

The Newyorker Times

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



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Poughkeepsie, New York

Number 7
July 2008

From the President
By Steve Miller

Ask not what your chapter can do for you. Ask what you can do for your chapter!

(Attributed in part to John F. Kennedy, who wasn't a barbershopper.)

A Letter about HCNE

By Ed Fritzen
VP Music and Performance, NED

Gentlemen,

This is a gentle reminder to make your reservations early to attend this year's Harmony College Northeast the weekend of 8–10 August 2008. As of today the reservations are only trickling in. In order to provide the best experience possible for all those barbershoppers in the Northeast District, it would help us immensely if we had an early count of how many participants we can expect that weekend. Remember, the more the merrier. I would really love to fill all the available dorm rooms at Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, MA, that weekend.

What can you expect at this year's HCNE?

1. An outstanding faculty, headed up by our Society's Music Education Specialist Jim Debusman.
2. Great quartets including Storm Front, The Management, and Counterpoint.
3. Good Food
4. Great fellowship
5. Tag Singing and woodshedding
6. The Big Friday Night BBQ
7. The Big Saturday Night show featuring the aforementioned quartets, the HX Chorus, the HX Reunion Chorus, the HX Faculty/Staff Chorus, and the popular mixed quartet, The Honeymooners
8. The Saturday Night afterglow
9. Director's College Classes
10. Quartet Coaching

To find out more information, please visit the NED website (www.nedistrict.org). There you'll find all the registration information and course descriptions. Register as

soon as possible to avoid having your favorite class cancelled due to lack of interest. I think we've provided something for barbershoppers of all ages and levels of experience.

We have a great venue this year at Bridgewater State College and an outstanding faculty. To make this a great weekend, all we need now is your participation. Please consider coming either with your quartet for some coaching or with others in your chapter to learn more about this great hobby of ours and to meet some great barbershoppers. I'll be there, and I'm excited about seeing as many NED barbershoppers as I can. Get those registrations in!

Yours in Harmony,
Ed Fritzen
860 608 7724 (cell)
elfritzen@comcast.net

Reasons

By Renée Silverstein

So many times during vocal warm-up procedures you are asked to do some things that may appear silly, or you may wonder why you are being asked to do them. Here are some logical and proven reasons behind the requests.

Relaxation of the jaw and the tongue is the key to producing good vocal tones. The jaw must be disconnected from the tongue and the lips. Singing an entire song on an open vowel such as "oh" should give you the feeling of singing through a tunnel, high in the mask of your face so that the vowel doesn't get flattened. Then when you sing the actual words you should try singing the same way you did through that tunnel. Also, the tongue needs to be relaxed so as not to choke off the resonance. When we change from one vowel to another and overwork the jaw or tongue the vowels sound "chewed" and lose resonance.

Singable or voiced consonants can affect pitch. You cannot sing a sustained "B," but M's, N's, L's and V's add color and special effects to the words. The vowels that follow these consonants can be flat if the consonant is under pitch. Therefore, the tone must be supported with a column of air. Make the vowels long and the consonants short but do not anticipate the ending consonants. We get choppy singing when we do that.

Singers tend to overarticulate because we must keep our mouths open more than when we are (Continued on Page 3)

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Meetings
Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.
Reformed Church of Poughkeepsie
70 Hooker Avenue
Poughkeepsie, New York
ALL SINGING MEN WELCOME
Website address 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,
 Copaching,
 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

Coming Events

9 Jul Public performance, Bartlett Park (across from church)—arrive 6 p.m. for 7 p.m. performance; summer uniform

23 Jul Sing National Anthem for Renegades game, Dutchess Stadium, Rte. 9D, Fishkill—arrive 6 p.m. for 7 p.m. performance; summer uniform

7 Sep Performance for Grandparents' Day at Elant Nursing home (formerly Fishkill Health Center), Rte. 9D, Fishkill—arr. 1 p.m.; summer uniform

24–25 Oct NED Convention and Contests, Lowell, MA

14 Dec Harmony for Hospice performance, Poughkeepsie Galleria—details TBA

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
30 JULY

Because of computer problems, the birthday and anniversary listings are not available. We regret the necessity of this omission.

Directors
By Renée Silverstein

COMPETITION/PERFORMANCES

Although we are four months away from the District contest I'm thinking about it—thinking about how our competition venues and hotel lobbies are filled with people encouraging and congratulating quartets and choruses, no matter what they score. I am amazed by how people offer encouraging words, hints, and suggestions, and are so interested in helping us sing better and expand our knowledge of this incredible style of singing. Lifting each other up seems to be a hallmark of our barbershop world. This is *rare* in the "outside world" or in other competitive hobbies. Our competitions give us a chance to get singers together from around the district, to show and share their stuff.

We know that growth is important to this hobby, not only to our very own chorus. In order to attract singers we must put this product in front of them. That's why we do the public performances. We need to hear a teenage singer that's been exposed to good, ringing, freely produced barbershop singing say, "Wow! What was *that?*" Or have a 60-year-old person (that used to sing) hear a barbershop chorus or quartet (that sounds reasonably good to that particular listener) and say, "Wow! I could do *that!*" Exposure is the key. We need to see the reaction of people who like to sing that see a quartet/chorus of men/women in their own age group: "I thought that there wasn't any other place to sing after high school, except church choir or classical groups.

So thank you all for signing up to do those public performances, it will pay off.

Here are some musical quotes I (Continued on Page 3)

Directions (From Page 2)

discovered on line:

“People who make music together cannot be enemies, at least while the music lasts.”—Paul Hindemith

“Opera is where a guy gets stabbed in the back and instead of dying, sings.”—Percy Shelley

“Nothing is more odious than music without hidden meaning.”—Chopin

“Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”—Berthold Auerback

“Rhythm, the primitive and predominating element of all Art.”—D’Indy

Reasons (From Page 1)

speaking. That’s why we do the exercises: the tongue twister as in “Ninety Nine Nuns In An Indiana Nunnery,” the trilling or “bubble lips” and the “bluh bluh bluh” exercise, the massaging of the jaw area, the hissing out of air to help strengthen the breathing muscles.

More reasons next month.

Financial Concerns

By Steve Miller

At a meeting of the membership on 25 June, the chapter voted in favor of an increase in annual dues from \$30 to \$50 per member. The increase will take effect on 1 July 2008. Although the dues increase will add money to the chapter coffers, there was never any expectation that it was to be the single solution to the financial woes of the chapter.

At the same meeting the BOD and the membership discussed the financial status of the chapter for 2008. While the annual show was deemed a success, the revenues it generated (approximately \$2000 net) fell significantly short of the amount expected. This shortfall in the show revenue, along with the dismal return from the Singing Valentines and the limited number of paid singouts, will see the chapter failing to meet its financial obligations after September 2008 unless we make an effort to correct it soon.

Many of the members have provided me with suggestions for reducing expenses and increasing revenues. At this point the rental of the church at \$390/month is obviously our biggest nut. I had told the membership in January that my goal was to make the chapter more financially successful. This still remains my goal.

The BOD and I are committed to resolving these financial issues. Be assured that the board has several ideas that we are looking into, but don't presume that your thoughts and ideas are not welcome. I will arrange to hold a meeting in early July so that the board and the membership can hammer out a plan for the financial success of the chapter. In the mean time, if you have any suggestions concerning the financial health of the chapter, please feel contact me or any member of the board. Thanks.

New Chorus Fees Adopted

By Eric Dickstein

On 18 June 2008 at the weekly New Yorkers Chorus rehearsal, the membership present voted to raise the annual chapter dues from \$30.00 to \$50.00. There were 17 voting members at the rehearsal and the vote was 16 Yea, 1 Nay.

In my opinion, this is a minuscule increase. If my math is correct (\$20.00/50 weekly rehearsals), this is a \$0.40 per week additional cost. I spend more for coffee per day (\$1.95x5) at the office.

The New Yorkers’ Board of Directors (of which, in the interests of full disclosure, I am a current Member-at-Large) felt this increase was necessary to help offset the financial deficit that we have been experiencing over the last few years. Believe me that this decision was not made lightly.

By no means will this increase make the chorus financially viable. It is a very small step. The plain fact is that this chorus is not generating enough money to meet its expenses. “What expenses?” you ask. How about rent, Chorus Director fees, and web site maintenance fees, for example? Rent is the largest share.

What can you, chorus member do?

For starters, volunteer when there is a performance, *especially* if it is a “paid” performance. They cannot be *all* on a Wednesday evening, which is most convenient for all of us.

Do your best to sell show ads and tickets, Singing Valentines, Barbershop Pick chances. Together, there were about 300 show tickets sold. (FYI, this is about what we have done in the past few years.) If we had sold 500 tickets and 10 more Singing Valentines than we did, raising fees would not even be an issue!

I’m not implying that this is easy, but we all have to try. If you personally didn’t sell 2 tickets, next year, make that a goal. If you did, make your goal to sell 3. For sure, your goal should be at least one more than this past year!

Next, do you know of any other place we could rehearse? This question is more difficult than it sounds. Here are (some of) the necessary requirements:

1. Space has to be large enough, handicap accessible (preferably).
2. Should have storage available (this is not mandatory — we could rent storage space).
3. Safe, convenient parking.
4. Location matters (to some of us); Poughkeepsie — Wappingers area would be ideal.
5. Many members feel strongly that the rehearsal night must be on a Wednesday. (Tuesday is out because our Director, Renée has her chorus rehearsal that night.) If you are aware of a possible location, you can contact any board member to follow it up.

Don’t hesitate to mention a location if the day, location or any other requirement listed above is not met! Things can change!

Lastly, many of you have and are presenting ideas to help generate funds. Keep them coming, but remember, having the idea is only half the solution. If your idea involves an activity, raffle, singout, etc, *be a part of it!* It is up to all of us; don’t leave the actual work or (See “Fees” on Page 4)

Fees (From Page 3)

participation to someone else.

Having re-read this, I'd also like to extend an invitation to those of you who haven't been to a rehearsal lately. I'd really like to "ring some chords" with you. You know where we are!

Suggestions on Fund Raising

By "Butch" Ashdown

In lieu of reading Steve Miller's report on the annual show revenue for 2008 and the approval of the dues increase, I would like to make a few suggestions and comments in regards to fund raising for the chapter.

#1. I feel that increasing the dues will make it more difficult to draw young people into our great hobby. With increases in *everything* in life these days, to make an annual payment of (guessing) \$150 per year to be a member will only dissuade prospective young members. You might as well call it an organization for folks who are well off. The guys who have been paying dues for any period of time most likely will not have a problem paying an extra \$20 per year.

#2. As a past president and 11+ year member of the society and chapter, I believe that others *must* get involved in "making things happen" within the chapter. The creation of the barbershop "pick" has helped in fund raising for the last 7-8 years. There is a calendar fund raiser where you sell 1,000 calendars for the year (365 days for a chance to win at least \$25 each day for the year). You sell them for \$20 each. The total prize money given out is \$10,000. Guess what the chapter makes on this: \$10,000! Only overhead is the making of the calendars. *That's it!* You would need 2-3 months to sell all of the calendars (50 members in the chapter divided by 1,000 calendars is 20 each). Then you wouldn't need to rely on the annual show to see if we can afford to even hold chapter meetings somewhere. My opinion is very strongly in favor of this type of fund raising. Easy to sell and quite profitable.

#3. The 2008 annual show was *not* advertised in Ulster County. So, if that's the case, then have a show in Kingston! It could be a cabaret style show or a full show at UPAC in Kingston. How about Orange County for a show? How about Greene County? No men's barbershop there either!

#4. How about having a nickel social with the chorus and quartets singing to provide entertainment? People have all kinds of things to get rid of and a nickel social can bring in a few bucks.

#5. How about sponsoring a bus trip to a casino or some other place? Bus companies charge a set fee for the bus. If all 52 seats were sold, the chapter could make upward of \$500 or more just to hold a trip. Throw in Bingo games on the bus and 50/50 raffles and more money can come in.

#6. How about holding a 200-club raffle? It could be as simple as having a 20-week raffle and charge \$20 for a ticket with 200 tickets max sold. The chapter could make at least \$2,000 to hold this popular fund raiser. Throw in a free show for the 20th week and make a party out of it.

#7. Golf tournament: A lot of older folk love to golf. A

day of golf can generate money also.

These are only a few things that I have thought of. How about checking with the ladies' Evergreen Chorus and finding out how much they pay for their new hall their renting—and it has air conditioning! I bet you may be surprised. I do not know what their rent is, but I'm sure it's worth exploring.

I'm also a wee bit dismayed that others have not stepped up to submit articles for the Times. George Trigg has done a *super* job at being the editor and has put out nothing short of a #1 product for us to enjoy. How about some of the new kids in the chapter giving an article on joining the chapter and introducing themselves? [Ed. note: There are two such articles in this issue.]

How about the Board publishing minutes so we *all* can see the business activity of the chapter? I bet the more we know, the more people will want to be involved and will give.

I spoke with John Hadigan at a recent Swing Shift rehearsal and told him 10 reasons if I showed up for the vote on the dues increase to vote NO on it. But I did tell him the reasons to do fund raising and I'd list the ideas for others to read and evaluate. I want my e-mail to be a positive reflection and to maybe help motivate those in power within the chapter to evaluate these ideas (and hopefully others will write too) and act accordingly to help save the chapter. Because, as Steve Miller said, by the end of September, we're going to be broke and that would suggest to me the end of the Poughkeepsie NewYorkers as we know it. Can *we save it?*

Meet a New Member

By Jim Marrinan

A little over a year ago I finished performing in a musical called "The Baker's Wife." Having a musical background and always having a particular interest in singing, I was very excited to meet Bill Florie and Chris Schultz. Through them I was reintroduced to barbershop—something I had wanted to do again for many years. I would often talk with my close friend Rich Merry about looking into joining "that barbershop group in Poughkeepsie." We never seemed to find the time.

It all started for me in high school. I was very fortunate to have a choral teacher by the name of Delbert Anderson. He had a particular love of barbershop music and, I believe, was an active barbershopper. Mr. Anderson formed a barbershop group with several of the other teachers and they would perform at our concerts. We loved it and because of them, some friends and I eventually formed our own group.

My name is Jim Marrinan. I am a fourth-grade teacher at Brinckerhoff Elementary School in Fishkill. My wife Kathleen and I have two wonderful children. My daughter Kathryn is 16 years old and a member of FDR High School's chorus and the ladies' a cappella singing group "The First Ladies." My son William is 13 years old and participated in a boys' a cappella group at Haviland Middle School. So I guess you can say that singing in the Marrinan blood!

I officially joined The NewYorkers a year ago and have had a blast! From the first time I walked in the door I sensed the camaraderie of the chapter (See "Marrinan" on Page 5)

Marrinan (From Page 4)

and knew that I would have a great time. I look forward to many years singing with my new friends!

50-Year Members Recognized

By Bob Chieffo

At the Annual Chapter Show May 17, during Rudy Veltre's traditional between-acts Sing-Along, Steve Plumb and Rudy were recognized for their 50-year membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society. They were further thanked for being two of the seven founders of the Poughkeepsie, New York Chapter and were treated to Show and Afterglow tickets. In addition, recognition certificates were presented to them. Rudy got his at the Afterglow. Steve and Barbara had to leave early, so his was mailed.

The certificate (see photo) shows the Chapter Charter and the guys in an early New Yorkers contest photo. The certificate says:

"Congratulations to Rudy Veltre / Steve Plumb"

"Celebrating 50 years in the Barbershop Harmony Society!
The New Yorkers gratefully acknowledge your vision and leadership
as a Founder of the Poughkeepsie, NY Chapter"

"Keep The Whole World Singing"

Steve Miller May 17, 2008
Chapter President



My First Singing Valentine Experience

By Matthew Kambic

In February of this year I had the opportunity to participate in Singing Valentines. Being a new member I did not quite know what to expect. I practiced the songs, polished my shoes, and warmed up my voice. While I anticipated that

the recipients of our harmonies would receive it graciously I was not totally prepared for what happened every time: crying.

Each and every woman we sang to became overcome with emotions. Try as they might to hold back their tears I could see it in their eyes and tell that they really appreciated it. One lady was so overcome and (See "Valentines" on Page 6)

Valentines *(From Page 5)*

became so teary eyed that I even offered to go get a mop (I'm just kidding). Suddenly, four nothing-special guys dressed in formal garb transformed into an Unstoppable Woman Swooning Force (UWSF). I could tell that these women really appreciated their significant other's romantic gesture manifested through us. We sang to one elderly lady, and she was so overcome that she actually died (I am only joking). You should have called the romantic police that day because the UWSF were guilty as charged!

I admit that I may have become just a little intoxicated with all this newfound power, but it was still a fun feeling to have. Most people we sang to only expected one song. This created a great opportunity. We would promptly inform them how their significant other had opted for the "Deluxe Package" (read: the only package available). The strangest part of the day came when we were booked to sing for a gentleman by his wife. Serenading a man is a very weird experience. I must have told him at least five times in song how I "Love him Truly," I could tell that he was about as uncomfortable receiving a Singing Valentine as I felt giving it; however, he realized how it was from his wife and was grateful.

All said and done I had a great time last Valentines Day. The travel time got a little long at times, but it is a necessary

evil. Our schedule was a little light, and we had some downtime to kill. Now, though, I know even better how to promote this for next year. I want to thank Scott for manning the phones for hours, doing scheduling, and planning each Singing Valentine. Our quartet is called Four to the Power of One, but during this day we might as well have been called The Frying Pans—we melted the heart of every lady we sang to! "A cheerful heart is good medicine..." (Proverbs 17:22a).

**Newyorkers Preserve
Barbershop Harmony in Walkill**

By Steve Miller

On Saturday, 21 June, a quartet from the Poughkeepsie Newyorkers provided entertainment at the Waltke family reunion in Walkill. Present were Earl Snyder, tenor; Steve Miller, lead; Bob Waltke, baritone; and Dick Schaffer, bass. The quartet performed a collection of polecats and current chorus repertoire for an audience of about 35. The quartet appreciated the warm response from the guests as well as the delicious barbeque that included chicken, hamburgers and the famous Waltke cheese potatoes. The performance will not soon be forgotten.

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