter has been known by multiple names: Hounds for Harmony, Somertones, Jersey Harmony Express, and finally Somerset Hills Harmony. During the pandemic, SHH enjoyed its first 15 minutes of fame when it introduced “carbershop” to the a cappella community.



# DENVER

2025 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

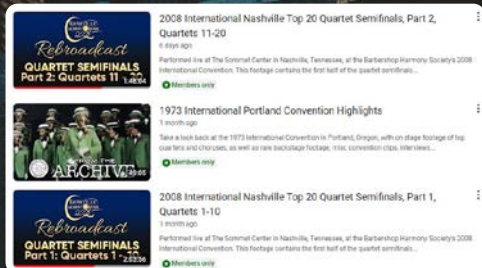


# RELIVE DENVER PERFORMANCES



In addition to the Denver videos released in our First Look YouTube channel (beginning July 14), be sure to check out the archive video content released regularly that features classic performances from past conventions and so much more.

**Learn more at [YouTube.com/barbershopharmony38](https://YouTube.com/barbershopharmony38)**



## YouTube

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TODAY**



**[BARBERSHOP.ORG/FIRSTLOOK](https://barbershop.org/firstlook)**

## VIDEO RELEASE SCHEDULE

### JULY 7-13

LIVE STREAM REPLAY:  
REWATCH EVERY  
PERFORMANCE, **\$39**

### JULY 14

DENVER VIDEOS BEGIN  
RELEASING ON THE BHS  
FIRST LOOK MEMBERS ONLY  
CHANNEL, **\$7.99/mo**

### MID AUG

VIDEOS WILL BE SET  
TO PUBLIC FOR FREE  
VIEWING ONE MONTH  
AFTER THEIR FIRST LOOK  
RELEASE, **FREE**

**Upcoming  
Events**  
Mark your  
calendar!

## **Harmony University**

July 27 – August 3, 2025  
in Denver, CO

## **Pasadena Midwinter**

January 13 – 18, 2026

## **St. Louis International**

June 28 – July 5, 2026

## **Minneapolis International**

July 4 – 11, 2027

## **Chicago International**

July 2 – 9, 2028

## **San Antonio International**

July 1 – 8, 2029

**BARBERSHOP.ORG/EVENTS**



## DIRECTORS WANTED

Need a director? First 50 words are free for BHS chapters. [marketing@barbershop.org](mailto:marketing@barbershop.org). See the most current postings at [barbershop.org/directorsearch](http://barbershop.org/directorsearch).

### NORTHERN LIGHTS CHORUS

[northernlightschorus.com](http://northernlightschorus.com)

**Toronto Northern Lights** seeks an enthusiastic and passionate Musical Director to continue our musical excellence journey. A big thank you to Andrew Carolan for his exceptional leadership—he's set the bar high, and we're excited to find someone new to carry the baton. Apply by August 10. Start January 2026, with a fall transition preferred. Contact Brian Tracey at [president@northernlightschorus.com](mailto:president@northernlightschorus.com).

### COMMODORE CHORUS

[commodorechorus.org](http://commodorechorus.org)

The **Commodore Chorus** of Norfolk, VA, is looking for a new director. We compete regularly, hold at least two concerts per year and meet on Thursday evenings. Contact

Dave Edgington at 757-270-9025 or [dedgington77@gmail.com](mailto:dedgington77@gmail.com).

### A CAPPELLA TEXAS

[acappellatexas.org](http://acappellatexas.org)

**A Cappella Texas** (Austin) is a 65+-year-old chorus with approximately 34 active members that competes and creates several chapter shows each year and performs at various community activities throughout the year. Contact David Carey at 512-906-4696 or [dcarey14@gmail.com](mailto:dcarey14@gmail.com).

### SOUNDS OF INDIANA

[soundsofindiana.com](http://soundsofindiana.com)

We are looking for a new director who will attend weekly Wednesday rehearsals, special rehearsals, direct chorus performances (12

performances in 2023). Director will attend regular music team meetings to prepare and execute the weekly chorus rehearsal program and work with music team members to voice and place prospective singers. Contact John S. Stewart at 812-325-4263 or [poodarayl@aol.com](mailto:poodarayl@aol.com).

### CAPE FEAR CHORDSMEN

[capefearchordsmen.com](http://capefearchordsmen.com)

The **Wilmington, NC Chapter** is looking for a skilled director to start spring 2025. The Chordsmen perform regularly for retirement homes and community events, present two annual shows, and support community charities. We meet Tuesday nights at 7pm. Contact Jim Benson at 910-520-2834 or [jb3ilm@gmail.com](mailto:jb3ilm@gmail.com).

## CHAPTER ETERNAL

Members reported as deceased between March 16 and May 15, 2025. Send updates to [membership@barbershop.org](mailto:membership@barbershop.org). See previous memorial listings and links to online obituaries at [barbershop.org/in-memoriam](http://barbershop.org/in-memoriam).

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**[www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org)**  
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- Association of International Seniors Quartet Champions • *aisqc.com*
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- Sweet Adelines International  
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Devin Anna Bradford, Eddie Holt,  
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Copy editing: Stan Peppenhorst



## THE TAG

Tom Gentry, Tagmaster  
tgbari1@gmail.com

# Not a great tag, but a great middle!

**W**hen is a tag not a tag? When it is a middle. Sure, many of us know about intros that can be sung for their own sake—think “Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland”—but what is a middle? It’s a fun series of chords that occur in the body of an arrangement rather than at the end or the beginning. What you see before you is such a critter.

Barbershop legend Maurice “Molly” Reagan wrote several



arrangements for our 1948 quartet champion, the **Pittsburghers**, so the best guess is that this is his

creation. Barbershop historian (and lots of other good things) David Wright contends that Molly is the man “to whom we owe more than any other person for our modern-day contest and judging system.”

Vaudeville comedian Henry Fink penned the lyrics to this 1913 song, “The Curse of an Aching Heart.” The music was composed by Al Piantadosi, who

also had hits with “Pal of My Cradle Days,” “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier” and “Skidamarink.”

### NERD NICHE

(answers on the bottom of the page)

1. Hey, kids, see if you can find the double false (or cross) relation.
2. Why isn’t the second bass note in measure 4 notated using a sharp, enharmonically?

3. Why are there parens around the tenor precautionary natural in 3 but not 5?

Sometimes we Barbershoppers eschew (*Gesundheit!*) the natural interpretation of a passage in favor of just wallowing in the ringing sound. We call this chord worshipping, of which this middle is a fine example. So the monster swipe in measures 3-6 is, well ... to die for. ■

## “The Curse of an Aching Heart”

*TTBB voicing* Molly Reagan (perhaps)

Tenor Lead: my soul with - in me died.

Bari Bass

*SSAA voicing* Molly Reagan (perhaps)

Tenor Lead: my soul with - in me died.

Bari Bass

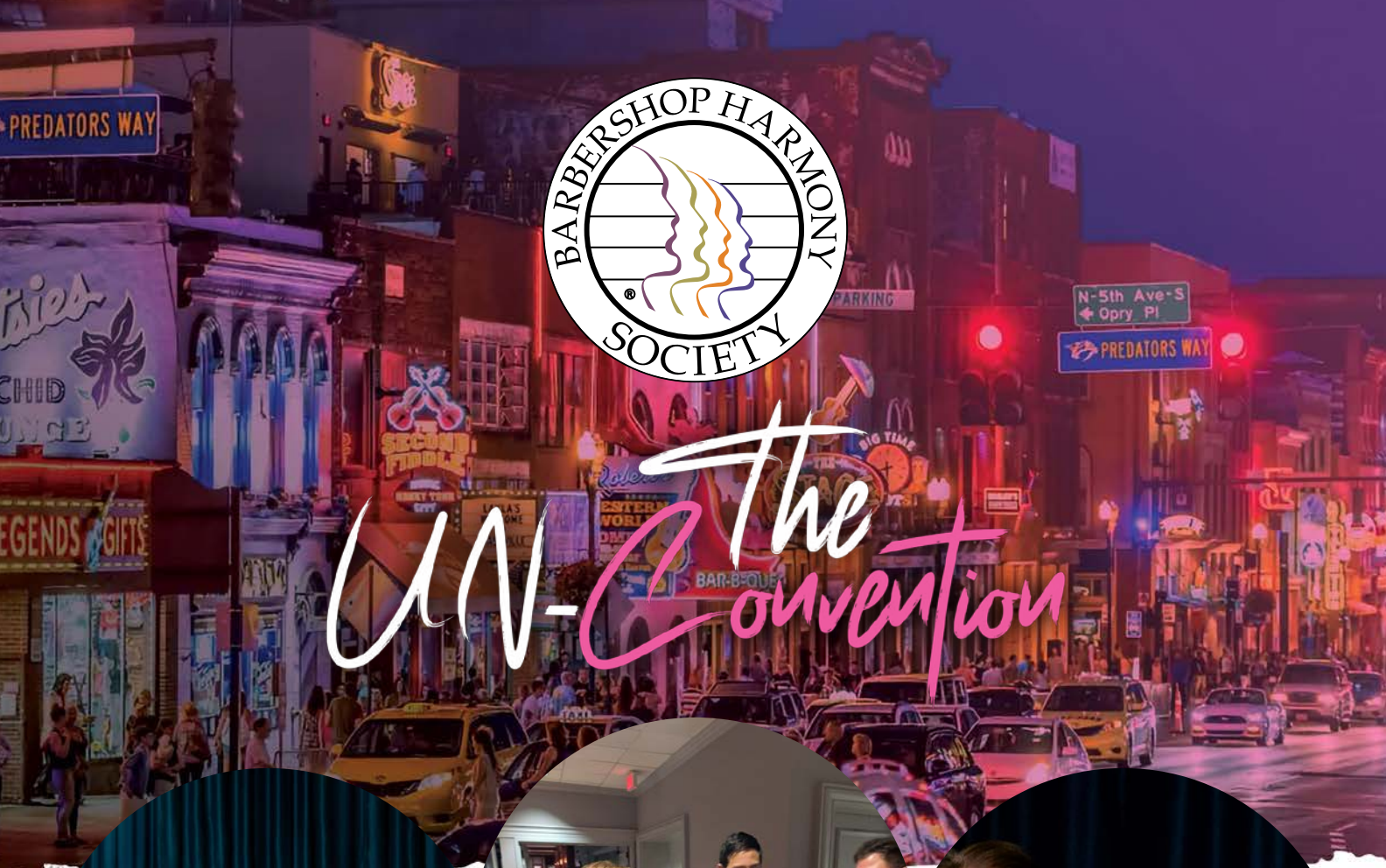
*SATB voicing* Molly Reagan (perhaps)

Tenor Lead: my soul with - in me died.

Bari Bass

### ANSWERS:

1. In the last two measures, the bass note to the bari note, and the tenor note to the bass note.
2. Because then the third of the chord would be misspelled, a no-no.
3. This may be a bit arbitrary, but since both the sharpened note in 4 and the natural one in 5 are within the swipe, omitting the parens serves to emphasize the latter.



# UN-*The* Convention



**Thank you to everyone who attended the UN-Convention in Nashville, Tennessee on Memorial Day weekend!**

**It was... true to its name... an unconventional approach to a Society convention, complete with shows with sensational guests, a prelims quartet contest, the one and only Michigan Jake, and a variety of fun games and trivia with plenty of time to relax and enjoy the sights.**

**Ask anyone who was able to attend this special event and they'll tell you all about it. :)**

# IT'S SUMMER TIME

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