

The Newyorker Times

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



New Series, Volume 8
Poughkeepsie, New York

Number 6
June 2007

Editorial

An Apparently Missing Assignment

A recent incident has revealed that a job assignment is missing. A suggestion was made that a wedding gift be given by the Chapter to Chapter President John Hadigan and his new bride. In the course of the ensuing correspondence, Our Secretary pointed out that some years ago, the Board of Directors had directed that "The chapter members are not encouraged to collect any funds for any special function for a chapter member." There may be those who disagree with this decision, but it stands nevertheless, and avoids the possibility that different members might get different treatments.

Still, it is highly desirable that special events in members' lives—adverse events as well as happy ones—should be recognized by the chapter. This means that some officer should have the responsibility to keep informed of such events and to send a suitable communication to the member involved. It is not entirely obvious what officer it should be; in the list of current officers, the title that seems closest is Vice President, Public Relations. If this is not regarded as an appropriate duty for that officer, then a new office should be created. We strongly urge the Board to take appropriate action as soon as feasible.

George L. Trigg

Bob Chieffo Receives Award from Song of the Valley, SAI

By Bob Chieffo

On the evening of 24 April 2007, Newyorker Bob Chieffo was proclaimed the "2007 Song of the Valley Man of Note." This recognition was given by the Song of the Valley Chorus, Sweet Adelines International, during its annual Officer Installation Ceremony and Dinner in Newburgh, NY.



June Pierson presents the award

As part of the ceremonies, SOTV members were recognized for contributions to the chapter and chorus by Team Coordinator June Pierson. Included in these recognitions was a special award established last year by June and Chorus Director Lisbet Kline, called the "Song of the Valley Man of Note." This is awarded to a spouse or other gentle-

man, "For Providing Significant, Generous and Outstanding Support to the Chapter." The first recipient in 2006 was Newyorker Ron Pierson. This year, 2007, the award was presented to Bob Chieffo. Both Ron and Bob have been extremely supportive in Song of the Valley's activities ever since June and Diane became members in November 2002 and February 2003, respectively. Ron and Bob are also the tenor and baritone in The Footlighters quartet, now celebrating its 32nd year.

Finding Your "Real Voice"

By Terry Clarke

Bass of Our Town and of Boston Common
in response to a note from Bob Hitchcock

[Guys: Last year after district competition I heard Our Town performing in the lobby and was prompted to send Terry Clarke—Our Town's bass and also the bass of Boston Common—the following note:

Terry,

. . . I'm relatively new to this hobby so when I heard you singing with "Our Town" in the lobby I was amazed. I had heard some of the Boston Common recordings but had never been close enough to hear the true resonance you bring to the table. Wow.

I was wondering if you are (See "Real Voice" on Page 3)

The New Yorker Times

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Meetings

Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.

First Reformed Church

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,
 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



- 9 Jun Sing at Relay for Life, Ulster Co. Fairgrounds
—meet at 3 p.m. for warmup, sing at 4 p.m.
- 27 Jun Sing for Renegades—meet at 6 p.m.
- 25 July Sing at Bartlett Park—meet at 6:30 p.m., sing
at 7. Rain date 26 Jul
- 8 Aug Sing for Renegades—meet at 6 p.m.
- 19–21 Oct NED Fall Convention and Contests, Lowell,
MA**

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
27 JUNE**

Happy Birthdays in June:

Lew Distasi	4
Larry Rand	11
Bill Standish	11
Linda Standish	12
Marty Silverstein	13
Barb Troan	14
Eleanor Veltre	24

Happy Anniversaries in June:

Tony and Faith Krzywicki	9
Bob and Bev Waltke	18
Rudy and Eleanor Veltre	20
Larry and Nancy Rand	21
Bob and Lois Hitchcock	21
Steve and Joan Ross	28

Directions

by Renée Silverstein

A TWELVE-STEP PROGRAM

Author: Carolyn Sexton

This is a twelve-step program to assist you in learning new music. It is only a suggestion until you learn a system that is best for you. The success of this program is contingent upon the effective listening skills of the learner—much more than upon one's music background or the ability to read music.

Any of the twelve steps may be repeated before continuing to the next step. But remember, each step is important to the overall results of learning all the right notes, words, and timing of the song. Do not eliminate any of the steps because it appears to be
(See Directions" on Page 3)

Directions (From Page 2)
insignificant.

THE TWELVE STEPS

1. Listen to the music on the master tape with your eyes closed. (This will familiarize you with the notes, timing, and general flavor of the song.)
2. Watch the notes on your music while you listen to the tape. Do not sing yet!
3. Again, watch the notes on your music while you listen to the tape. Do not sing yet.
4. Watch the words on your music while you listen to the tape. Please, no singing yet.
5. On a separate sheet of paper (or on the back of your music), write all the lyrics to the new song. Now, watch your own paper while you listen to the tape. No, not yet—don't sing, please.
6. Watch the notes again while you listen to the tape. Remember, no singing.
7. Watch the words on your music while you listen to the tape. Be careful, not a sound.
8. Try to write down all the words again on another sheet of paper without looking at the printed music. If you have trouble, listen to the tape again. Watch the words and then again try to write them without looking at the music. Stay on this step until you can write down all the correct words without looking back at the printed music. Now, proceed to Step 9.
9. Hurray! Finally you can add your voice. Watch the notes on your music while you HUM along with the tape. Hum—hum. Singing is next.
10. Watch the words on your music while you sing along with the tape. Can you believe this? You're really going to SING this song for the very first time. If you have any difficulty, circle the spot(s) on your music as you go all the way through. Then go back and listen (don't sing) to those parts again.
11. Put a clean practice tape in your tape recorder. On this tape, record as you sing the new part all the way through without looking at your music. (Bet you can hardly wait to hear this step!)
12. **VERY IMPORTANT STEP** Watch the music as you listen to your own tape to see if you sang the notes correctly. You should be wonderful. But, should you have any doubt, go back and check your part again on the master tape. Concentrate on listening to the parts you circled earlier to be sure you have made corrections.

CONGRATULATIONS! With a little bit of luck plus all your hard work, you are now the proud possessor of one more selection of music made beautiful by your addition of all the correct notes, words and timing.

My own thought: Music is what feelings sound like.
Renée



Real Voice (From Page 1)

planning on teaching at any upcoming class. (Teaching the aspects of the craft from your perspective.) Apparently you were dealt a great voice, but I'm sure you must work at maintaining its quality.

. . . I'm not looking for you to "give" anything away, but I'd love to hear any suggestions you would give in a class.

Thanks for a great impromptu performance. It was thoroughly enjoyable.

Terry's response follows:]

Thank you for your kind remarks regarding Our Town's performance. One of the blessings I've enjoyed over the years is a quartet comprising a baritone who knows how to complement (and make sound better) the bass, a lead who can lay it out there with gusto when needed, and a tenor who can provide full voice.

Interestingly, the Society's judging system neither encourages nor rewards that type of sound. As you may have noticed, most (if not all) of the quartets these days fall into a familiar "box" which has been dictated by the judges. And just how do the judges do that you may ask? First, by insisting that they all judge the same, all come up with the same scores within their categories, and second, by spending the time when they're not judging, coaching. That's right, the judges actually coach the quartets and then sit in judgment of all the biases they just laid on the quartets. In a word, the system stinks. Instead of encouraging each and every quartet to find its unique sound and identity (quartets, like the fingerprints of individuals, have their own sound if permitted and encouraged to find it), the judging system today instructs singers to perform in the fashion the judges can judge. Unfortunately, were Our Town to enter competition we would be penalized severely for all the "sins" we commit when we sing. Interestingly, neither we nor The Boston Common have ever been asked why and how we generated the sounds we do/did. So I doubt you'll get to hear me at any of the so-called Harmony Colleges. They'd need to invent a new class.

However, now that I'm off the soapbox, let me respond somewhat to your question. First a little story. When I was attending college here in Boston in the early 1960s I sang with a group called The Cross-Countrymen. Our lead had his degree in music and his instrument was the cello. Indeed, he sounded much like a cello when he sang—wide breadth of tone, little edge to his voice, and very accurate thanks, as I mentioned, to his degree in music. In those days I sang with a distinct edge to my voice, up in my throat (not unlike many basses I hear in quartets today). Lloyd (our lead) suggested one day that when I get up in the morning and immediately run to the toilet to urinate, that I just hum quietly with my mouth shut. "You'll note a voice different from the one you use when you sing with us."

I thought he was full of it, but to humor him the next morning when I arose to go to the john, I did as he suggested. Sure enough, it was a (See "Real Voice" on Page 4)

Real Voice (From Page 3)

different sound than I had been using. In fact, it was a round, fat sound. I tried opening my mouth, and sure enough, I still was able to hold onto it. But not for long. As I showered and went about my business, my voice returned to “normal.”

The next time we met at rehearsal I told Lloyd I had done as he suggested and that he was right, it was a different voice. “That, good friend, is your real voice. You had been sleeping/resting for eight hours or so, breathing correctly. When you uttered a sound for the first time after all that correct breathing and rest, it was your real voice coming through. Now do that every morning and see how long you can hold onto that sound. Eventually you’ll get to the point where you can switch back and forth from your real voice to the one you’re using now.”

He was right. And that’s how I discovered my real voice. I now breathe as I do when I sleep—from the bottom of my lungs, not the top—and I rarely run out of breath, and it supports the sound of my voice.

We are ALL dealt great voices. It’s just a matter of finding the real voice within. So try the exercise I used to find mine. And after a month or so, let me know if it’s helped any.

Oh, and the resonance you’re hearing from the quartet is generated by all four voices. Remove any one of them and the resonance fades.

Again, thanks for your kind words; and for asking. Good luck.

Terry

The View from the Rear

By Bill Florie

Let me begin by apologizing. There has been no view from the back row for the last few months. Between rehearsing for and performing in my first community theater production, and getting ready for contest and the annual show, I have not had the time or energy for my literary endeavors. With all of that behind me, I’d ask that you indulge my ramblings once again.

My very first “view” consisted of some very strong opinions on what made this chapter either great or forgettable. I asked everyone to look in the mirror and evaluate the product that we offered to ourselves and prospective new members on a weekly basis. I challenged the membership to make every Wednesday night the kind of meeting that would make a new member “have” to come back for more. I think that we rose to the occasion in a huge way. I saw two friends of mine sit through meetings that were primarily focused on contest and show prep, yet they still walked away wide eyed and grinning because of what they heard and experienced! The night that Jim and Rich first came was easily the second best chapter meeting that I can recall. I

would expect that by the time you read this, we will already have added at least one new member if not more. They’re hooked, and we reap the rewards. I thank each and every one of you who had a part in welcoming our new guests so warmly and hope that Jim, Rich, Pat, Rick, and George are barbershoppers for life!

NOW FOR THE “VIEW”

I think that in order for a behavior to become habit it needs to be continually reinforced. I feel that many in the chorus have actively tried to be aware of the interactions that take place nightly and have made positive impacts. Unfortunately, humans are creatures of habit, and old habits die hard. I have asked George to reprint my first two articles for this issue, and I beg you to read them again. I have reread them many times over the last few weeks, because I know that I have started to revert to some of the behaviors that I was not proud of, and I refuse to let that continue. If I’m not showing someone else the respect that I would want shown to me, I have to accept responsibility. It is **always** my choice to behave a certain way. It would be foolhardy to blame someone else for my actions. We always need to keep re-evaluating what we do and try to improve it. Please reread the articles and think about how we can make this a great experience for each and every member, every single night! I ask this for a very important reason.

I have asked the board for permission to create an ad-hoc subcommittee whose sole purpose will be to grow this chapter. I am firmly convinced that there have to be an awful lot of Jim Marrinans, Bill Flories, and Rick Greenops in Dutchess County. We have shown that once someone who enjoys singing experiences this wonderful hobby of ours, it’s almost impossible to keep them away. The conundrum is, how to get in front of these people, how to make it simple for them to come and get hooked, and finally, once they’re hooked, **we need to make sure they want to stay hooked!**

Over the next couple of weeks I will be asking for volunteers to be a part of this committee. I am looking for those who have a serious interest in growing this chapter. There will be a mission statement, which will clearly outline the goals of this committee, and an **open, completely tolerant**, sharing of ideas. At this point I have not given any thought as to how many people will be on the committee. I would rather wait to see who wants to be involved and hopefully include everyone. This will be a democratic committee that I will moderate only as necessary to keep a forward focused flow of ideas and activity.

Some food for thought: The population of the town of Poughkeepsie and the city of Poughkeepsie combined is 73,000. Of that 73,000 approximately 32% are males between the ages of 24 and 64. Do the math and you have 23,360 men, and that’s not counting the over-60 set which is hard to break out from the census bureau statistics. If only **1%** of these men could sing, that would mean 233 potential new members! That’s only Poughkeepsie! There are 295,000 people in Dutchess County. (See “View” on Page 5)

View (From Page 4)

Using the same statistics, that means 944 potential new members! OK, I realize that I am making some pretty outrageous assumptions here, but is it outrageous to think that we could find 20 new members in Dutchess County? I don't think so! That's why I think we need to find a way to expose what we do to as many men as we can.

That will be the goal of this committee and I am looking forward to achieving that goal. How nice would it be to pull five risers down every Wednesday night instead of having to decide between two and three?

Please see me if you are interested in being a part of this committee. If you are unable to participate but have some ideas to share, then I will take them! I only ask that you submit them as written (or printed) documents, as I will never be able to recall thoughts and ideas shared during the chapter meetings.

In closing, I sincerely hope that I have not offended anyone. That is not my intention. My mirror didn't tell me exactly what I wanted to hear, but I know it didn't lie either. I truly love this organization and the joy it brings me, my fellow barbershoppers, and our audiences. Whether it's the hundreds at the annual show, or the one woman at La Falces who lit up like a Christmas tree when she heard a quartet sing. She said it made her think of her dad and his love for music. Man, it just don't get no better than that! I want to see this chapter thrive. I want every single man to have that joy over and over again for years!

Come on, Lets Grow!

**Mirror Mirror, or
the View From the Back Row**

Reprinted from the issue of October 2006

I've thought many times about writing an article similar to this for the Newyorker Times, and each time have managed to talk myself out of it. This time I've decided to go for it. I am writing this based on my own observations and opinions, so please understand they are only that. If you feel they are valid, do with them what you wish. If you disagree, this will make wonderful fire-starter.

I've often wondered what it is that keeps me coming to chapter meetings, while at the same time it seems that there is little or no growth in our chapter, and although we've attracted singers for the holiday chorus and such, they haven't come back.

I think that I am probably pretty unique, in that I stopped singing in chorus in the seventh grade. I never sang in any other organized school setting, and until I was thirty-seven, I never sang anywhere but the car and the shower. I always loved to sing, just never had the nerve to go out and find somewhere to do it. When I did finally start singing it was at church (not much chance that someone will be critical there).

The first time I heard the Newyorkers sing at a local mall, I knew that this was something I had to do. I had no idea what "Barbershop" music was, and to this day couldn't tell you what distinguishes barbershop from any other four-

part vocal arrangement (I think it has something to do with the chords). I can tell you that the brain didn't need to know what the ears already figured out. This stuff sounded incredible! The energy, joy, and talent that was shown in that performance is something that I vividly remember to this day, and in spite of that, I can tell you I was scared out of my mind to attend my first chapter meeting.

I've talked about that meeting many times since then, so please pardon the redundancy, but that still ranks as the best meeting I have ever attended. One could argue that it was the thrill of something new that made it seem so special, and I'm sure that was part of it, but there was something more. It happened to be the first post-holiday meeting of that year, so everyone was probably excited to be singing again after a couple of weeks off. More than that though, was that every one in the room worked so hard to make me feel welcome. There was more impromptu quartet singing that night than any night since (or so it seems), and I was dragged into just about every one! Maybe the Christmas spirit was still lingering, or maybe it was a combination of both. I don't know, but I can tell you the camaraderie was palpable.

What's the point?

If someone were to come to their first chapter meeting this Wednesday night, would they have the same observation? Do *we* walk away from Wednesday night feeling like we just spent the last three hours with brothers, engaged in the one activity that we probably love more than anything else we do on a regular basis?

Here begins the view from the back row. This is not an attempt to toot my own horn so please don't take it as such. What I say next is meant to illustrate a point. I think that my lack of self-confidence is a well-documented fact.

If you were to hear me sing when I first joined the Newyorkers would it be fair to say that you might make some assumptions? My voice had some good qualities. I could carry a tune (most of the time). I had a pleasant personality that carried over in to my presentation. I had experience singing with a band at church.

Based on these observations it might be easy to assume that singing with the Newyorkers would be an easy assimilation for me. Yet you probably all know now that it was anything but easy. After three years, lots of practice, and lots of encouragement, I still panic when I sing with a quartet in front of the group or in public. Why do I keep at it though? For the same reason that most of you do: It is the most incredible feeling to be able to make such beautiful music with this gift that we've been given. If I stopped coming to chapter meetings I would lose the opportunity to do this on a regular basis, and I'm not willing to give that up. Are we as a group (myself included) creating that same feeling for every *member* and every *guest*? I can't help but think that if my first chapter meeting had been anything other than one that I attended, I probably would not have had the nerve or desire to come back.

I believe we have an opportunity to evaluate what we do constantly, and try to improve it. That applies to everything, not just singing. The way we conduct ourselves at every meeting says so much more (See "Mirror" on Page 6)

Mirror (From Page 5)

than just rushing to be the first to shake a newcomer's hand.

Do you have any idea how someone feels when they make a mistake and half the chorus turns around to look at them? Now imagine that that person already lacked self-confidence. We can't assume that because someone can sing, they are confident in that ability. Or how frustrating it is to ask a question, only to have 15 *directors* shout their answer all at once? We pay a director to come every week and direct us, but then at times, seem unwilling to take direction. Do we want to escape the daily stresses that consume our lives, only to find more stress and aggravation in the place where we seek refuge?

We are blessed with wonderful people who have wonderful gifts. Look around next Wednesday night and appreciate a director who is as committed to this chorus as any one of us. Appreciate and respect that commitment so that maybe the next time you disagree with something, you'll be less likely to vocalize it, and instead will respectfully share your thoughts after the meeting. Soak up the invaluable knowledge that is shared by an assistant director, who complements our director so effectively (oh, and by the way, sings with a champion quartet!). Understand that not every member has your ability or self-confidence. Support and encourage. Listen to John Haverkamp tell a joke. Close your eyes while any one of our quartets performs and just appreciate what it takes to do that. Expect the same when it's your turn. Grab someone who never quartets and ask them to sing. I can honestly tell you that if I wasn't forced to sing with a quartet over the last three years, I would still be sitting in the back row trying to blend in (and hating myself for doing it!). Revel in Rudy's never diminishing zeal for barbershop. Pick George Trigg's brain (you'll be there for hours).

More than anything else, make every Wednesday night one that a guest will never forget, and one that will make him **have** to come back for more.

There, I've said it. I've already looked in my mirror, and I know I have work to do. What do you see in your mirror?

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

Reprinted from the issue of December 2006

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 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. Just this week 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 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 impact 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 (Continued on Page 7)

Mirror (From Page 6)

front row. Smile back, and let it rip!

Happy Harmonious Holidays!

Singing in Tune (Part 4)

By Fred King, International Coach
From the PROBE website, by way of
Lake County Chapter's *Overtones*,
Al Ries, Editor

Breath control is certainly an important factor, and material is available to make it possible to learn or teach how to breathe properly. It's important to avoid flattening in particular because it is necessary to keep an adequate supply of air exerting pressure against the vocal cords. Wasting breath initially by uncontrolled attacks at the beginning of phrases or taking too little breath causes the singer to run out of air before reaching the end of the phrase. This will result in flattening.

Singing softly seems to cause special problems for many singers. They have the tendency not to energize themselves sufficiently, thus permitting the pharynx to collapse, eliminating the resonance and destroying breath support. This results in a lowering of tone.

To control this, have the singer show his upper teeth slightly when singing softly. This helps take the weight off the voice. An elongated movement of the jaw should be minimized. On the other hand, singing loudly with too heavy a tone quality also leads to flattening, as will excessive vibrato and tremolo. These last two do not allow the other parts to tune to the problem voice.

A quartet or chorus that fails to embrace the basic balance rules of volume relationships as written up in the singing category and the Basic Barbershop Craft Manual will sometimes produce a rough or dissonant sound. This impedes the singers' ability to hear good tuning. The dissonance also may be perceived as being out of tune.

Next part, we will touch upon other causes of flattening. Remember, there's a test coming. Actually, the test is given each time we have a chance to sing together. Next part, we'll get into more of the discussion of control aspects needed for good singing.

Six Things Every Director Wishes You Already Knew About Rehearsing

By Bill Rashleigh,
Society Music Specialist
From Lake County Chapter's *Overtones*,
Alvin W. Ries, Editor

1. For the chorus to improve, each man must have his own behavioral comfort zone, improve one aspect, skill, or attitude each and every time he sings.

2. Become emotionally involved in the music. The music does not need to be complex to produce complex emotions. Anything less than full effort will result in a less satisfying musical experience for you and your audience.

3. Listen, and extinguish comments while on the risers and during rehearsals.

4. Singing well takes a lot of exertion. Singing requires more concentration for a longer period of time than any other activity. Focus on the job at hand.

5. Skills take time to learn and more time to re-learn. The instruction is simple: Sing all the word sounds in proper balance, with proper tone, with perfect unity, while expressing them in a heartfelt manner.

6. Have fun! Like each other and share in the joys of making great music because you don't know if you won't be able to do it again.

Sing With Energy!

By Clare McCreary, Assistant Director,
Suncoast Chorus
From St. Petersburg Chapter's *Scoops and Swipes*,
Dr. Clare McCreary, Editor,
by way of Des Moines Chapter's *Harmony*
Overtones, Robert Uy, Editor,
and Worcester Chapter's *Key Notes*,
Roy Hayward, Editor

We keep hearing the phrase "Sing with energy," especially when singing a very soft passage. What do you have to do to sing with energy? The penalties of *not* singing with energy on a soft passage become all too evident—poor sound, loss of pitch, monotony. So how do you sing with energy?

It is hard to say which is more important, the muscle support or the mental and visual energy. You must look like you really mean it! In order to do that, you have to be able to mentally believe what you are saying in the song. At the same time, there must be a strong antagonistic action between the muscles of the diaphragm and the abdominal muscles.

You can make faces and gestures and be really into it, but without support, the soft sound would go flat and be weak, not just soft in volume. You can have great support, a tight belly, and meter out the air, but without the brain believing in what you are singing and reflecting that in your face and actions, the nice sound would come across as meaningless and boring.

So keep a tight belly—metering out the air so that the volume stays low. Form the vowels correctly—plenty of room inside the mouth with correct tongue and lip position. And be convincing with your face and body language. That is singing with energy!

The Chorus Singer's Job

By Jon Wagner, Director
Sun City Center Chapter's *Par For the Chorus*,
by way of Worcester Chapter's *Key Notes*,
Roy E. Hayward, Jr., Editor

The job of the chorus singer isn't to sing every word and note. The job of the chorus singer is to make sure that every word and note they sing is (See "Job" on Page 8)

Job (*From Page 7*)

perfect. It that means you only sing *10 notes* in a whole song, then that's what you need to do.

For a given individual, this could mean stagger breathing every 5 seconds so as not to get out of breath, or dropping out for a whole phrase to catch your breath, or only singing notes within a third of middle C, or whatever.

Do what you can do right and *practice the rest at home*.

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

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