



BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

All the News that's Phit to Print from
The Polk-Burnett County Chapter

The Smoke Signal



Chapter sings Monday nights, 7:30 pm in the lower level of the Polk County Government
Center at the NE corner of "I" and "46" — www.indianheadchorus.com

Editor: Ken Mettler, Kbmett@hotmail.com, 125 N. Blanding Woods Rd., St. Croix Falls, WI 540245

Barbershop Harmony Society, 110 7th Avenue N., Nashville, TN 37203-3704 www.barbershop.org

Land-O-Lakes District - LOL home page: www.loldistrict.org

1,000 Lakes Division - Probe Member

Our fifty-seventh year – Issue 9, September, 2014

Upcoming performances –Dan Valentine, coordinator

Sat., Sept 13 -Amery Fall Festival Parade
Sun., Sept 21st VLQ Almelund Church sing and Apple fest
Fri., Oct 10 Dress rehearsal Annual Show
Sat., Oct 11th -Annual Show @ Amery HS 2 PM & 7:30 PM
Sat., Oct. 25th - Rochester District Contest
Sun., Dec. 7 - Amery stroll

Lunch List:

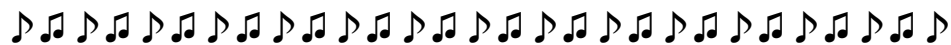
- SEPT 1, MARK NELSON
- SEPT 8, STEVE OSERO
- SEPT 15, PAUL PEDERSON
- SEPT 22, CARL PETERSON
- SEPT 29, NEIL PICKARD
- OCT 6, ALAN SALMELA
- OCT 13, HARLEY SCHAEFER
- OCT 20, BRYAN SHOBE
- OCT 27, BILL STEVENSON
- NOV 3, DUANE STONE
- NOV 10, STEVE SWENSON
- NOV 17, DAN VALENTINE
- NOV 24, MARK WESLANDER
- DEC 1, ED BONESKY
- DEC 8, CHUCK WILLIAMSON
- DEC 15, KARL WICKLUND

- DEC 22, JON BUSS

Harmony University Report, part 2 - by Karl Wicklund

Sound Management Overview

As I mentioned in last month's *Smoke Signals*, I took several different classes during my week at Harmony University. I am eager to share what I learned there. The class that applies most directly to us individual singers is Sound Management. This was such a comprehensive course that I won't try to cover it all in one article. I plan to write a few articles drawing on this session over the next few months.



This session was taught by Steve Tramack, a director, judge and coach from New Hampshire. We met for 90 minutes each morning. Most of my classmates were directors, assistant directors, and aspiring directors. One topic was a system to help us produce the best possible individual and ensemble sound. In this article I'll focus on the first part of that approach:

Producing Beautiful Tone.

So, what is "Beautiful Tone"? It is freely produced, round, and open; it flows steadily and evenly; it *rings*. In any group of singers, but particularly in barbershop, we talk about blend; when every singer is producing his best tone, blending is much easier. We looked at five foundational steps to produce that most beautiful tone.

Step One – Body Alignment

Everything follows from this.

The body is a singer's instrument. A body out of alignment is like a dented trumpet – you can still make expressive music, but your potential is compromised.

Feet – Shoulder width, toes parallel, one foot slightly ahead.

Hips – tuck the pelvis under just a bit. If you can lock your knees, your rear end is probably stuck out too far.

Upper Body Posture – there are many ways to think about this: be lifted by a string attached to the top of your head; a magic set of hands gently raises the back of your skull; keep the spine elongated.

Head – Ear holes over your shoulders, chin and jaw relaxed. Beware of thrusting your head forward like a turtle. (For instance, when you come forward to take tonic, make it a whole body gesture.)

Stand with pride. Instead of a soldier at attention, think of a sprinter standing loose, just before the start of a race. This posture allows air to move freely, and keeps us relaxed and energized.

Step Two – Abdominal Breathing

Proper alignment makes deep, relaxed, controlled breathing possible.

Even before you breathe make sure your chest is elevated – this opens more room for air.

Expand – feel expansion in your abdomen, in your back, around the bottom of your ribs. Jim Henry talks about feeling expansion in the back of the head and neck.

Be prepared to look twenty or thirty pounds heavier when you let air in. If you are open and aligned, taking breath in should be practically silent.

Step Three – Beginning the tone

Onset of tone can begin *after* the breath (aspirated; with an “H”) *before* the breath (glottal), or ideally, *with* the breath (simultaneous). There are exercises to work on this, but most singers can feel their own way to control this with practice.

Step Four – Sustaining the tone

This is about balancing energy & power with freedom.

Breathing in a chorus is different than breathing in a quartet – allow yourself to breathe *before* you need it.

Aim to maximize resonance rather than volume. (More on this next time)

Step Five – Releasing the tone.

Release the tone with musical intent – the end of the tone is as much part of the music as the beginning.

Inhaling typically works best for the cleanest, most artistic release:

Rather than *this*: “la la la la la-a-a” *Stop. Breathe.* “la la la la la-a-a” *Stop. Breathe.*

Aim for *this*: “la la la la la-a-a” *Breathe.* “la la la la la-a-a” *Breathe*

Like our bodies, our breath will ideally be always in motion.

It's much easier to do all this than to read about it. That's true of most of what we do as musicians. Nonetheless, I hope you can use this series of articles to understand more about yourself as a singer.

THE COLLECTIVE WE

Maurice DeBar, Chorus Director

A chorus must have synergy. Simply defined, synergy means "working together." Actually, it goes much beyond that, to mean thinking and acting with one mind and purpose. The "Borg," a fictional alien race on episodes of the television show, *Star Trek*, was the prime example of synergy in the extreme, with their attempt to bring order to the galactic population with an objective of forcibly recruiting others as drones with a collective thought pattern. If we were thinking about electing a president, this type of thinking would have seriously bad consequences. We would have a loud man with a small moustache leading us to war. In a democracy, every man has the responsibility to think for himself. But in a democracy, we also give up a part of our rights to an elected official who has the responsibility to make decisions for the group. Similarly, in a chorus, we give up our individual selves for the good of the whole. In this democracy, every man (or voice) pledges to support the unit. In a chorus, we pledge to blend into the whole, letting no one voice dominate. As New Yorkers "this ain't easy!"

Our chorus has several members who are retired from the military. They are used to following orders. Members gladly conform and wear uniforms. They want to be part of the group. Well, it is obvious that the individual must give in to the ensemble. But, we discover, there are hidden benefits in doing so. An article entitled *Karma of the Crowd*, found in the February 2014 issue of *National Geographic*, points out that belonging to a crowd can change the way we see the world. It can alter our perception.

Belonging to the right crowd, (i.e. singing organization), benefits the individual in some of the same ways that personal social connections do. Stress levels can be lowered. There can be positive effects on immune and cardiovascular systems. These are just some of the effects suggested in the story.

As far as my own personal experience, I can honestly say that I felt differently after conducting in Carnegie Hall. I was like one of the lovers standing at the bow of the *Titanic*. I can truthfully tell you that I don't always have those positive vibes. I only feel them when I think we have accomplished something together that we are proud of. Singing badly does not make anyone feel good about themselves. So, you ask: "How can those positive vibes be felt at every rehearsal?" I'll tell you how to get the same effect as two hours at the gym. **Come prepared.** Add your part to the mix and make the collective "we" sound better. Make it sound better because **you are there!**

Our Officers for 2013

President: Archie Lessard.....	651-462-4664
Sec/Treas: Larry Fisk	715-327-8091
VP Marketing & PR & Bulletin editor: Ken Mettler.....	715-483-9202
VP Music: TBA	
VP Membership: Harvey Sandahl	651 437-7822
Asst. Music Dir. & Webmaster: Karl Wicklund.....	715-268-2685
Music Director: Steve Swenson.....	715-483-9797
Members at Lg.: Alan Salmela.....	651-433-3881
Dan Valentine.....	715-472-2080
Mark Nelson	715-483-3152

Other chorus functions

Young Men in Harmony: Jon Buss.....	715-410-7324
Birthday/Anniversary cards: Clint Gjerde.....	715-268-7875
2012 Show Chair: Archie Lessard.....	651-462-4664
Performance Coordinator: Dan Valentine.....	715-472-2080
2013 Show Chairman: Karl Wicklund	
Assistant: Chuck Williamson	
Librarian: Brian Shobe	
Music committee: Steve Swenson, Karl Wicklund, Dan Valentine	

"WHEN A SINGER TRULY FEELS AND EXPERIENCES WHAT THE MUSIC IS ALL ABOUT, THE WORDS WILL AUTOMATICALLY RING TRUE."

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Why have a tool if you don't use it? -Marketing the Magic of Barbershop Harmony

I recall once hearing about a comment made by some wit who, in complaining about the state of things as far as declining purchasing power, declared: "The only thing a dime can be used for these days, is as a screwdriver." Perhaps true, but to have that dime as a possible tool and NOT tap into its uses at all, would, you would surely agree, be regrettable.

It brings me to the subject of barbershop-related marketing resources that, despite being potent, are often ignored. The Society has them in abundance, and so does every chapter.

Are YOU taking advantage of all of them to attract new members? To sell tickets to our Annual Show? To generate barbershop awareness? A review of such "tools," yours for the taking, might be in order, especially for our newer members. First, there's our website (at www.indianheadchorus.org). If you haven't checked it out for a while, I urge you to so do. Not just one or two of its links, all of them. It is a PR tool, designed, that allows its visitors to keep abreast of what we are

doing and what's planned. It allows them to see and hear our vibrant chorus. You can obtain directions to our rehearsal location and a great deal more. Encourage friends and businesses to offer financial contributions to our nonprofit chapter. What about the posters, flyers and informational handouts available for you to use? If they remain on our tables or in your folders, you are missing out on their valuable worth. Taking them, but with no intention for further use, is a tragedy. Get society car bumper stickers, encouraging more singers to join our ranks. EVERY chapter meets "growth" needs with such help. But if you don't know about the resources, or DO, and ignore having them, that's a pity. We have a Facebook page that helps spread the word; so can (will I dare say it?) the monthly bulletin. We respectfully ask you to fully re-examine what is at your disposal. And be sure to tap into the Society's resources, too, when you have a few moments to spare. "Tools!" If they are USED, they will make you a hero, every time.

What Does It Feel Like To Sing Baritone In A Barbershop Quartet?

*The answer is from Fred Kanel who sings baritone with the North Georgia Barbershop Singers and two quartets, and found himself being quoted after he was asked that question. It is reprinted with his kind permission. Fred writes for his chapter's bulletin, **Down Our Way.***

The short answer is that baritone is the hardest but most interesting part and singing it in a group of any size is great. Singing it in a quartet is fantastic!

The barbershop parts

The melody is sung by the lead; he's the center of the audience's attention when a quartet is singing. The tenor is above the lead, often singing the kind of harmony that people improvise in casual group singing. The bass sings the low notes, often dramatically low ones at the end of phrases. The baritone sings between the lead and the bass, singing notes that people aren't normally aware of but that are essential. This makes the baritone part sung alone sound strange because it doesn't match either the melody or the normal harmonies that people are used to hearing.

What I thought singing baritone would be like

When I was around barbershoppers at their conventions and tried to do casual group singing, it was evident that baritone was the part my vocal range was best suited for. But I hated it and thought it was a terrible part to have to sing. It wasn't melodic; it jumped around from place to place, often with funny intervals between successive notes; it had lots of accidentals (i.e., sharps, flats, or naturals marked in the music). It seemed to me that the part was made up of the "garbage notes" that *somebody* had to sing and so were given to the baritone. (I later learned that barbershoppers actually joke that baritones have to sing the notes nobody else wants!)

What singing baritone is actually like

When I finally joined a barbershop chorus and started really learning my part instead of trying to sight-read it on the fly, my outlook changed. Once all those accidentals became second nature I realized that they were what gave the real flavor to the song and made it interesting - like the seasoning in the stew. Barbershop music frequently uses a special kind of chord, called a Seventh chord, which has a distinctive sound. This chord is very similar to most chords in "normal" music (called tonic chords) except that tonics and sevenths differ by exactly one note. And that note is often sung by the baritone, so his voice is the one that *makes* it a seventh - without him it's just a tonic. Once I learned my part to the chorus'

repertoire, I really took pleasure in singing a part that not everybody can sing but that is so vital to the barbershop sound.

What singing baritone in a quartet is like

Now I sing baritone with two different quartets. In a chorus, your errors of commission or omission will probably not be noticed; in a quartet there's no hiding place. Not only do you have to know your part completely but you have to be able to blend it in perfect synchrony with the other three voices. (Details can await a separate question.) My quartet practices about seven hours a week to continue to improve in these areas. Although doing this right adds to the challenge of quartet singing, that extra effort is more than outweighed by our sheer joy at hearing the music we create and seeing its effect on our audiences. Usually that's happiness and delight but on more than one occasion we have watched people cry at particularly moving passages in our songs. The baritone in the quartet has the pleasure of giving the music the nuances of its special sound and the awareness that he is *the* guy who's doing that.

The joy of singing barbershop

At barbershop conventions before I started singing, I would watch four guys get together in a restaurant or a hotel lobby and open their mouths and create this amazing music out of nothing but their four voices. I couldn't stop grinning from ear to ear and no one else listening could either. Now that I sing in barbershop quartets I actually *am* one of those four guys who light up peoples lives that way. It's an amazing experience and I can't recommend it highly enough. You don't have to read music or understand music theory to sing barbershop.

Barbershoppers are really welcoming of newcomers, and they have CD's of your part being sung that you can learn from (which is the method I prefer.) If you've ever wanted to sing barbershop music - perhaps in a group so you don't stick out while you're learning - go to <http://barbershop.org> and find a chapter in your area.

OUR FIRST CONVENTION

With the Society's Las Vegas International Convention coming up soon in June, it is interesting to read O.C. Cash's humorous invitation to encourage attendance at the organization's very first in 1939, when O.C. offered reasons "Why You Should Come To Tulsa."

"In the first place," he wrote, "you need a vacation and some relaxation. You haven't been looking so well lately. Now, you have attended conventions before. What did you get? Listened to a mess of speeches, reports of committees and heard meaningless resolutions read; then reach your room exhausted and tried to organize a quartet. And what a failure that always is! The only thing about a 'pick-up' convention quartet that ever 'organized' is the singers. The purpose of our Society is to organize the harmony.

Have you ever participated with 2,000 men, 500 tenors, leads, baritones and basses, in 'busting' 'I Want A Girl' wide open? No! Then you have a thrill coming. There will be few speeches, if any, at Tulsa, June 2 and 3, just harmony, harmony until the tenors drop in their tracks. So get three or four

of your 'cronies' together, rig up this trip, come by plane, train or covered wagon, but come. Be extremely nice to the 'little woman' from now until June but if she doesn't soften up, do as I do. Just give her a good stiff punch in the jaw and come on anyway. When you get to Tulsa I want to show you the baritone to 'Mandy Lee.' I am the only baritone in the United States who can do it correctly. Now if you 'mugs' don't come to this party, the next time I see you. I am going to kick your britches right up between your ears.”
Affectionately. O. C. Cash

Leap Year Occurs in every year that is divisible by four and only in century years that are evenly divided by 400.



John Buss writes for the Pitch Piper one more time:

I wish to thank the entire LOL District for all the support over my tenure as your Director of the Youth in Harmony of the LOL District. It has been fun and frustrating. My goal has been to give an opportunity to all youth, to experience a cappella harmony, and continue singing the rest of their lives.

I want to introduce your new Youth in Harmony Director, Eric Sorenson. He has been a fantastic support to me and my committee. I believe he brings a new and exciting approach to this Youth project. He was a music educator, knows how to reach other music educators, is great with students, is retired, and is now an associate director of the

La Crosse Coulee Chordsmen. Please support him going forward. I will help him as he may need me.

I need to move on in my life, so may I make a few suggestions?

1. Invite a local High School music department to perform on your annual show. Give the school a scholarship to perform on your show. It will appreciate whatever you can afford.
2. Develop a one day workshop and invite all students to the event.
3. Work with the local music educators, to create quartets, octets or vlq's. They can compete at the state level. This will help their overall curriculum. Give them music for those students. Ask the music educator how you can help and support their program. We are not recruiting new members for today, but when they get out of school, perhaps they may join a chapter somewhere.
4. Go to the Midwinter Convention and witness the excitement of the youth movement at the convention.
5. Join the Harmony Foundation's Ambassadors of Song to support this Youth in Harmony movement. Better yet join the Presidents Council. A portion of your donation can come back to your chapter, if you choose.
6. Sponsor a young man to the Youth Chorus at our fall conventions.
7. Please review the LOL District's website, click on the Youth Zone for all the resources available to do the above, and you can link to every District Youth Zone and the BHS Youth Zone.
8. Review the Barbershop Harmony Society website for valuable information.
9. The people in Nashville are so willing to help you as well, call them or email them.

If anyone would want to talk to me about youth in harmony call me or email me. I want to help all chapters to get involved and grow their chapters for the future. I congratulate all those chapters that are involved with youth in their area. I live in a county of 25000 population and I envy cities like Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, and many others that can draw from such a wide area for their events. I am attending the GNU's "Real Men Sing" Festival and performance September 27th; they plan to have 200 young men attend their one-day workshop. Wow!!!!

This is a great hobby and I hope everyone will get excited about the future with youth, because that is our future.

"SING"cerely,

Jon Buss
LOL District YIH Director
715-410-7324

Email: allegrobuss@gmail.com

20 Jokes So Terrible They're Actually Funny

1. Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The Ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.
2. A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says, "I'll serve You, but don't start anything."
3. A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Ahmal." The other goes to a family in Spain ; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal."
3. A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
5. A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: "A beer please, and one for the road."
6. Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other: "Does this taste funny to you?"
7. "Doc, I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home.'"" "That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome." "Is it common?" Well, "It's Not Unusual."
8. Two cows are standing next to each other in a field. Daisy says to Dolly, "I was artificially inseminated this morning." "I don't believe you," says Dolly. "It's true, no bull!" exclaims Daisy.
9. An invisible man marries an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.
10. Deja Moo: The feeling that you've heard this bull before.
11. I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.
12. A man woke up in a hospital after a serious accident. He shouted, Doctor, doctor, I can't