

# The Newyorker Times

The newsletter of the Poughkeepsie, New York, Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society



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Poughkeepsie, New York

Number 12  
December 2006

## *From the President's Desk*

*By John Hadigan*

Well, folks, it's time to give yourselves a well deserved pat on the back! When we walked off the stage at the District Convention in Providence, I had a feeling of "Mission Accomplished!" I knew that we had put forth a strong performance and had a definite impact on the audience. Little did I know we would end up with our first top ten finish in eleven years! What a way to follow up one of our best Division performances in the same span of time.

I came home from the convention feeling great and looking forward to preparing for our holiday season performances. Then only a week and a half later, I received a large envelope in the mail from the Singing Buckeyes Chorus in Cleveland Ohio. I hadn't a clue what this package was and why it was in my mailbox. But when I opened it, it was hard to believe what I was looking at. It was an invitation for the Newyorkers to participate in the 2007 Buckeye Invitational Chorus Contest next August! At first I thought it must have been a mistake, but it wasn't. By virtue of our spring contest performance we had qualified as a small chorus to compete in the 2007 invitational. WOW!

The following is excerpted from the material I received explaining what this event is all about.

[The Buckeye Invitational Chorus Contest is] an outlet for cross-district and regional competition among some of barbershop's best choruses and quartets. It's a place where non-qualifying choruses for SPEBSQSA and SAI International contests and highest non-qualifying quartets, together with selected Harmony, Inc. groups, can meet together in a competition with national scope. ... From its opening Thursday evening show through its unique comedy quartet contest, its mixed quartet contest, and its regular contests for choruses and quartets, Barbershop Odyssey, and Stars of the Night shows with multiple feature performers, multiple afterglows[,] the Invitational is non-stop barbershop fellowship and fun.

As you can see it is truly an honor to receive this invitation. Although it doesn't look (See "President" on Page 3)

## *The Quartet Corner*

### **Swing Shift**

Just a note to all about Swing Shift activities in past and future.

First, we are pleased to say that the District contest in Providence was wonderful for us. We were pleased with how we sang and agreed with the scorings that we received. The great news from contest is that we are exactly 1 percentage point from being the fourth place quartet, as the fourth through eighth quartets were very close in scoring. So we assume that having five rehearsals going into District was the reason for our scoring. Our A&R also reflected consistent rehearsing as a goal to achieve in future contests. So, lo and behold, we are back on a fixed rehearsing schedule and look forward to fixing and tweaking the minor things that will propel us to the next level of our quartet life. Thanks to all who supported us in this contest.

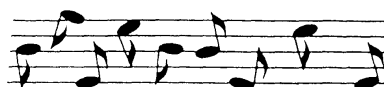
Swing Shift had a wonderful show spot for the Song of the Valley chorus a few weeks ago. We were warmly received by the audience and had a great afterglow with the ladies. We can't thank them enough for their hospitality and the fun we had.

Swing Shift is also being considered for a show spot for a Harmony Inc. show in Rockland County in March 2007. We also will be performing on the street in Catskill on 9 December from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. We'll be walking around shops singing Christmas carols and some barbershop tunes. It should be a fun evening.

Swing Shift is going to Top Gun School on 5-7 January in Fitchburg Mass. We were invited as one of the top NED quartets and look forward to receiving some great coaching from Wheelhouse of the Mid-Atlantic District and other great NED mentors.

Well, that's the update on us. We wish you all a great holiday season and look forward to singing with you all in 2007.

John, Greg, Jim, and Butch



**The Newyorker Times**

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Dick Schaffer
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- Chorus Director ..... Renée Silverstein
- Assistant Directors ..... John Hadigan  
Steve Hagerdon
- Chorus Manager ..... Scott Salladin

**Meetings**

**Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.**

**First Reformed Church**

**70 Hooker Avenue, Poughkeepsie, New York**

**ALL SINGING MEN WELCOME**

Website address ..... [www.newyorkerschorus.org](http://www.newyorkerschorus.org)

**Poughkeepsie Chapter Mission Statement**

The mission of the Poughkeepsie Chapter shall be:  
To perpetuate the art of Barbershop Harmony, and  
To promote and provide opportunities for vocal harmony activities for its members and potential members such as, but not limited to,  
Quartetting,  
Vocal crafts and techniques,  
Coaching,  
Chorus singing, and  
Competitive preparation and participation,  
and  
To provide public appreciation of barbershop harmony through public and charitable performances, and  
To promote good fellowship and camaraderie among its Membership, and  
To foster and enhance the ideals and principles of the Barbershop Harmony Society



- 10 Dec Harmony for Hospice at Poughkeepsie Galleria—arrive 3:00 p.m. at Community Room for 4:00 performance. Afterglow at Rudy Veltre's home to follow
- 13 Dec Performance for New Paltz Chamber of Commerce breakfast at Terrace Restaurant on SUNY campus—arrive 7:30 a.m. for 8:30 a.m. performance. Uniform: long sleeved white shirt, green music tie, black slacks, black shoes and socks
- 19 Dec Performance for JOY (Just Older Youths) seniors club at New Hackensack Reformed Church, Rte. 376, Wappingers Falls—arrive 2:00 p.m. for 3:00 performance. Uniform as above
- 20 Dec Informal fun holiday party at rehearsal
- 5-7 Jan COTS (Chapter Operations Training Seminar) —see Scott Salladin for details
- 13 Jan 2007 Installation Dinner, Hudson's Ribs & Fish, Fishkill—6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Price \$30 per person. Special guests: Steve & Barbara Plumb

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE  
27 DECEMBER**

**Happy Birthdays in December:**

Jim Facciolla	6
Scott Salladin	16
John Hadigan	19
Eric Bram	21
Marian Harlow	25

**Happy Anniversaries in December:**

John and Elinor Haverkamp	25
Bill and Barbara Booth	26
Steve and Mary Hagerdon	27
Jack and Carol Ostmark	30

*Directions*

*by Renée Silverstein*

**A Success Story**

We're winding down to the end of a very successful year for the Poughkeepsie Newyorkers. That's a tricky word, successful. Success can be measured in many ways. Most folks measure success in dollars and cents. In retail one says business was very successful, we made a lot of money; or the movie was a big success at the box office. A schoolteacher achieves success when the light goes on in a student's eyes as he or she grasps the knowledge being taught.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

**Directions** (From Page 2)

I rather think we have a different approach, and it depends on the goals one sets to attain success. For instance, we didn't win any medals at our recent contests but certainly succeeded in entertaining the audience, pleasing the judges who awarded "points" (but points don't count, to quote Drew Carey on his "Whose Line Is It Anyway" program), and walking off the stage knowing we did our very best. Even at weekly chorus rehearsals as we sometimes plod our way through a phrase one part at a time, when we hear the chord ring—yay, success! Personal success, the feeling that your work and talent produced a good thing, immeasurable in dollars, cents or points. Performing for the general public and having the audience sing along, out loud, with every song reinforces our motto to Keep The Whole World Singing, wouldn't you say?

We certainly did a lot of public performances this year, the chorus as well as individual quartet appearances. You must agree: That prepares us for the main events during the year, our show as well as contests. The Poughkeepsie Newyorkers Chorus is a very successful group of singers, and I am proud to be part of this group.

In Harmony,  
Renee

**We Get Compliments**

By Mark A. Lubart

[Ed. Note: the following is extracted from comments on the November issue that Mark, an Oldyorker (1970s) now singing with the Big Apple Chorus, sent to Bob Chieffo. It is published with permission from both Mark and Bob.]

What a wonderful issue! The Mirror story is terrific. Who is Bill Florie? I want to meet him and sing with him. He gets it. ... Please let Bill know that his opinions are VERY valid and right on the mark. Fire-starter indeed !!!

And the Cab article had me crying. Beautiful. I wonder who that cabbie is. Thank your publisher for including it.

I hope the holidays find you, your family, and quartet, well and happy. Congratulations to Tom on his win in the Olympics. And I hope to see you soon. Perhaps I'll come to a chapter meeting during December. Will you be having rehearsals?

**A Guest Visit**

By Bob Chieffo

How often are we entertained by a first-time Chapter guest? The Newyorkers were surprisingly so on 29 November by Rick Greenop of Fishkill, NY.

We met Rick on 19 November when the Newyorkers sang a Sunday afternoon performance at the Fishkill Health Related Center. Rick is a (See "Guest" on Page 4)

**President** (From Page 1)

like we'll be able to participate, I would like to think that we'll receive another one next year. Maybe we can make it a chapter goal to put ourselves in a position both financially and timewise to accept an invitation to the 2008 Buckeye Invitational. Either way, I couldn't be more proud to be a Newyorker!

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*The View from the Back Row*  
By Bill Florie

**What does Garth Brooks have to do with Barbershop?**

I had very much hoped to be writing this month about the thrill of competing in Rhode Island, and the wonderful job that we, as a chorus, did. I had hoped to talk about the four days spent with my friends and with my quartet. I was sure that after four days of singing together we would be on fire for contest in March. I was looking forward to spending time, breaking bread, and gang singing. And I was really looking forward to a repeat of the kind of spontaneous, enthusiastic applause that our last contest performance generated. Instead I spent the week saying goodbye to my father-in-law. I'll never for a moment regret skipping contest to be there for him and my wife, but I am sorry I missed the fun.

This is not a plea for sympathy. I am thrilled that this chorus accomplished what they hadn't been able to in quite some time. The brightest spot of that weekend, for me, was to check the website on Sunday morning and see how well you guys did. I have heard many comments from members over the last few weeks about how well we are singing, and how well our audiences are receiving us. A couple of weeks ago the chorus sang at Fishkill Health Center and had almost the entire audience singing along with every song (another missed performance on my part; does anyone see a pattern developing?). It was really exciting for me to see how motivated the chorus members were by that performance. I specifically remember the gentleman in the front row at Castle Point a few weeks ago. He was having the time of his life, and his face showed it. You couldn't NOT have a good time performing for him! This brings me to Garth Brooks.

A number of years ago, Garth was interviewed, and one of his comments was, in my opinion, the most misrepresented statement I'd ever heard. I cannot claim to be able to reproduce the interview verbatim, so I will paraphrase and offer my own interpretation. The subject being discussed was the huge fortune that Garth had amassed as an entertainer. He commented that he had already earned more money than his grandchildren's children could possibly spend. I distinctly remember the uproar the following day. He was vilified for being arrogant, high and mighty, pretentious. It was a Garth feeding frenzy that lasted for quite a while. What wasn't discussed, however, were the comments immediately following that statement. Garth went on to explain that he (See "View" on Page 4)

**View** (From Page 3)

never did this for the money. While the money was a nice bonus, it was something that resulted from him doing what he had a passion for, and doing it well. It was his contention that there was no greater joy than being able to stand in front of 50,000 people, and move them with a song; that the ability to affect someone profoundly on an emotional level, through his music, was a greater reward than the money. Isn't that how we feel when we see the guy in the front row smiling from ear to ear and singing along? (And it's definitely not about the money for us, is it?) What we do is a blessing, for us and for our audience. We have the ability to put a smile on someone's face, make them forget their troubles for a moment or two, bring back memories, or just spread a little sunshine. I think that as long as we are motivated by our ability to affect someone's life positively, even if only for a minute or two, we will have more fun and perform better, and get more personal reward from the effort. The proof is in the pudding! We are singing well and it's showing in contest scores and audience reaction, which starts a positive cycle that everyone benefits from.

Every time you open your mouth to sing, imagine that you're singing to that guy in the front row. Smile back, and let it rip!

Happy Harmonious Holidays!

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## Barbershop Harmony Society Elects Officers for 2007

From the Society's newsletter *LiveWire*,  
22 November

The Barbershop Harmony Society Board of Directors elected Rod Sgrignoli of Littleton, Colo., to represent Southwestern District and Rocky Mountain District as a paired-district member of the Board. Rod will fill the vacancy left by Bill Biffle, who will serve as Executive Vice President beginning in January. The vote was taken at the Board's meeting Nov. 4.

Other officers elected to serve the Board beginning in January were chosen at the July 4 meeting. They are as follows:

Society President, Noah Funderburg  
 Society Executive Vice President, Bill Biffle  
 Society Treasurer, Robert Guiggey  
 Board Member at Large, Alan Lamson  
 Paired-District Board Member from Cardinal and Johnny Appleseed Districts, Edward "Skipp" Kropp  
 Paired-District Board Member from Land O'Lakes and Pioneer Districts, Jim Lee  
 Paired-District Board Member from Evergreen and Far Western Districts, Lou Benedict  
 Harmony Foundation Trustees, Robert Brutsman and Susan Sauls

**Guest** (From Page 3)

staff member there. It was the kind of performance you don't forget. We sang well, and the audience of about fifty residents enjoyed it too. Besides the Sing-Along "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" (with and without pronouns), several residents sang along with us on many songs. It was a warm experience on both sides of the "footlights".

When it was over, some of us engaged Rick in talk about the performance and barbershopping. Rick was quite interested, and after we heard his resonant bass voice, so were we! We exchanged contact information especially directing him to our Chapter's website where he could learn more about the New Yorkers and the Society.

We exchanged a few e-mails and Rick was able to change his Wednesday night guitar teaching session to come and visit. Without going into a "minute-by-minute" recall of the evening, I think it safe to say Rick and the chorus had a good time. Besides rehearsing some Christmas music and repertoire, we got him singing a tag. Oh yes, the guitar: Jack Tacinelli just happened to have brought in his guitar. Was it fate? Or was Jack looking for a "free" lesson? It didn't take much to convince Rick to sing us a song. And... some of us knew the lyrics and sang along too. Sound familiar?



Guest Rick Greenop entertains the New Yorkers

Rick joined us for our pizza and brew Afterglow. When I left, he said he'd be back next week. Ahh, that's real music to the ears of a seasoned barbershopper!

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## Society Plans to Celebrate 50 Years of The Music Man

From the Society's Newsletter *LiveWire*, 27 October

Yes, the Barbershop Harmony Society is gearing up a grand year of special events for 2007 and plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest musicals of all time: The Music Man.

Meredith Willson's *The* (See "Celebration" on Page 5)

**Celebration** (From Page 4)

Music Man originally opened at Broadway's Majestic Theatre on 19 December 1957 and ran for 1375 performances. Barbershoppers, and the public generally, know that our beloved 1950 International Quartet Champions, The Buffalo Bills, starred in the musical on Broadway, appeared on the #1 LP, and reprised their roles in the popular 1962 movie. When the public thinks of "barbershop," most think The Music Man.

We plan to take advantage of that historic connection in 2007.

The upcoming Mid-Winter Convention in Albuquerque will have a Music Man Theme and feature a "Buffalo Bills era" quartet contest. Next summer's Denver International will also have a Music Man theme and invite EVERYONE who has ever been in the musical to gather and create a massive Music Man Chorus. We'll sing songs like

The Wells Fargo Wagon "Is it a prepaid surprise or C.O.D.?"

Iowa Stubborn "You can eat your fill of all the food you bring yourself."

Ya Got Trouble "Gotta figger out a way to keep the young ones moral after school!"

Good Night My Someone "True love can be whispered from heart to heart"

Marian The Librarian "Heaven help us if the library caught on fire"

Pick-A-Little-Talk-A-Little "A lump of lead as cold as steel here, where a woman's heart should be!"

Shipooopi "Get a squeeze back, that's fancy cookin'"

The Sadder But Wiser Girl "I rave for the virtue I'm too late to save."

Sincere "Your apprehensions confuse me, dear"

It's You "What words could be saner or truer or plainer"

Lida Rose "At the least suggestion I'll pop the question."

Gary Indiana "How I happened on this elegant syncopation"

Till There Was You "In sweet fragrant meadows of dawn and dew."

76 Trombones "Thundering, thundering louder than before"

Rock Island "But ya gotta know the territory"

Does this bring back memories? Did you catch yourself singing along? I'll bet you were even smiling. That's what we can do to the public and your future show patrons, bookings, and new members. This music brings back fond memories to those wishing to return to those days and educate those who hear this for the first time.

Harmony University 2007 will also have a special Music Man theme: "I always think there's a band, kid."

The climax of the year will be a Society-wide meeting night on Tuesday, 19 December 2007. Every chapter will be invited to hold a guest night/inter-chapter celebration on this, the actual 50th anniversary date. We'll invite local

Sweet Adelines and/or Harmony Incorporated chapters to participate. Finale for the evening will be "Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You" 8-part arrangement.

You and your chapter can take advantage of this anniversary and use it to increase awareness and your membership. You should start planning NOW!

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## Tension Impedes Quality Singing

By Darin Brown, Denver Mile High Chapter,  
As paraphrased, with additions, in  
Peoria Chapter's *Noteworthy*, Ken Krancher, Editor

All singers have a constant battle to produce the most beautiful tone possible facing the constant challenges of voice placement, pitch, volume, timbre, note duration, language, and diction. When a high level of performance energy is needed and choreography is added, all sorts of traps and roadblocks emerge to impede a free sound. The following describes the most common types of tension and how to overcome them.

Tongue tension happens when the tongue is pulled away from the most desirable singing location in the mouth: that is, on the lower ridge. This can happen when one over-exaggerates words with big vowels, such as "ah" and "oh," rather than maintaining a relaxed curved placement. Practicing a relaxed vowel singing exercise during "warmups" can ease this tension. Singing a Polecat song with your tongue on the lower gum ridge will help awareness of this placement.

Jaw tension is caused by sticking the jaw out or holding the jaw tightly in place while singing. This tends to make the tone more strident, and usually affects the pitch. Eliminating jaw tension is difficult since the singer often is unaware of its presence. To promote a relaxed jaw, sing softly and sustain a tone while physically moving your jaw around. Range extremes may cause this tension, so practice singing high and low pitches while moving your jaw with your hand.

Physical tension in the body is the most obvious. The most common forms that affect singing are poor position and poor breathing. Slouching and standing flat-footed impede successful use of the diaphragmatic muscle support needed for good singing. Breathing exercises before singing complete songs is a must for both rehearsals and performances. Repetitiously practice choreographed moves while singing in front of a mirror so that you can reduce the possibility of tension and improve confidence in your performance.

Laryngeal tension involves straining the larynx to produce louder sounds of extreme high or low notes. When the muscles in the neck are employed to raise the larynx to accomplish this exceptional task, the result often is straining of the larynx, causing the singer's voice to become tired. The singer must be aware of the location of the Adam's apple while singing, and cautiously prevent it from rising to the top of the (See "Tension" on Page 6)

**Tension** (From Page 5)

throat while singing challenging passages.

Hopefully, these suggestions will assist in alleviating your vocal tension.

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**What Can I Do to Improve the Chorus?**

By J. P. Marshall, former CSD President  
From an unnamed chapter's *Plains Notes*,  
by way of Traverse City's *The Chorister*,  
Elbert Ford, Editor

I want our chapter to be better bur how can I change the whole chapter? I am not on the music committee. How can I improve the overall sound of the chorus? I am not on the board. How can I make the chapter more successful? I'm not the VP of Chapter Development. How can I make our chapter grow? I am not the president. How can I help our rehearsal structure?

I'm sure that many of you have asked yourselves these questions before, as have I, and I have had a time coming up with the answers. Then I saw a fellow Barbershopper in another chorus standing off to the side working on one move until he had it perfect. When I asked him why he

spent so much time on that move, he told me that it was hard to make it look right and he was not going to miss it. It was then that I realized the answer to all these questions. No one told him he had to get that move right or he wasn't going on stage, but the guy next to him had it right and the next guy and the guy after that. He was not going to be the only one who didn't have it right.

That is something that can be put to each of those questions I posed at the beginning of this article. How can I improve the overall sound of the chorus? If I take personal responsibility to get my part right every time, the guy next to me is not going to want to be the guy wrong so he will get it right every time, and then the next guy, and so on.

How can I help our chapter grow? If I take personal responsibility to bring two guests to every guest night, the next guy is going to see that and he will bring two guests tin and on and on.

If we all improve ourselves about what we want to see the chorus improve on and really make an effort to do it right every time, that will be seen by other members and our chorus will become better in that area and as an overall chapter.

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Website for Poughkeepsie Newyorkers: <<http://www.newyorkerschorus.org>>

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