

August 2004

HARMONOTES

The monthly newsletter of Kansas City's

Heart of America Chorus



The second-oldest chapter in the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

*Drawn by Harmony...
Bound by Friendship...
Striving for Excellence!*



HOA: RIDING HIGH AFTER LOUISVILLE! PREPARING FOR THE "NEXT STEP"



by Marty Oldehoeft, HOA President

There will be plenty said in this issue about the Louisville convention. Indeed it was great to be back on the international competition stage. We certainly learned a couple of valuable lessons. Lesson one—we indeed had the right to be there. We deserved to be in the hunt. We jumped off the porch with the “big dogs” and ran with them. Lesson two—even with the excellent scores we posted, we ran in the middle of the pack. WOW! The competition is getting tougher. I would submit that we still have a few more lessons ahead. A good “next step,” I believe, is on a personal level. We have had some of the best outside coaching the society has to offer. We have heard “get open-stay open” and “tell the story” on Tuesday nights enough that it now only takes a reminder to make it happen (most of the time). So the personal level commitment, although not my idea, is to spend more time with the learning media at home and to make every effort to record yourself on Tuesday night, then listen and improve by the following Tuesday. I say we make a genuine effort to raise our level of performance to a new high by October in Omaha. ♥

Chorus Photo by David Wagner - Provided by Proctor Productions

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HARMONOTES

...is published by the board of directors of the Kansas City, MO., Chapter of SPEBSQSA, Inc., a non-profit organization. Unless accompanied by a byline, all articles have been written by the Editor and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the officers and members of the chapter. Space will be made available for opposing points of view.

Heart of America Chorus

The Kansas City, MO. Chapter S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.

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The utmost care was used in preparation of this newsletter.

However, should you notice erroneous copy, please let the Editor know! Comments/submissions may be made to:

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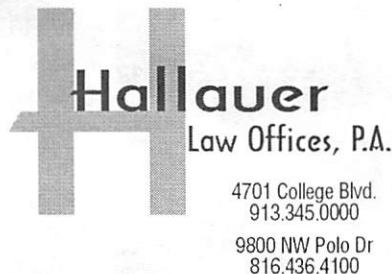


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Heart of America Chorus

ELEVEN-TIME Central States District Champion!

CHAPTER QUARTET CHAMPIONS

- Rural Route 4 - 1986 International Champion**
Don Kahl (tenor), Calvin Yoder (lead),
Jim Bagby (bari), Willard Yoder (bass)
- Gentlemen of Note - 2001 International Seniors Medallists**
Rod Rule (tenor), Jon Gathright (lead),
Rich Huyck (bari), Monty Duerksen (bass)
- HyPower Serenaders - 1948 Central States District Champion**
Don McPherson (tenor), Ben Franklin (lead),
Bert Phelps (bari), Dale Warrick (bass)
- Gamboliers - 1952 Central States District Champion**
John Doolley (tenor), Eddie Schliebs (lead),
Orval Wilson (bari), Jimmy Byrnes (bass)
- BMA Gamboliers - 1957 Central States District Champion**
Barney Wasson (tenor), Eddie Schliebs (lead),
Orval Wilson (bari), Harold Robinette (bass)
- The Kippers - 1962 Central States District Champion**
*Ken Gabler (tenor), *Tom Taylor (lead),
John Goldsbury (bari), Don Page (bass)
- The Four Kippers - 1966 Central States District Champion**
*Ken Gabler (tenor), *Byron Meyers (lead),
John Goldsbury (bari), Gil Lefholz (bass)
- The Morning Times - 1974 Central States District Champion**
Dave Snook (tenor), Roger O'Dell (lead),
Steve Leone (bari), Stan Grossman (bass)
- Corner Quartet - 1981 Central States District Champion**
Don Kahl (tenor), Lance Heilmann, (lead)
Steve Leone (bari), Stan Grossman (bass)
- Harmony Spectrum - 1982 Central States District Champion**
Gene Bowers (tenor), David Krause (lead),
Jim Bagby (bari), Willard Yoder (bass)
- Special Touch - 1984 Central States District Champion**
*Rick Kready (tenor), David Krause (lead),
*Bud Clark (bari), Matt Moore (bass)
- KC Connection - 1986 Central States District Champion**
Rod Rule (tenor), Wayne Lankenau (lead),
Rich Huyck (bari), Larry Wilson (bass)
- 12th Street Rag - 1994 Central States District Champion**
*Rick Kready (tenor), Mark Fortino (lead),
John Fortino (bari), Keith Schweer (bass)

OTHER CHAPTER QUARTETS

- 12th Street Rag - 2000 International Semi-Finalists**
*Micah Jeppesen (tenor), Mark Fortino (lead),
John Fortino (bari), *Barry Moore (bass)
- Arpeggio**
Marlin Weidler (tenor), Rick Dunaway (lead),
Ralph Tallmon (bari), Don Newman (bass)
- Crosstown Four**
Dale Neuman (tenor), Gordon Coleman (lead),
Ron Abel (bari), Val Putzier (bass)
- Gentlemen of Note**
Mike Mathieu (tenor), Jon Gathright (lead),
Rich Huyck (bari), Monty Duerksen (bass)
- Grandstand**
Rob Mathieu (tenor), David Krause (lead),
*Jeff Veteto (bari), *Adam Veteto (bass)
- Mother's Guys**
Rob Mathieu (tenor), and Mike Mathieu (lead)
Rick Mathieu (bari), Joe Mathieu (bass)
- New and Used Parts**
Jerry Garrard (tenor), Mike Neff (lead),
Grant Hunget (bari), Keith Schweer (bass)
- Sound Alibi**
Tom Etfson (tenor), Jerry Garrard (lead),
Shawn Jeffries (bari), Darrell McCune (bass)
- Sounds Like Treble**
Niel Johnson (tenor), Rob Varney (lead),
Al Fehlauer (bari) and *Bill Bay (bass)
- SureFire!**
Carter Combs (tenor), Mike Neff (lead),
Grant Hunget (bari), Don Young (bass)
- Tone-Henge**
Bruce Wenner (tenor), Dan Henry (lead),
Jim Bagby (bari), Keith Schweer (bass)

*Member of other chapters

LAST LOOK AT THE ARENA

by Jim Bagby, aka Ye Olde Arm Waver

It was an exhilarating, gratifying, exhausting, amazing, emotional, teeth-clenching, cheer-til-you're-hoarse, surprising and fulfilling week in Louisville.

By now you've voiced and heard highlights and lowlights from many members of the HOA family and followers. Many of those involved the victories by St. Charles, *GOTCHA*, *Vocal Spectrum*, the CSD's other potent showing—including our *12th Street Rag* finishing eleventh, just 7 points behind 10th-place, *3 Men and a Melody*—and of course the "A" scores by HOA.

You'll read about all those topics elsewhere in this issue of *Harmonotes*, and undoubtedly in future issues. You know we'll be discussing where we go from here, particularly as a competing chorus—and I've already startled some (and encouraged others) by saying we're at a crossroads and due for some hard decisions after coming in 13th.

But what I'd like to share with you from Louisville is one of my favorite moments, because it involved virtually all of the HOA delegation who made the trip. It was instigated by the man who made the week work the way it did for Kansas City, Chorus Manager Extraordinaire **Vince Perry**.

When he found that a CSD pep rally was impractical, because the AOH and HOA rehearsals and logistics would not mesh, he came up with an alternative plan: a surprise drop-in on St. Charles. We decided we should let **Jim Henry** know, rather than burst into a rehearsal at an inopportune time, so I contacted him and said we'd only be there a few minutes. He responded, in effect, "if you're crazy enough, sure!"

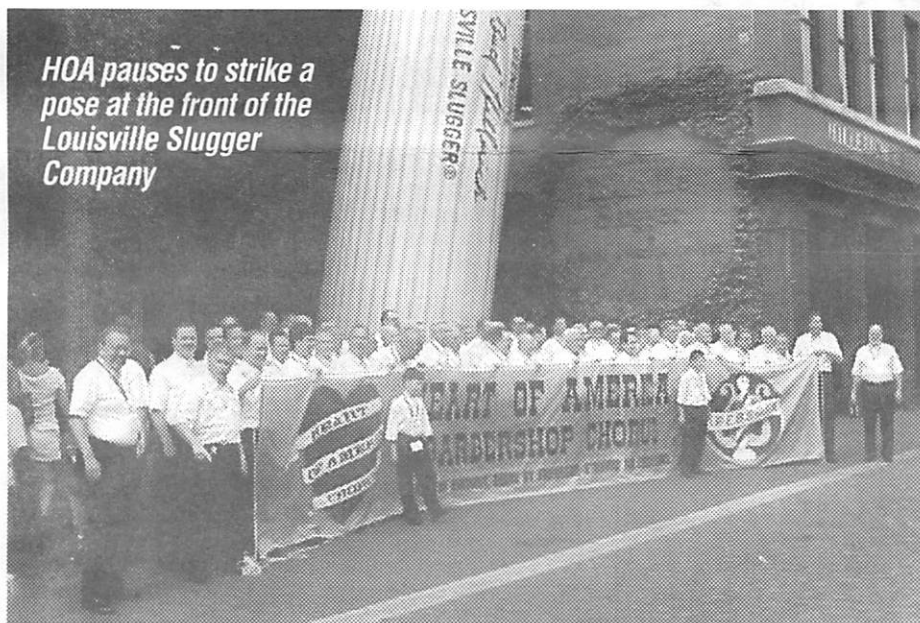
Thus we found ourselves aboard three yellow school buses Friday morning, leaving the HOA hotel, for a stop at the Louisville Slugger Museum—pictures behind the HOA banner and a couple of songs—then on to the AOH hotel.

Chorus members and families filed in carrying our banner and armed with special red, foam hearts Vince had made that said: **Good luck AOH! from The HEART 2004!**

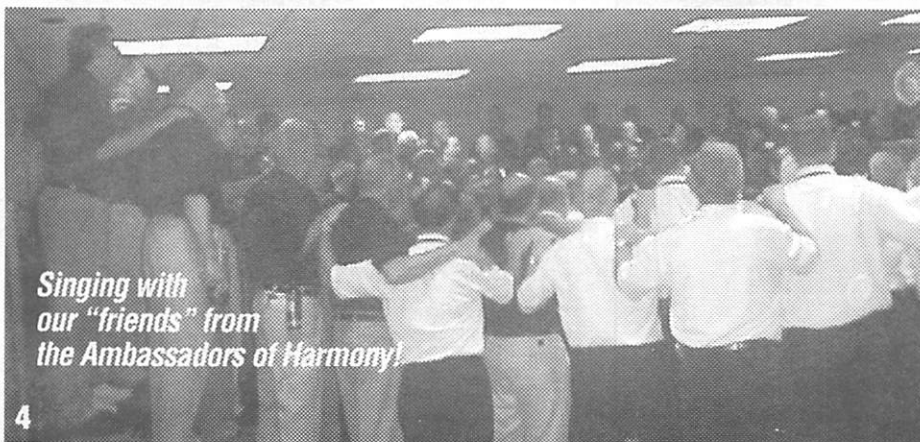
We tossed 160 of those into the mass of humanity that was the St. Charles Chorus, and it turned out they weren't totally surprised to see us, because they reciprocated with rabbit feet key chains in many hues.

Then Jim directed all 240 of us in "Friends."

It sounded wonderful. I have no idea how it looked. ♥



HOA pauses to strike a pose at the front of the Louisville Slugger Company



Singing with our "friends" from the Ambassadors of Harmony!

INTERNATIONAL MEMORIES

by John Fortino

Of the 11 times that the *12th Street* has competed at the international competition, this year was by far the most memorable. Many might believe that our 11th place finish would be the reason why. And indeed, the accomplishment was part of what made it so memorable. However, the journey getting there, what we learned along the way as well as other things that happened that week are of greater significance in our minds than our placement.

First, at the beginning of the year up until the March show, most of our energy was focused completing our new album and not on contest. While studio work is a great tool for honing one's vocal, and interpretative skills, it does little to help you with your stage presence and learning new skills that make the music come more alive. Shortly after the show, not only was I blessed with starting a new job (which was great but you know how demanding starting a new job can be) but also the union at **Barry's** company, SBC, was threatening to go on strike. Rehearsals were hard to come by, and the quartet lived from week to week wondering if we could do the next show or even compete at prelims. After prelims, a point came when Barry's company would not allow him to leave town because the strike could happen at any time. At the end of May, I was told I would have to go to Australia for 2 weeks in June for business, and Barry was sent to Sedalia, Mo. for strike duty. The quartet met for rehearsal in a little hotel room in Sedalia and seriously considered not competing in Louisville. We wondered if the strike would end and if we could be prepared enough to compete under the circumstances.



Photo Courtesy of **Matt Bostick**

However, blessings come in strange packages. The situation forced us to do something coaches have been trying to get us to do for a long time. Duet, duet, duet. We would realize later that dueting is what saved us, and we believe that this is an important tool for improving going forward. There were only 2 rehearsals with all 4 of us in the month of June and they happened the week before we left for Louisville. From April until we left for Louisville, we only worked on the first set. The goal was prove that we could perform at the top 10 level. As you know, we finished 9th the first night.

In Louisville the quartet was the most relaxed and had the most fun stepping on that stage than we have ever had before. We believe it had a lot to do with the fact that our HOA brothers were right there with us. While I know it has been said many times before, you have know idea how much love is felt and how wonderful it is to have your own chorus and their families there with you as you make the journey. This year was just so much more FUN because you were there.

And if having all of you there wasn't enough, it was a blast for **Mark** and me to get to share the stage side by side with 80 other great performers in our chorus. Especially for me having been out of it for some time, it was an exciting and heart-warming experience. When all of us are standing together, you can feel the drive to be the best. I couldn't be more proud of our 13th place finish. It means that our chorus is back where it should be, on the international stage.

Finally, it should be no surprise to anyone that for Mark and me to be on the same stage competing with our dad, our sons and our brother-in-law was a highlight of the week. If I could wish that each one of you could be blessed with such an experience, I would. Music has always been a part of our family, but it was truly exemplified that week competing in the *Heart of America Chorus*. ♥

LETTERS TO THE HEART



Dear Jim,

It has been a long time since the Heart of America barbershop show in Kansas City, but I wanted to tell you that was the most enjoyable concert Rosella and I have ever been to, and we've been to a lot of concerts. I bought four of your CD's and gave three of them away to friends that I knew would appreciate it. I play the other one over and over in my pickup and also here in the house. I especially like "I Have Seen the Light." I have played that song for our small group, my Sunday School class, our Elder board and anyone else I can get to sit still and listen to it. I know you pour your heart into barbershop music, and I appreciate the quality and the intensity that are the result of your hard work. I also appreciate the selection of songs that you do. May God bless and multiply your effort and heart that you give to music.

With appreciation, **Richard Schrock**, Garden City, MO

Congratulations on an impressive contest performance in Louisville. We are proud to be HOA supporters and we look forward to your future accomplishments. Keep those chords ringing!

In harmony, **Helen and Dick Shores**

Dear Jim,

Please accept this small token of my appreciation for singing at Jim's funeral Mass. I thought that maybe 10 or 12 of you might make it, but I was totally overwhelmed by the numbers that showed up. You were absolutely fabulous, as always, and we had dozens of compliments on your singing and your choice of songs. You truly made his send-off complete and so SPECIAL.

I can't tell you what it mean to me to have you there, and I'll never forget your kindness. And I want to thank you for giving Jim 10 of the happiest years of his life. He treasured your friendships and making such beautiful music with you was such a joy for him. He was so proud to be a part of such a wonderful group of talented gentlemen.

I intend to come to as many of your performances as I can, so I hope to keep in touch. From the bottom of my heart I thank you once again and I love you all! Keep on singing and may God bless you in abundance.

With love and gratitude, **Betty White**

Congratulations on your fine work in Louisville. Even after being away for over ten years, I still feel like an HOA'er. My Tampa name badge sports the red heart with KC on it all the time. Mike Mathieu was nice enough to give my wife one so she can do the same. Although I am very proud of you and what you have done after being out of International for 6 years, I didn't want you to beat Tampa by 60 points! With regular mailings of Harmonotes, I am able to maintain my emotional ties with you. And now with AOH sitting out for two years, you shouldn't have to hope for a wild card. I did get to catch a little of one of your Lobby Concerts and thoroughly enjoyed your rehearsal on Friday afternoon. Again congratulations on an excellent job, and expect to see you in Salt Lake City.

Because of being introduced to our hobby through you, your work ethic, and love, I have to drive 134 miles one way to get to the same kind of guys. I have tried some other groups, but once I got the International bug, I can't get over it. So its your fault that I drive 2-1/2 hours and get home after midnight every week.

In harmony, **John Pennington**, Lead,
Presentation Program Manager/*Heralds of Harmony*

GENTLEMEN OF NOTE HANG UP THE PITCHPIPE

by Rich Huyck, Monty Duerksen & Jon Gathright



After a lengthy period of grieving at the passing of our Tenor **Rod Rule**, we have come to the conclusion that the *Gentlemen Of Note* was too special in our hearts and minds (and those of our supporting families) to continue with any replacement. We have decided to retire and allow the *GON* legacy to stand as a fond and treasured memory of all the wonderful experiences we had as brothers in harmony.

From the early beginnings as *Four Friends* and through the six rewarding and fulfilling years as *Gentlemen Of Note*, we had the good fortune to entertain literally thousands of people with better than average barbershop harmony and good cheer and humor. The quartet was also reasonably competitive in the Senior Quartet division of the Society: we will always remember the 3rd place finish in the 2001 International Se-

nior Quartet Contest in Jacksonville. But the most enjoyable times we had together were in the opportunities to entertain people and leave them with smiles on their faces.

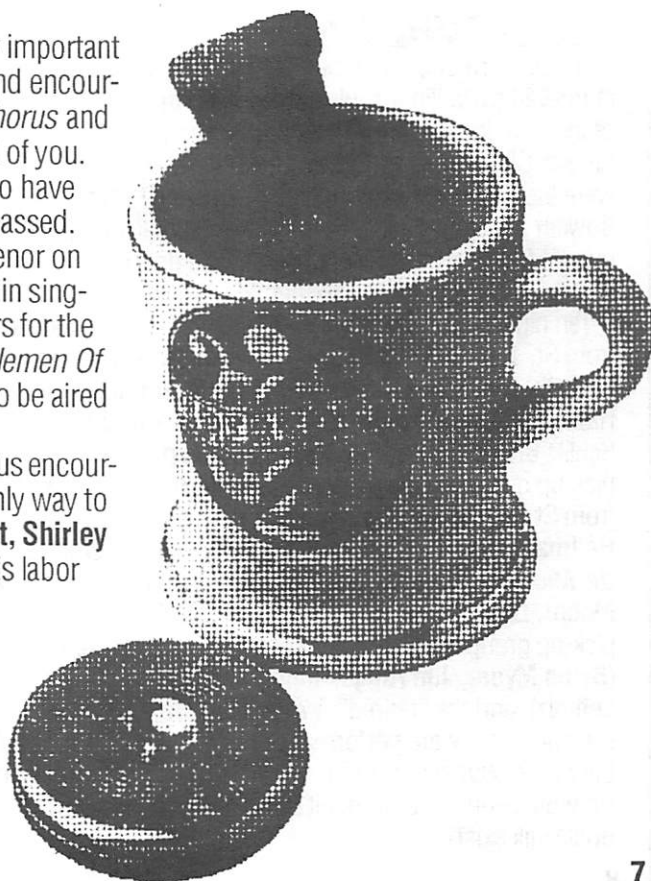
One of the most memorable times we had was being asked to sing on stage with the *Oak Ridge Boys* at their Branson theater. When we completed our number, one of the Oak Ridge Boys commented to the audience: "Well, I guess we won't do our acapella number now!" After the show was over, many in the audience found us in the lobby where we did an impromptu 20-minute program for a very enthusiastic crowd. Hard to top that one!!

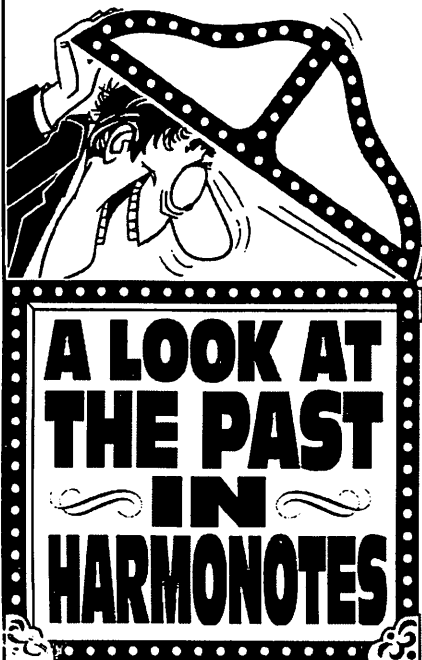
As we reflect on the years that *GON* were together, a very important factor in our success is the obvious good will, support, and encouragement we received from the members of the *HOA Chorus* and family! We always felt the warm love and support from all of you.

There were also some fine gentlemen in the chorus who have helped us to complete some of our obligations after Rod passed. **Carter Combs** and **Tom Elefson** have provided sparkling tenor on several occasions. And **Mike Mathieu** has done a fine job in singing tenor with us on the HOA show in March, as mike testers for the CSD Prelims contest in April, and for our last gig as *Gentlemen Of Note*. Introduction of a recipient of an Extreme Makeover to be aired nationally in October 2004.

We want to thank all of the HOA family for their tremendous encouragement and support over the years. And there is no earthly way to completely thank our wives: **Sandy Rule**, **Dessie Gathright**, **Shirley Duerksen**, and **Eileen Huyck** for their loving support of this labor of love. ♥

The most enjoyable times we had together were in the opportunities to entertain people and leave them with smiles on their faces.





By Wade Dexter, Editor Emeritus
jedexter@mailstation.com

Category; **David Leeder**, former director of the Honolulu and Tucson choruses and a certified Presentation judge; and longtime HOA coach **Bob Calderon**, co-designer of staging for the seven-time International champion *Vocal Majority* and other championship choruses.

THIRTY YEARS AGO: OCTOBER, 1969

Thirty-eight members of the *Heart of America Chorus* journeyed to Joplin on July 18 to sing on the charter show of the new Joplin chapter, which was sponsored by Kansas City. Other performers included on the program were the *Digits*, **Percy Franks** (on the piano?), **Dan Bowser** as emcee, and as a special treat, the *Travelaires*, a quartet from western Kansas (the article doesn't say where. Anybody remember them?)

Ten nights later, the guys from HOA joined contingents from St. Joseph. NOJOCO (now known as the Overland Park Chapter), Lawrence, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Harrisonville, and even New Orleans at a party at the Schlitz Brown Bottle. Entertainment was provided by a pick-up quartet made up of chorus directors (**Byron Myers** from St. Joseph, **Mike Michel** of NOJOCO, **Lance Heilmann** from Lawrence, and HOA's own **Don Webb**), the *Mid-Ameri-Chords*, the *Digits*, the old *Royalaires* (**Arlo Moore**, **Don Thorne**, **Bob White** and **Bob Gall**), another pick-up group consisting of present and former *Kippers* (**Byron Myers**, **Jim Riggs**, **John Goldsberry** and **Gil Lefholz**), and the "retired" *Merry Mugs*. To top off the evening, there were performances by the HOA chorus and the *Pony Expressmen* of St. Joe. Anybody recall this event (or would you rather forget it?) Does the Schlitz Brown Bottle still exist?

TEN YEARS AGO: AUGUST, 1994

Plans were under way for the annual HOA retreat, scheduled for September 9-11. The event was to be held at the Mount Conference Center in Atchison, Kansas. Leaders included **Bill Rashleigh** from SPEBSQSA headquarters in Kenosha, a certified judge in the Singing

FORTY YEARS AGO: MAY 15, 1963

Got a quick response to my request for information about the old Kansas City Suburban Chapter in this column of the May *Harmonotes*. **Warren Edmonds**, veteran Kansas City Chapter member and 1960s editor of *Harmonotes* (now a member of the **Frank Thorne** Chapter), had this to say about the old Suburban outfit: "As the secretary of that chapter, I believe I can fill in some background. The chapter was started in 1961 or early 1962. Most of the original charter members were barbershoppers from the Kansas City, Independence, and Kansas City, Kansas chapters. The Independence and Kansas City, Kansas chapters did not exist at that time.

The chorus director was the late **Don Page**, who was also the bass in the *Kippers* (quartet). Don had been a member of the Kansas City Chapter and had sung in quartets in the chapter. When Don dropped out of the *Kippers*, he was replaced by **Gil Lefholz**, and the quartet became known as the *Four Kippers*.

The Kansas City Suburban Chapter met at the Antioch Shopping Center north of the river. There were many good voices in the group and the chapter surprised many in the district by coming in (in) fourth place in the 1962 CSD fall contest. When Don page left the chapter to pursue other interests, the group had difficulty obtaining a director. **Arlo Moore**, **Russ Craig** and **Bob Tracy** took turns directing the group, but it became difficult to hold the chapter together. The chapter finally faded away, and the majority of its members drifted back into the Kansas City Chapter.

The Suburban Kansas city group was a woodshedding bunch, some of us seeing it getting light in the east before heading out for home. That's barbershopping at its best.

"**Morris Rector** was in town singing in a quartet doing the *Music Man*, which was playing at the Starlight Theater."

Does anybody have anything to add to Warren's account? How about that quartet that Mo Rector was singing in? Was it an organized foursome? If so, what was its name? Or was it just a pickup quartet of local singers? ♥





TONE-HENGE HILLBILLIES

by Ol' Dan (Henry)

The Greater Ozarks Barbershop Chapter calls Bella Vista, Arkansas home, but draws from nearby Bentonville, Rogers and numerous other communities. This is the only part of Arkansas that is included in the Central States District. It's obviously a gorgeous area, and the hospitality of its rapidly increasing populace is equally outstanding.

Many well-known Central States barbershoppers have retired in the area, and are singing in the *Pride Of The Ozarks Chorus*, **Jim Nugent**, **Gale Demaree**, **Bob Frankenfeld** and **Chuck Scherz** to name a few. *Tone-Henge* sang with these guys and a lot more on May 22nd. That's when they put on their annual show in Bentonville. Frankenfeld directed the great-sounding chorus, and the chapter's five quartets added much to a really fine presentation!

The Noise Boys, headlined the show, and *Tone-Henge* was happy to play 2nd banana to these 2001 district champs. We learned that this was probably the final performance by the *Noise Boys*, and made *Tone-Henge* proud to be a part of the historical event. Of course individual members of the quartet continue in others, including **Jeff Veteto**, who is now belting out a mean baritone with our own **David Krause** and **Rob Mathieu** in the new 4-some everybody loves, *Grandstand*.

The Bagby's daughter, son-in-law and grandkids live in Rogers so the weekend offered a wonderful visit for **Jim** and **Joann**. **Ol' Dan** got to visit a Channel 4 retiree who came to the show, and **Bruce** and **Keith** found out they can blow up balloons in a porcelain room that measures 3 feet by four while keeping them dry! Whatta hobby! ♥

SOUND ALIBI TAKES A TRIP!

Editor's Note: Darrell McCune was nice enough to pass along these great photos of his recent jaunt! I'll let his captions, at the bottom, do the talking. Thanks, Darrell!



From Top to Bottom: Here are some photos of *Sound Alibi* having a little fun on our Louisville trip. We traveled in style in **Brian Seydlitz's** RV. I also met up with an old barbershop buddy of mine, **Mike Esser**. Mike used to sing bass with me in "Sound Alternative" quartet in Ottawa back in the 70's and 80's. He and his son (*shown second from top*) were once again singing in the *Ambassadors of Harmony* chorus after being out of the chorus for several years. I was with Mike when they announced that AOH had won the chorus contest. I really felt I was at the right place at the right time at that moment. *Sound Alibi* got to sing for Mike and his family on Sunday morning and even sang "Old St. Louie" with him (*Third photo*). Finally, I threw in a picture of the young **Fortino** cousins just for fun. ♥



BUT, I WAS FOLLOWING ALL THE RULES!!!

by Bob Rutherford

Well, gee whiz, I was watching my diet, exercising, quit smoking over 6 and a half years ago, no history of heart problems in family, and had a complete physical with treadmill and sonogram of heart last July. So, why am I looking at ceiling tiles while being wheeled down the hall from the emergency room to the cath lab? I mean, after all, I've been following the rules pretty closely. I'm a little heavier than I'd like to be but my doctor doesn't think it is an issue yet. What is the deal?!?!

My wife **Jane** wants to classify the 'event' as a serious 'wake up call'. I like to refer to it as a clear picture of 'reality'. How does one go from being two thirds through his normal Tuesday morning workout routine and 3 hours later wake up in a recovery room of the St. Joseph Hospital Cath Lab? The answer to that question is a dose of 'reality'.

Okay, what caused this event that turned into a heart attack? There was a little plaque that had built up in one artery (the left anterior descending artery to be specific) which broke loose. The doctor believes that it may have caused the artery to bleed causing the blood to start clotting around the loose plaque (or something along that line) thus eventually blocking the artery and then causing the heart attack. Oh, yes, the doctor believes the plaque may have been the result of smoking and of course had been there for over 7 years.

So the 'reality' of the situation is a heart attack can happen just about any time and with little or no warning.

Now comes the good part, and if I might be allowed, with words of advice. The doctor strongly believes I would not have survived had I not been in fairly good physical shape (they had to 'jumpstart' me twice, once in the ER and once in the Cath Lab). And, the heart (though injured) will make a 100% recovery. In other words no permanent damage. Again, due to being in good physical shape.

Anyone see where I might be going with advice? So, watch that diet (and weight), exercise (you don't have to body build, just exercise at least 3 time a week for 45 minutes to an hour), don't start smoking, or quit if you are, don't drink too much (just after Tuesday night rehearsal only) and lastly SING at least 5 hours a week. You may not avoid a heart attack but you sure will have an excellent chance of survival.

And lastly fellows, I am truly humbled by the caring shown by this chorus via visits, cards, Emails, phone calls and even balloons (in addition to the one they did to open the artery, angioplasty). I have never been so touched as I was by the phone call Saturday morning during your warm up. So from the bottom of our hearts (Jane and mine), THANK YOU for being so concerned and caring. The HOA family is absolutely the greatest.

Thank you, thank you, thank you..... ♥

KEVIN HUYCK...ALIVE AND WELL

Editor's Note: Wade Dexter was nice enough to send the following information he found while reading the July issue of the Chord-Inator, the bulletin of the Minneapolis, MN, chapter, edited by Dr. Hardin Olson.

Kevin Huyck and his wife, **Janet**, live with their children, **Avery Elizabeth** and **Randall**, in Apple Valley. Born in Las Cruces, NM, he finished high school in Kansas City and attended the University of Missouri. He is a chef and a Food Service Director.

Kevin's father exposed him to barbershopping at an early age and as a result, he sang with the KC Barbershop Chorus from 1976 to 1985. In addition, Kevin has performed in community theatre and is a member of the Rosemont United Methodist Church Choir.

A fellow choir member, Commodore **Jerry Pittman**, mentioned that he was a barbershopper and invited Kevin down to the JCC. Kevin jumped at the chance to get back into the Society with a chapter with a promising future. He sings a fine baritone. ♥

*Another Editor's Note: Wade went on to state, "Kevin wasn't very active anymore by the time I joined HOA in 1983, so I never got to know him well, but some of the older members, one in particular, ought to remember him." As soon as I read that, I scratched my pointed head and called HOA's **Rich Huyck**...and confirmed that Kevin is indeed the oldest of his children. Thanks for sharing, Wade!*

HEARTBEAT HIGHLITES!

by Sharon Oldehoeft,
2004 Heartbeat President

Just a few reminders of coming events. September will find us at **Dessie Gathright's** home for a pot luck on the 14th. We will be meeting at the church at 6:30 p.m. to car pool to Dessie's. Bring a covered dish to share and join us for a fun evening. Drinks and table service will be provided.

A silent auction is planned for November. Please save your "treasurers" and donate them for the auction. Remember, that item you are tired of will be new and treasured by someone else.

We give a special Thank You to **Mary Jo Miller** for generously providing and decorating HOA visors for our Louisville trip. She is a creative gal!!

Hope you are having a wonderful summer. See you in September. ♥

MUSICAL NOTES

by Keith Schweer, Music Vice President

The last time the *Heart of America Chorus* competed on the International stage was 6 years ago, 1998, in Atlanta, Georgia. We've had a few down years since then, but now we're back where we belong—competing at the International level. And it feels great! I had forgotten what it felt like to be on that stage.

We had a terrific rehearsal on Friday and, as we started out Saturday morning, you could sense that this was going to be a great day for HOA. The front row met early to get our attitude working. We are HOA! The chorus rehearsed for a while—feels pretty good. We broke for lunch—got made up—got dressed. Did I just feel a couple of butterflies flying around in my stomach? Reconvene with the chorus—go over a few things. You can feel the excitement starting to build. You can see it in each man's face.

Get on the buses for the ride to Freedom Hall. Chorus pictures, one with the trophy (wouldn't you like to win that thing some day?) After standing around for a while because of intermission, we are taken to the warm-up room. We're told we have 15 minutes here, but after about 5 minutes, we're told, "it's time to go." But, Jim wouldn't let them rush us. We had our prayer and began that long walk to the stage. Climb the stairs—get on the risers—line up—get your windows—check your uniform—BREATHE. 8,000 people on the other side of the curtain. **Ev Nau** says, "Welcome back." BREATHE! Everyone's encouraging each other. We hear the chants—"HOA, HOA, HOA". Jim asks, "Are you ready?" We all nod—more butterflies. BREATHE!! **Dave Labar** says, "Representing the Central States District, under the direction of **Jim Bagby**, the *Heart of America Chorus*!!!! ♥





"NEWBIE" THRILL IN LOUEY-VILLE!

by Carter Combs

Chorus Photo by David Wagner - Provided by Proctor Productions



Wow, whatta week! I have been trying to figure out just what to say about my first-ever chance to compete at International, and so far, what I've got is: "Wow, whatta week!"

As a long-time barbershopper, I'm used to competing in quartets, and even directing choruses at district contests. I figured "no big deal, it's just another contest!" Well sure, and the Superbowl is just another touch-football match in the park.

Now, I've been a spectator at several Internationals, and know all about the excitement of watching some newcomer quartet surprise the audience (and themselves) by making the semis, or even the finals. And I've sat in tears as a fine chorus tugged my heart-strings with a tender ballad, and jumped to my feet after they raised the roof with a rousing up-tune. And then would say to myself, "I wanna do that...with the right bunch of guys, I know I could do that!"

So I have to tell you, you are that right bunch of guys!

Thanks to the "old pros," I knew exactly what to expect. As we went through the pattern, my mind would click "Yep, that's just how **Jim** (or **Mike** or **Keith** or **Vince**) described it." There were no surprises to distract us, so we could concentrate on telling our story.

Thanks to the "new guys," we had real energy, enthusiasm and vitality. During rehearsals I was constantly gratified and often amazed at the commitment of our newest members, as they learned not only the words and notes and moves, but also sought to integrate everything from the most basic techniques to the finest finesse.

Thanks to our coaches and motivators, I knew we belonged on that stage, that we had the right skills to do ourselves proud, and that we have the promise of growing and improving our craft for the next go-round. I'm already excited about Salt Lake City! *Wow, whatta week!* ♥

CANDID PHOTOS BY MATT BOSTICK ►

A: "Spliced" photo of *Heart of America Chorus* gathering on Friday morning of Louisville convention week in front of Louisville Slugger Museum; 120-foot-tall carbon steel bat weighs 68,000 pounds! Chorus sang two songs at this **Vince Perry**-arranged "photo op." **B:** HOA lining up for Friday morning lobby concert at HQ Galt House Hotel East. **C:** Tag-singing group at HOA Executive West Hotel Saturday night led by ebullient **Yoders** in AIC jackets, **Wes** (left) and **Calvin** (right). **Mike O'Dell** is identifiable to Calvin's right, and **Marlin Weidler** peeks around Wes. To Calvin's left is **Frazier Brown** of Phoenix, who was competing in his record 25th straight international quartet contest, and **Dick Irvin** is to his left. **D:** HOA in competition (visible from left) **Shawn Jeffries**, **Rob Varney**, **Dick Irwin** and **Don Young** with suitcases made by Don. **E:** **Jim Bagby** got to be part of 50th anniversary tribute to 1954 champion *Orphans* with (from left) **Gene Cokecroft**, **Kenny Hatton** and *Orphans* bari (singing bass) **Pete Tyree**. Here they are singing "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi" on the Saturday night show. **F:** HOA delegation on one of three buses, headed for "surprise" drop-in on AOH. **G:** **Al Higgins** in front of "The Big Bat"—an exact scale replica of a 34" model designed by **Babe Ruth** in the early 20's.



LOOKING AHEAD...

by Mike Neff, Associate Director

Wow! We returned to International competition and placed 13th out of 22 competing choruses. Not bad for our first time back, and we certainly had good scores, with an overall average of 82.8 percent.

So what do those scores mean anyway? The combined scores from all the judges for both songs totaled 2484 points out of a possible 3000, which computes to our 82.8 average.

If we look a little further at the category scores by song below, we scored highest in Presentation on both songs and lowest in Singing. Now if you're like me, you're thinking "we've had all kinds of coaching on singing and good vocal production. Why weren't our singing scores higher?"

Song	Mus	Pre	Sng	Song Score	Song Average
<i>Auld Lang Syne</i>	418	419	411	1248	83.2%
<i>Look Me Up When You're In Dixie</i>	408	424	404	1236	82.4%



I'll get to the answer to that question in a moment. But first, let me say that I think HOA is singing better than we ever have. I'd also be willing to bet there are pointers to be learned from our Louisville contest experience on both songs. The singing scores averaged out, by song, to 82.2 for *Auld Lang Syne* (411 score divided by five judges) and 80.8 for *Dixie* (404 score divided by 5).

Our coaches have told us we can sing at the mid-high 80's level. It's not always consistent, but we can do it. So then the questions become "how can we do that more often?" and "what could we have done better in Louisville to make that happen?"

There are three key areas that will improve our overall singing as we move ahead.

Breathing – think about the function of a breath in any song. It's a moment of release for the listener, a place of action for the singer and the transition spot between phrases. The breathing in any song is just as much a piece of the musical "puzzle" we assemble as the words and notes are.

Now consider how many times we've talked about active breathing and what a song "asks for" from the performer. There are places in all of our songs, not just the contest songs, that ask us to give them more emphasis, more action, more energy, more expansion. See the word "more" repeated? We do an okay job breathing, most of the time. But what would happen if we worked on breathing with a higher level of focus? Not more time, but more focus. Imagine what COULD happen, and how much better we'd be as singers, and consequently how much better the overall chorus sound would be. Not rocket science, is it? It just takes discipline—in warmups, in polecats, in repertoire, in your individual practice, in performance.

Freely produced, open, resonant sound – HOA can produce a huge sound, when we sing correctly. So, how do you know when you are singing correctly? **Jim, Carter, Bill Biffle, Don Kahl**, myself and many others can all stand in front of the chorus and ask us to sing better or give us tips on how to, but how do YOU know if you are actually singing better? And how do you reinforce that you are singing better, outside of a Tuesday rehearsal?

(Continued on page 15) →

(Continued from page 14)

Further, do we remember to do what has been previously asked of us when we come back the following Tuesday, or does our leadership have to keep revisiting things that we have covered before?

I am convinced that every member is capable of listening to himself, reinforcing good singing skills week to week and identifying areas where he can sing with more focus, sustain a phrase longer, take a more active breath or balance with the ensemble to a higher degree. But, the guy out front can't make us do that. It's up to each of us as individual singers. And a tape or mini disc recorder is a big help.

Attention to the plan - just for a moment, forget completely about the Music and Presentation categories and think about how mood, emotion, tone color, dynamics and inflection affect singing and the Singing Category. Assuming that we are breathing properly and producing a free, open, resonant sound like I mentioned above, the other nuances in singing are the "icing on the cake."

How beautifully do you sing the phrase "and we'll have the mem-ries of times we knew, the mem-ries of friends like you?" How joyfully do you sing the passage "where I live I haven't got a cabaret, but we have a lot of fun there anyway?"

Ok, so you think you do these things at an acceptable or even highly successful level. But how do you KNOW? And more importantly, if something can be improved, how do you identify it and do you know how to improve it? Again, think "recording."



I don't think there is a man on the risers who isn't aware of these things or how to improve them. All it takes is the time and discipline to do it. I'm not at all suggesting that we go to a three-hour rehearsal, or rehearse twice a week, or change anything major to achieve these goals. I believe they can be done simply with commitment and discipline. If we can do these things individually, I guarantee our Singing scores, and consequently, our overall rank, will improve in Salt Lake City next summer. I hope you agree! ♥

TIP OF THE HAT

1. **Brooke Meyers** for his work putting the new tuxedo additions together.
2. **Vince "Mother Hen" Perry** for all his work keeping the chorus informed, ordering and passing out T-Shirts, taking care of convention registrations, Hotel Reservations, collecting money for chorus photos and doing every thing, big and small, a Mother Hen does to get us to contest.
3. **Ron McIntire** for handling the chorus contest photos.
4. HOA Music Team. Where would we be without them?
5. All the *Heartbeats* who participated in the HOA sendoff June 22.
6. **Chuck Ames** for making sure the chorus risers got to practice venue at Shawnee Mission West High School June 17.
7. **Phil Veltkamp** for getting the new repertoire learning CD's to the members in Louisville and to those unnamed guys who burned the CD's and learning tapes.
8. To the mathieu ladies and others who helped collect money for the Saturday night dinner.
9. To the 82 HOA chorus members who worked so hard to take us to 13th place.
10. To **Bill Biffle**, **Don Kahl** and **Dwain Brobst** who came in to provide expert coaching in the runup to the contest and to **Rosemary Calderon** for developing the choreography for "Look Me Up When You're in Dixie." ♥





Heart of America



AUGUST-OCTOBER CALENDAR

- Aug. 1-7** Harmony College, Missouri Western State College
Aug. 8 *12th Street Rag* at Church of the Resurrection
Aug. 22 HOA Music in the Park
Aug. 28 HOA Volunteers at Worlds of Fun
Sept. 7 **Bill Biffle** Coaching
Sept. 24-26 HOA Retreat, Atchison, KS
Oct. 8-10 CSD Fall Contest & Convention, Omaha, NE

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