

The Newyorker Times

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



New Series, Volume 7
Poughkeepsie, New York

Number 11
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An Apology to Our USPS Subscribers

By George Trigg

I goofed! For some reason, I neglected to put stamps on the copies of the October issue that were sent by USPS before I put them out to be picked up by the carrier. I realized it no more than 45 minutes later, but it was too late; they were gone. I fully expected that they would be returned immediately by the New Paltz post office, but no such luck. What is more, only a handful of them ever got back to me. Those I put stamps on and remailed. I have no idea what became of the others. They may have been delivered to the addressees with postage due, or they may have gone to the dead letter office.

If anyone did not receive his copy, I still have the file in my computer and will be happy to send a replacement. Just let me know and I will promptly send one to you.

Newyorkers Hit Top Ten in District Contests

Extracted from score lists posted on NED web

The Poughkeepsie Newyorkers chorus sang their way—just—into the top ten scorers in the NED chorus contest held in Providence on 28 October, with a score of 61.4%. Twenty-three choruses competed. This is an improvement over their last previous contest record, when they finished 20th out of 22 with a score of 58.1%.

The only quartet from the chapter that competed was Swing Shift. They finished 8th out of 28, with a score of 66.9%.

Mirror Mirror, or The View From the Back Row

By Bill Florie

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 in 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 (See "Mirror" on Page 2)

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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



- 19 Nov Performance at the Fishkill Health Center, Rte. 9D—arrive 1:30 p.m. for 2:30 performance
- 10 Dec Harmony for Hospice at Poughkeepsie Galleria—arrive 3:00 p.m. at Community Room for 4:00 performance
- 19 Dec Performance at New Hackensack Reformed Church, Rte. 376, Wappingers Falls—arrive 2:00 p.m. for 3:00 performance

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
29 NOVEMBER**

Happy Birthdays in November:

Carol Ostmark	6
Marie Miller	8
Elinor Haverkamp	12
Aline Dickstein	16
Steve Miller	22
Dick Schaffer	25
Macy Sherow	25

Happy Anniversaries in October:

Bob and Diane Chieffo	26
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Mirror (From Page 1)
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 prob- (Continued on Page 3)

Mirror (From Page 2)

ably 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 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 is it 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?

Worcester Concert on 17 & 18 November

Adapted from a flier

The Worcester Men of Song present "A Salute to Walt Disney," a barbershop harmony concert, on Friday and Saturday evenings, 17 and 18 November, at 7:30 p.m. at Worcester's historic Mechanics Hall. The program includes songs from "Beauty and the Beast," "Mary Poppins," "The One and Only Genuine, Original Family Band," "Pinocchio," "Song of the South," and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," and features the chorus and chapter quartets, with special guests straight from Main Street, USA, Disney World, the Humdingers—known in Disney World as the Dapper Dans. All seats are reserved; the price is \$20.00. Call toll-free at 1-877-MEN-SING, or mail to

Worcester Men of Song
P. O. Box 3234
Worcester, MA 01613.

The Cab Ride

Author unknown; taken from the internet
and published in Worcester's *Key Notes*,
Roy Hayward, Editor

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, and drive away. But I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself.

So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor.

After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked like no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knick-knacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my (Continued on Page 4)

The Cab Ride *(From Page 3)*

kindness. "It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you're such a good boy," she said. When we got to the cab, she gave me an address, and then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice."

I looked in the mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

"What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing. As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must

have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers," I responded. Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, and then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware—beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT YOU SAID—BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

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