

The Newyorker Times

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



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Poughkeepsie, New York

Number 9
September 2008

It's Convention Time!

By Michael Klein
NED VP, Membership Services

Yes, there was a big one last week in Denver, and there will be another one quickly following in Philadelphia, but let's talk about the one that really matters—the one that will be in Lowell, Massachusetts, on 24–26 October, the Barbershop Harmony Northeastern District Convention!

The City of Lowell and The Gentlemen Songsters invite you to join us on 24–26 October as we make the chords of harmony ring throughout the city. The hotels, the restaurants, the pubs, and especially the Lowell Memorial Auditorium are all eager to have you enjoy the city and share the music. The Barbershop Harmony Society is inviting all singers and music lovers to come and be part of the excitement and spirit that is part of our community. More than 1200 members of the Society, their families, and their friends will travel from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Eastern New York State, and the Eastern Seaboard of Canada! While many are coming to reunite with old friends and to enjoy the city, some are coming to watch the competition as quartets and choruses vie for the title of Northeastern District Champion. The competitions will be held at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

Yes, there are contests, but there are even better reasons to attend the convention. It is similar to the conventions that are happening for the Democrats and Republicans, where perhaps you already know who is going to win (or maybe you do not even care). Parts of those conventions will be trite and bombastic, or infomercial—imperfect at best. But can you imagine what outsiders would think about the individual parties if only the candidates (competitors) showed at the convention? There is marketing power that comes from numbers whether it be people or balloons. That is why we need YOU in Lowell. YOU are what makes the message a strong one. YOU make people notice that barbershop harmony is EVERYWHERE in Lowell. What if instead of 1200 people, we had 2100 people? Doesn't that become newsworthy? That's why we need YOU.

If there is any part of you that wants to see this Society grow, then YOU want to be there.

So what's in it for you? So much, that I will be reminding you every week from now until 10/23 so that you do not forget! For starters:

1. Hearing great barbershop harmony. You do like barbershop harmony, don't you?
2. Cheering on your friends' accomplishments as they take the stage with their quartet or chorus
3. What? No friends? Then you had better come make some. Start with me, and I'll help you from there (you can do better). Bottom line, I can not imagine a friendlier group of people.
4. Easy meals with your barbershop buddies, NEW FOR 2008 in the HQ Hotel Ballroom! BARBERSHOP BUFFET DINNER for Friday, BARBERSHOP BUFFET BREAKFAST for Saturday, BARBERSHOP BOX LUNCH for Saturday, BARBERSHOP BUFFET DINNER for Saturday; menus & special advance reservation pricing being determined.
5. Saturday afternoon, there is a 3 p.m. show 11 miles away with Vocal Spectrum and the Arlington Liberty Belles (Sweet Adelines) (info to follow).
6. Travel to nearby NH for TAX-FREE SHOPPING.
7. There are three nearby events (charities) that need ensembles to sing, so if you are not in a competition, and performing on stage is preferable to sitting and looking at one, you can perform during Saturday afternoon's Chorus contest. Let me know if this is of interest for your group.
8. Sunday morning Barbershop Gospel Mass at church in walking distance from the HQ hotel.
9. A city that is Barbershop Harmony friendly and WANTS you to sing in their business establishments.
10. Did I mention hanging around and singing with good decent people, that like what you like, barbershop harmony?
11. Will "those guys from the Boston Common" get another NED Championship?
12. Great museums, restaurants, and tours.
13. Karaoke for cash.
14. Other surprises; stay tuned!
15. Did I mention socializing and singing with good decent people, that like what you like, barbershop harmony? Please do not be one of (See "Convention" on Page 2)

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 of the
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 Yankee Division, Northeastern District
 Editor: George L. Trigg
 18 Duzine Road, New Paltz, NY 12561-1304
 845-255-9488; e-mail GeorgeLTrigg@alum.wustl.edu

Chapter Officers


President Stephen Miller
 VP, Chapter Development William Florie
 845-473-7027; e-mail wflorie@aol.com
 VP, Music & Performance John Hadigan, Jr.
 VP, PR & Marketing Dan Landa
 Secretary Scott Salladin
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 BOD Members-at-Large . Eric Dickstein, Richard Schaffer,
 Chris Schulze
 Immediate Past President John Hadigan, Jr.
 Youth Outreach William Standish
 Chorus Director Renée Silverstein
 Assistant Directors John Hadigan, Jr., Steve Hagerdon
 Chorus Manager Scott Salladin

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
 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 Bar-
 bershop Harmony Society



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

20 Sep Paid performance for Macy's at Poughkeepsie Galleria—arrive at 5 p.m for 6 p.m. performance. Uniform: formal WITHOUT jacket.

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

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

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
27 SEPTEMBER

Happy Birthdays in September:

Garry Ashdown	2
Bob Durand	2
Duke Chisholm	7
Diane Chieffo	26
L:ois Hitchcock	27
Angela Betscha	30
Barbara Booth	30
George Trigg	30

Happy Anniversary in September:

Steve and Joan Ross	28
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Directions
 By Renée Silverstein

BELIEVE

I'm going to make my contribution to this month's newsletter very short, but vital to the upcoming District contest—in fact, to all performances.

Barbershop music involves a lot of very technical aspects that we work hard to internalize to have them occur flawlessly when we sing. There is nothing technical about experiencing the music. Translated, that means it must be emotional, spiritual, and moving and tell a story that YOU are a part of. Once you become part of the story, so that you believe in the lyrics and the message, the story will never end.

Convention (From Page 1)
 “those people” that sits at home and complains that you do not go to conventions because “nobody goes anymore.” I can't change “nobody,” but I have a shot at getting you there. Be a part of the party! Treat yourself, your friends, and your family to some fun!

So now, you are thinking, sounds great, how do I sign up? I'm glad you asked.
 (Continued on Page 3)

Convention (From Page 2)

1. Complete a registration form (before 9/24 for best price). This can be done by a chapter representative on behalf of all chapter members and their guests. [Ed. Note: This is being done for members of the Poughkeepsie Chapter. See following article.]

2. Call hotel directly to reserve your room. While it may be tempting to look for a lower price, ask anyone that has done so in previous years; staying at the Doubletree Hotel (Headquarters) is the way to go. You park your car (free) and walk to the dressing rooms (Middlesex Community College) and the Auditorium. Other hotels may have lower prices, but you will likely have to park at the Doubletree garage anyway. Also, there will be singing and socializing until late hours of the night at the Doubletree. The more of us that congregate there, the more singing there will be. (You do like to sing, right? OK, just checking.) [Ed. Note: See following article for hotel listings.]

3. If you are going to compete, be sure to fill out a CJ-20 Form so that Cotton Damon can get your group a space. There is no cost to compete, but you must be a registered Convention attendee. Here is the link for Competitor info:

http://www.nedistrict.org/index.cfm?page_id=218&subpage_of=62

By the way, for those of you that like a good contest, there are at least five quartets that have a legitimate shot at the championship. All will have to do their very best to be in the top five. There is no sure thing this year (unless you ask Terry Clarke).

I know this is a long email, but you will get reminders and further clarification, and we will highlight different parts of the weekend in shorter messages in the days to come.

If you have any questions about the weekend, your first look for your fastest answer should be to go to www.nedistrict.org and click on "2008 Fall District Convention." You are also welcome to

email: GentlemenSongsters@Gmail.com
phone: 877.402.8354 (voicemail)
Instant Message: [lowell4harmony](#)

No questions? Then send in your registration today!
See you in Lowell!

Ed. Note: See following article.

Registration for Lowell

By Scott Salladin

I am now taking registrations for the competing chorus and for your family members to attend with you. The cost of the convention for all competitors in the quartet contest or the chorus contest is \$35 for the All Events Adult. For those people that just want to attend this contest the cost for the All Events Adult (non Competitor) is \$35, For those of you that are students (18 yrs old or younger with F/T Student ID) All Events is \$17.50. Children under 12 yrs old or younger enter free. Single Event Adult your cost is \$20, Single event Student \$10.

Convention Registration for the Early Bird MUST be in prior to Sept 17. After this date the price goes up \$10 starting Sept 25th.

Hotel Reservations can be made through the hotels:

Doubletree Riverfront hotel
50 Warren Street, Lowell, MA 01852
Walking distance to the Lowell Memorial Auditorium
978-452-1200 for reservations
Room Block Name: Barbershop
\$105.00 per night (+9.7% tax rate) as of 8/22

Fairfield Inn by Marriott
1695 Andover St., Tewksbury, MA 01876
Mapquest: 3.48 miles; 9 minutes from Lowell Memorial Auditorium
978-640-0700 for reservations
Room Block Name: Barbershop
\$88.00 per night (+9.7% tax rate) as of 8/22

Please let me know if you are attending and who will be attending with you.

New Yorker's Grandson Earns High School Honor

Adapted from article in *Dutchess Beat*,
issue of 20 June,
forwarded by Bob Chieffo

Brian Veltre, the grandson of New Yorker Rudy Veltre, one of the founders of our Chapter, was named salutatorian of the 2008 graduating class of Poughkeepsie High School. He is also a member of the National Honor Society, "Torch," and of the Science Olympiads, and is on the math team. In addition, he writes for the school newspaper, the *Pioneer Post*, and has played on the school tennis team for four years—three as a doubles player and the last playing singles.

He plans to study medicine at SUNY Albany, inspired by his mother, a nursing administrator. Science Department chair Gwen Saylor, who had him in her physics class, said of him, "Brian is a quick learner, a hard worker. Things come easy to him." The principal of the high school, Margaret Pineiro, said of him and the class valedictorian, Alex Harmuth, "I've known Alex and Brian since they began high school. The school is very proud of their dedication to excellence; they are not just students who 'do the books'; they are involved in other activities outside of class—they're good citizens. I believe they will both be successful at the next level, and I'm looking forward to following their success." Science teacher Bryan Woods, who had Alex for AP chemistry and Brian for AP biology, said, "Even though we know they're more intelligent than us, they never made us feel that way."

Rudy has every right to brag.



Musical Notes

By John Elving, VP Music & Performance,
Mount Rushmore Chapter,
as seen in that Chapter's *The Voice of Rushmore*,
John Elving, Editor

I came across an interesting article in *Choral Director* magazine just the other day that has some interesting thoughts that really apply not only to school, community, and professional choirs, but also to us barbershoppers. It's something that all too often we don't consider in our performances. The article started out by saying, "*Before the first note is uttered in a choral performance, impressions have already been made. The arrangement of the singers, their physical appearance, posture, and facial expressions—all of these elements communicate volumes about the character of the ensemble. And perhaps the most striking feature that the audience will key in on is the clothing a choir wears during a performance.*"

Hmmm—have we, any of us, thought very much about that? Sure we have our prescribed uniform which we all wear, but what about the way we present ourselves when that curtain opens or we walk on stage? And how often do we portray the wrong image when we spend time talking with each other, or we don't pay attention to our business at hand in some other way? Are our clothes looking fresh, or are they fresh out of the corner pile? Are we sure our clothes fit properly? *[Guilty!]*

Are we professional looking from beginning to end? The article goes on to say, "...*(you) are being judged from the moment you step on the stage and the image you present will color the perception of the listener, and affect what the audience hears.*" It's something that we all need to think about whenever we perform. Our chapter is usually paid in some way for our performance. That makes us professionals in one respect. It means that we need to take pride in being the best ambassadors for Barbershop harmony that we can possibly be. To do that it means that each and every time we sing, whether in rehearsal or actual performance, we need to work at being our absolute individual best.

How Do You Do It?

Excerpted in part from an article
"Remembering Sinatra,"
by Dennis McCarthy in *USA Weekend*,
and taken from Worcester Chapter's *Key Notes*,
Roy Hayward, Editor

This question was once asked by Steve Wynn (Casino/Resort owner) of his traveling partner while flying to Atlantic City. His partner answered, "Do what?" "How do you record a song?" Steve replied, wanting to know how the magic was created.

With a drink in his hand, he resisted at first, but then turned to Steve and said, "Take a sheet with just the lyrics. No music. At that point, I'm looking at a poem. I'm trying to understand the point of view of the person behind the words. I want to understand his emotions. Then I start speaking, *not* singing, the words so I can experiment and get

the right inflections. When I get with the orchestra, I sing the words without a microphone at first, so I can adjust the way I've been practicing to the arrangement. I'm looking to fit the emotion behind the song that I've come up with to the music. Then it comes together. You sing the song. If the take is good, you're done." [Sounds simple enough to me.]

This guy was *Frank Sinatra!* By the way, the method proved quite effective for him. Using this method he recorded "My Way" once, and then walked out of the studio.

Could this work for you? Maybe, or maybe not. Try it and find out. The worst that could happen is that you might have to learn the words before hearing the music.

Sing for Your Lunch

By Bob Chieffo
Photo by Liz Bunch

On Friday, 22 August, two former New Yorkers and wives were in town, Bruce and Clara Slack and Don and Liz Bunch. The Slacks have lived in Florida for years and were up north visiting friends and family. Bruce was an early New Yorker and Chapter bulletin editor. In 1964 he won the NED Bulletin Editor of the Year Award for the "Poughkeepsie Pitches," as it was known then. Although not actively barbershopping, he is a consummate tenor, always ready to float his part in a quartet.

Don and Liz Bunch live in North Carolina. They were also up visiting friends and family as well as doing some Maine coast sailing. Don sings lead and still barbershops with the New Bern Chapter in NC. He was very active in the Poughkeepsie Chapter and was president in 1981.

In Rudy and Eleanor Veltre's tradition, all were invited for pasta e fagioli (a.k.a. pasta fazule) at noon.

Let's see... three quarters of a New Yorkers' quartet... eating pasta e fagioli for lunch... sounds a lot like the old First Friday/Sing For Your Lunch Bunch at Aloy's of years past. Oh yeah, we need a baritone! Who can we get? Who loves Italian food and likes to sing in a quartet?



(L-R): Bruce Slack tenor, Don Bunch lead,
Rudy Veltre bass, Bob Chieffo bari

The meal was delicious and later we four guys went down to Rudy's rec room and sang some polecats. Good friends, good food, good fellowship and (reasonably) good chords. Can you ask for more?

Freddie King—Time Is Short

By David Calland
2008 JAD Executive Vice President
Forwarded by Alan Lamson

Freddie King has refused dialysis treatments and his time left with us is very short. Since his massive stroke, he has struggled and does not want to be on this Earth an not in control of himself. He has made the decision.

Kevin, his son, responded to my text message moments ago and said, "Thanks. Dad is comfortable so far. We are making some plans while we have this time. As usual, Freddie is in charge! K."

Please keep the King family in your thoughts and prayers. I will update as I get more information.

Alan commented, "For those of you who have had the pleasure to talk with, sing with, or be entertained by Freddie, you understand what a great loss this will be."

[Ed. Note: As of 1 September, no further information has been received.]

New Youth Membership Plan as of January 1 No More Student Classification

From the Society's Newsletter *LiveWire*, 18 July

Stop the presses! Effective January 1, 2009, per the Society Board of Directors, there is a NEW YOUTH MEMBERSHIP PLAN. The plan is this: There is no longer a student classification from this point forward. We have a new Youth 1 category that includes all men ages 25 and younger. The three key highlights of the plan are as follows:

- Join the Society for \$10, period (the \$10 covers the processing and enrollment fee, and materials sent to the new member).
- Each subsequent year remains ½ regular member dues until the year in which he turns 26.
- There is no longer a "student" classification. All regular members over 25 years of age pay full membership dues, and all senior members still pay ½ price dues.

Membership Matters!

From the Internet
By Dave Baker, not further identified,
by way of Mt. Rushmore Chapter's
Voice of Rushmore, John Elving, Editor

Many people think of recruiting as some kind of magical thing, but it's just basic marketing. Marketing can be hard work (which is why my boss has to pay me to do it), but it's not really that difficult if you create a plan and follow it through. Just for the record: creating the plan = "the easy part"; following it through = "the not-so-easy part." Case in point, my old chorus in northern New Mexico. I'd just moved there from Utah, from a town that had a chorus of 25-30. When I arrived in town, the chapter there had dwindled to 8 or 9 active guys. They often didn't have all four

parts represented at chapter meetings. Several in the chapter were just about ready to stick a fork in it. I was asked to direct the group, and I told them I would do it, but only if everyone would commit to recruiting some more guys to sing with the group. We knew that there were about 40,000 residents in the county, which we figured should be able to support a chorus of at least 30-40 members. In the past, advertising and other strategies had failed to produce any real results. Instead of trying to spend our way to new members, I proposed a plan of direct contact, leveraging the numerous church and social organizations in the area, to directly contact and personally invite musically inclined men to join us.

Looking in the phone directory, we found that there were upwards of 150 churches and congregations in the area. In addition, there were several organizations such as the Elks' Club, the Lion's Club, and so on that could be tapped for members. Our plan was to contact these churches and community organizations to target guys for recruitment. I should note that we had a few guys who had objections to contacting churches, for one reason or another. My argument was that, outside of school, church was about the only opportunity most guys had to sing in public. That seemed to overcome these members' concerns.

The plan went as follows:

1. Compile a List of Organizations. In a couple of brainstorming sessions, beginning with telephone directories and using our own personal contacts, we came up with a master list of target organizations, complete with names of organizations, addresses, and main contact numbers.
2. Get Each Organization's Musical Contact. We made up a contact sheet for each organization and called them all, introducing ourselves and asking for the name and number of the primary musical contact for the organization. Some had an official musical director, others had someone who was an unofficial point of contact. (We had a few who asked not to be contacted again. This was expected.)
3. Call Each Musical Contact. A member of the board contacted each organization's musical contact person. By using a prepared message (an actual script) we explained that we were recruiting for a men's chorus and were looking for referrals. We asked for names of 3-4 men in the organization who we could contact directly to invite them to join. (If the contact volunteered more than four, or fewer than four, we took as many as they gave us.)
4. Invite Contacts to Attend Open House. A board member called each contact given to us by these organizations, also using a script. We explained who we are, and extended a personal invitation to come to an open house. We also asked for the contact's mailing address and e-mail address so that we could send a reminder for the launch meeting.
5. Send out Printed Reminder. About a week and a half before the open house, we sent out a printed invitation/reminder to each of the contacts who volunteered an address. The invitation encouraged prospective members to visit the chapter website (which I had just completed) for more information about the group, where we rehearsed, and other information. We also had some music downloads on the site for those who wanted a

(Continued on Page 6)

Membership Matters! *(From Page 5)*

“jump start” on learning some music.

6. Personal Reminder. The day before the open house, a board member personally called each interested contact to remind him about the open house and to offer a ride. We also reminded the contacts to visit our website for more information about the event (and directions to the rehearsal hall) and about the organization. For those who had given us an e-mail address, we e-mailed a map to the rehearsal location.

7. Conduct Open House. The open house was planned to maximize the social and musical experience. Everyone was greeted at the door and given a name tag and a packet of music. We gave new attendees lots of chances to sing, and provided high-quality refreshments and a well-scripted pep talk. We handed out some very simple arrangements of familiar songs and read through them as a group. Finally, we challenged these guys to come the next week. And you know what? A bunch of them did. At our next concert, we had 25 guys on the risers. That means that with just one open house, we nearly tripled the number of guys singing with the group.

I'll add a few details here to make things interesting.

First, we made certain not to call this event a “guest night.” We didn't want guests; we wanted members. Second, and this is the part where I get flamed, we made absolutely sure never to mention the word “barbershop” at any point in the contact scripts. We mentioned the name of the chorus, and if asked, we let the guys know that the group “sings a variety of a cappella music, including gospel, barbershop, and doo-wop,” but we were careful not to say “barbershop.” Why is this? We had found, through asking around, that many in the area had a negative reaction to the word, either because they'd been exposed to “bad barbershop” or because of stereotypes in the media. We wanted to give the guys a great singing experience first, get some goose bumps going and then tell them, “There, you just sang barbershop.” And that's exactly what we did. Was it a “bait and switch”? You could make a good case for a yes or a no. But that's marketing.

Unfortunately, I had to move to yet another state about six months later, so I never got a chance to shoot for the 30–40 mark. But when I visited the chapter last month, they were still going strong. Most of the guys we had invited to that one open house were still singing with the chorus.

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