

WHAT picnic-related item is Vince Perry carrying? See page 7!



Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire

Heart of America Chorus

CALENDAR

- Sept. 6 -** HOA Guest Night
- Sept. 16-18 -** 2006 HOA Retreat
- Sept. 24 -** Leavenworth's Annual Show w/*Vocal Spectrum*
- Oct. 7-9 -** CSD Fall Convention, Des Moines, IA
- Oct. 18 -** HHS Joint Rehearsal - HOA Meeting Hall
- Nov. 7 -** HHS Joint Rehearsal - Mission Mall
- Nov. 17 -** Greg Lyne Coaching Session
- Nov. 20 -** HHS Joint Rehearsal - Location TBA
- Dec. 3 -** Holiday Harmony Spectacular featuring HOA and the KC Chorus of Sweet Adelines

September 2005 Volume 05 - Issue 9

HARMONOTES

The monthly newsletter of Kansas City's
Heart of America Chorus

The second-oldest chapter in the
Barbershop Harmony Society



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

C'mon, Guys, Do I Ask For A Lot?

by Jim Bagby, HOA Chorus Director

I know summer is not even over, but I've decided what I want for Christmas. I'm only going to ask you for one thing—just one. Doesn't that seem reasonable? Nope, not a Harley, like I usually ask for (and it hasn't done any good!). Not a pony, or a medal in Indianapolis. Not a million-dollar contract, or even a hundred-dollar contract. In fact, this won't cost the chapter a cent.

Are you ready? I REALLY want a 100-member chorus for the holiday show. If I were greedy, I'd say 110, since we're so close now. We have 90 HOA singers in place for the fall district contest, even with adoption of strict attendance requirements. And we have more than a dozen regulars on the sidelines, unable to be here that weekend—or in a couple of cases, unable to meet the new standards.

Now look around at the semi-regulars and inactives, not to mention new members and the recent guests. Heck, we ought to have 120. No, that's not what I'm suggesting. Just the first 100-member performing chorus in at least 50 years. Just once before I'm too old to wave an arm...

SPEAKING OF THE HOLIDAY show, the lineup of eight-parters with the Kansas City Sweet Adelines is just about set. And the songs we'll do on our half of the show will be seven of these eight (and may be decided by the time you read this):

- Caroling, Caroling
- Mary Had a Baby
- Hanukkah Medley
- Happy Holidays/Holiday Season Medley
- It's the Most Fattening Time of the Year
- Do You Hear What I Hear?
- I'll Never Pass This Way Again
- I Have Seen the Light



With the Dec. 3 absence of *12th Street Rag*, doing a show that weekend with Florida relatives, the "Light" soloists will be **Grant Hunget, Mike Neff and Jerry Garrard**—a pretty powerful trio! But with some trepidation, I'm going to try something new: open auditions for the three solo spots and three backups on "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

If you're interested, regardless of your voice part, grab the music and/or learning CD, check the fairly wide range of the song and contact me. The tryouts will be in early September. My reservation comes from knowing we won't be able to use all the good singers likely to appear, so come knowing that will be the case...

(continued on page 2) ♦

Music In The Park!

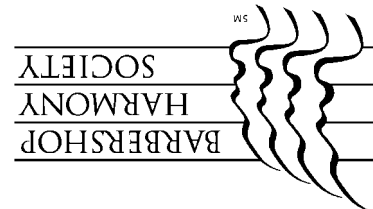
Photos on Pages 10 & 11



Panoramic view taken by Ron McIntire

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of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America
Kansas City Chapter, Inc.
210 West 100th Terrace - Apt. #204
Kansas City, MO 64114-4431



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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All chapter officers and quartets are expected, and chapter members encouraged, to contribute their ideas on a regular basis.

The editorial staff reserves the right to deny publication of material deemed inappropriate for *Harmonotes* and to edit all submissions for reasons of space and clarity (grammar, phrasing, and spelling).

Permission to reprint articles is granted to barbershop chapters as long as the author and *Harmonotes* are acknowledged.

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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Chapter meets at 7 p.m. each Tuesday night, at:
St. Peter's United Church of Christ
110th & Holmes - Kansas City, MO 64105

The HOA Board of Directors meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of the month. Place TBA. Chapter members are welcome!

HOA Website: www.hoachorus.com
Web Address: webstaff@hoachorus.com
Chapter Telephone: (816) 221-7888

(Continued from front cover)

ON ANOTHER important topic, I'm grateful to the music team and all participants now that we've reinstated individual vocal coaching in the 9:30 p.m. breakout sessions—and especially to lead coach **Darrell McCune** and organizer **Carter Combs**. More than that, I'm excited about what we can accomplish with this program, particularly if each member follows up on the suggestions of the coach.

In my sessions, and according to feedback I've heard from other coaches, one of the areas many of us need work on is breathing and breath management. We have not emphasized that recently with the entire chorus as much as we used to—or as much as we probably should. It's a basic that demands constant reinforcement, and I pledge that the directing staff will pay more attention to this key fundamental.

Meanwhile, be aware that you can improve your own breath support by making sure your singing posture is good: rib cage comfortably high, shoulders rolled slightly back, chin parallel to the floor, feet spread shoulder width, elbows slightly bent and jaw totally relaxed. Then breathe as if you had a belt full of noses. Do NOT allow the chest or shoulders to rise with any breath. Work to feel the expansion below the rib cage, all the way around, as you inhale, and the sensation of lift as you exhale.

This is very much an oversimplification. There are handouts available for those who want to do more individual work. And it probably goes without saying that the better shape you're in, the more likely you are to be able to support a strong column of air that produces the sounds we make. Aerobic exercise of any kind will increase lung power. And reducing and strengthening your waist line will help you take those quick, active breaths we're always extolling.

FINALLY, many thanks to Associate Director **Mike Neff** for laying out the Aug. 23 and 30 meetings, and running the first one while I was fishing and barbershopping in the Black Hills.

Here's to the start of football season (go, Chiefs and Sooners!) and to holiday wishes coming true early. ♥

I'm One Lucky Edihtur

by Todd Anderson, *Harmonotes* Editor



As *Harmonotes* editor, I'm to be vigilant when it comes to grammar, punctuation, etc. Trouble is, I excelled far more at Art than English. As a youngster, I would draw for hours—loved it. But diagramming sentences and such? Ugh. Surely those mind-bending exercises exist in a level from *Dante's Inferno!* I was constantly getting busted for drawing *Spiderman*®, rather than listening to English instructors.

Recently, when I learned that *Harmonotes* placed fourth in the International online bulletin contest, I immediately thought of those who helped make that remotely possible. Guys like **Jim Bagby**, who obviously DID pay attention to his English teacher. Now retired from the Associated Press, Jim has patiently rescued me countless times during the proofing phase.

And knowing what a strong barbershop bulletin should contain? I've enjoyed learning from Wade **Dexter** about what our bulletin has lacked in order to rank higher. Even **Ron McIntire** has chimed in with super ideas for articles.

Harmonotes rankings are a direct result of those of *you* who offer your assistance, articles or photos. It'll be interesting to see how our publication measures up in future competition. Stay the course! ♥

President's Corner

by Marty Oldehoeft, Chapter President



The chorus received a card from our Central States friends in Fremont, NE. (*The Pathfinder Chorus*). Kind words of congratulations from them with each member signing the card. All the names looked very similar to a doctor's signature. Guess those Nebraska folks don't want their names forged. Next to one of the names, very legible, was a reference to Ps. 104:33. What wonderful words to live by. "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." ♥

Attention All Members Of HOA!

Consider directing your tax-deductible contributions to *your very own* charitable organization...HOA! As you can see, it has already started. Certainly not everyone has the financial ability to participate, but consider that this is an opportunity to know how your charitable dollars are being used. *Be included in the list below, and proudly support your chorus...HOA.*

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We gratefully acknowledge your generosity to the Heart of America Chorus

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Donors will be listed in HOA's monthly bulletin and the March 23, 2006 Annual Show program. The Heart of America Chorus is a 501(c) (3) organization.

Checks should be made out to: HOA
Give to any HOA Board member or mail to:
HOA, c/o Dale Neuman

816 W. 121st. St. · Kansas City, MO 64145-1011
Donors are listed from June 30, 2005 through July 1, 2006

Musical Notes

by Keith Schweer, Music Vice President



At our last Music Team meeting, we decided we needed to resume individual vocal coaching and other educational and learning activities aimed at the improvement of each individual member of the chorus. We have already started and plan to continue to utilize the 9:30-10

p.m. time period for these purposes. We'll do individual vocal coaching where a several members of the Music Team will take three chorus members at a time and work on the basics of vocal production—posture, breathing, relaxation, etc. Also, during this time, we'll have classes on the basics of music theory, as taught by **Dennis Kinghorn**. This is a class Dennis has taught before and we've had requests to repeat. In addition, there will be repertoire reviews for new members and others who would like to brush up on songs we don't always get to every week in chorus rehearsal. The rep reviews will be conducted by one of our directors. Also planned are Presentation reviews that will be led by members of our Presentation Team where they will look at video tapes of sections of the chorus and help us do a better job of visually presenting the songs that we sing. All of these activities are geared toward helping the individual member improve his skills as a performing member of HOA. If each member can improve his performance skills, the chorus as a whole should improve as well. If you know of other things we could be working on during this time frame, please let me or any member of the Music Team know about it. Thanks to Assistant Director and Tenor Section Leader **Carter Combs** for handling the scheduling of all these extra activities. ♥

Barbershop History Quiz



by Mark Axelrod, editor of "Blue Chip Chatter," Teaneck, NJ.

1. Where does the term *barbershop harmony* come from?
2. What were barbershop's two major showcases from the 1880's through the 1930's?
3. What caused barbershop's demise as a major form of popular music?
4. Why was barbershop harmony important to **George Burns, Bing Crosby** and **Al Jolson**? (You'll find the answers on page 15)

Rewind!: Busy Months of July and August

by Marlin Weidler



Here it is midway through the month of August and *Rewind!* is in preparation for fall contests. We have gone so far as to schedule and even keep some coaching sessions. That is scary! We had scheduled several in May and June but with illness, etc., we had to cancel every one of them at the last minute.

We were unable to practice for close to two months with J.B. being ill. The doctor said it was a viral and that all J.B. could do was not sweat it out. One thing led to another, including sweating so much when mowing lawn that he finally decided to get a second opinion and was put on medication, which healed him up in time for Internationals. We now have to stay healthy for October fall contest both for the quartet and the chorus. As a quartet together at Internationals –it was fun singing on top of the Mormon Office Building, which was like 26 stories tall (what a sight) and the people thoroughly enjoyed the music. They asked if we were singing in the finals. What a compliment! But we explained that we were there with the *Heart of America Chorus*, which was competing on Saturday. It was fun being in SLC as a quartet and singing for any and everyone.

The weekend following Internationals we performed at the Three Trails Camp for the Salvation Army in Independence. There were kids who attended a camp from the previous week and they had a supper for the families on that Saturday evening. We performed for half an hour. There were even some barbershoppers in the audience. Of course we made sure to invite them to our chapter meeting. On July 31 we were invited to be one of the three quartets to sing at the annual concert in the park. It was not as hot as previous years and the bugs were not as loud. On the Aug. 10, Dick and I took a long extended lunch hour for the quartet to sing for the Smithville Chamber of Commerce. *Rewind!* would like to thank Don Young for providing us the contact information. Thank you, Don! There were about 50 people there in attendance and they were very responsive and seemed to enjoy our half hour long performance.

At the time this article is being written, *Rewind!* is getting ready for the White Eagle Festival down in Augusta, KS. We will be getting some coaching from Lance Heilman and then perform on stage for the public. There will be more about this festival in the next *Harmonotes*. ♥

What Do YOU Want From The Des Moines Contest Experience?

by Mike Neff, Associate Director

Whether you are new to the chorus or a veteran member of HOA, you most likely have a personal goal for the fall contest in Des Moines.

For some of us, that goal will be to attain scores that crown us champions of the district again. Some will want scores that are improved over the scores we achieved in Salt Lake City. Others will want to feel a sense of improvement in their own personal performance. And there will be those that want to create a memorable performance of beautiful music for our supportive CSD audience.

Let's face it, all of those goals are achievable. So how do we achieve them? I think we achieve our goals by bringing our own personal best to the contest stage. And how do we do that? Well, the road to that goal is as different as the goals for each of us are different.

So my own approach is this – I know the thing I want to focus on is making the best vocal sound I can, but at the same time, not looking like I am trying to. I want to have great vocal production become second nature, so that the audience sees me performing, and making the music come to life. The audience doesn't see me "singing"...they see me PERFORMING. Make sense? That may not be your personal goal, but it's an example of one that is achievable.

We've heard lots of talk about commitment and how it impacts our goals. I won't suggest any specific rule or approach to "commitment" because it varies for each of us. But let me propose that there's an "IT in commitment."

So, find out what the "IT" is for you, and set that as the goal for your own personal performance in Des Moines. What a wonderful day it will be if we all achieve our personal best on Oct. 8, 2005. ♥



Taping Tips!

by Mike Neff

- First, make sure your recording device is turned ON (you'd be surprised!)
- Test the recording by holding the microphone at various spots and listening to what kind of sound is recorded...is it too soft, too loud, or distorted? Adjust where you hold the recorder based on what you hear.
- If the pitch of the recording doesn't sound like you'd expect it to, make sure the speed setting on your recorder is at the normal setting. Sometime the speed setting is turned too high and the sound recorded sounds like the Chipmunks! And conversely, it miiiiiiiiggggggghhhhtttttt beeeeeeee tooooooo slllllloooooowwwwww.....
- Listen to your recording BEFORE turning it in to your section leader: What do you hear? Note accuracy? Word accuracy? Are you breathing in the right spots? Is the sound you are producing pleasing to your ear? Is it musical? Does it sound strained, tight, thin, or lacking in support? Or does it sound smooth, free, open and full?
- Remember that the taping process is a tool for both YOU and your Section Leader to help get the most out of your voice! Compare a tape early in the process and then tape yourself again after the retreat. You'll be amazed at the progress you'll make! ♥



Harmony Foundation Report For August

by Jim Porter



Note that we will have our raffle each time we meet in our regular location. Half of the proceeds is designated to Harmony Foundation. You can, of course, give money directly to Harmony Foundation anytime we are together, just tell me at the time of your intentions and I'll direct your gift 100% to the Foundation.

As of Wednesday Aug. 24: In the past month, our chapter has raised \$188 for the Harmony Foundation. So far this year (since Nov. 20, 2004), we have raised \$1,919. Last year at this point, the total raised was \$1,916. In our best year (2003), the total raised at this point was \$1,987.

Thank you all for your interest and participation! ♥



Tone-Henge

by Ol' Dan

Tone-Henge has a tip for any plebian 4-somes that might be of a mind to ask us ancient generation folk for sage advice based on experience. None of our newly formed quartets have **actually** asked us

for any kind of advice as yet, let alone **sage** stuff, but here 'tis; free, if not sage.

Tone-Henge and the *Henge-ettes* recently enjoyed a seafood dinner at one of the finer eateries in the KC metro. Shortly after the meal, we adjourned to a rehearsal. Really. What happened next was amazing! We actually spent more time singing than solving chapter/society/world problems!

Now we're not advocating that problem-solving be abandoned, but something about that seafood dinner before the rehearsal led to some sevenths we haven't created since the Neolithic Age!

So our tip is; "Seafood and singin' go together. Keep eatin', and keep singin' and it's helpful to keep breathin' in and out." ♥

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to the following chapter members!

Sam King	September 5
Thom Tisdall	September 5
Jerry Garrard	September 6
John Braden	September 8
Rich Huyck	September 10
Walter Bates	September 13
J.B. Witham	September 14
Ron Abel	September 15
Sam Solomon	September 16
AJ Meier	September 23
Phil Veltkamp	September 23
Frazier Allen	September 24

Harmony College Report



by Brian Marston

First of all, I am so thankful and appreciative to the Heartbeats for selecting me as the 2005 recipient of the Orval Wilson Memorial Scholarship to attend Harmony College. I felt and still feel truly honored. *Thank You!*

I started off to Harmony College on Sunday at 4:30 (that's a.m.), as I would be driving all the way to Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. I rode with **Tom Millot**, a past member of the Kansas City Chapter. Our trip was quite interesting as I listened to Tom's stories and woodshedded a couple of tunes with this veteran AHSOW member. We also listened to a couple of old CD's of Tom's and I was intrigued to know that quartets existed before the 1950's! We arrived in Columbus about 5 o'clock in the evening on Sunday. I was barberstar-struck as I saw names, faces, and medals just walking around casually. I knew I was in for an amazing experience when I realized I would be surrounded by the Best of Barbershop for the next whole week!

I began to meet people immediately and make new friends like my Hawaiian roommate, **Kowika**, a fellow first-timer. I quickly noticed I was on the floor with about 20 guys from the *Next Generation Chorus*. I figured that I would have to switch out of the Harmony College Chorus and sing with some "younger" singers (no offense old-timers). My week was off to a good start and I was ready to begin my classes—that's why I came to Harmony College in the first place, wasn't it?

Session 1 was Arranging I with

Tom Gentry. It was great to pick a guy's brain like this for two hours a day and see how he thinks. After all, his arrangements won *Power Play* their gold medals. I was pleased that I was able to keep up in the class since I've been taking Music Theory classes at Longview College. By the end of the week, we were able to arrange/woodshed parts to a melody of a song. It was a good start to my day and my arranging career.

Session 2 was *The Next Generation Chorus* directed/taught by society's Music Specialist, **Rick Spencer**. I don't know if this qualified as a real class or not because I had way too much darned FUN! I had a blast in this class with so many guys around my age. People that heard us on the Saturday Night Show said that we could hang with the Westminster Chorus. It's probably all because I was on the front row.

Session 3 included History of Barbershop II with **David Wright** and Tune It Or Die! with Society Director, **Joe Liles**. I learned so much in both of these classes that it would be way too much to write it all down. So, I won't bore you, but I think these classes are a must and would recommend them to any barbershopper going to Harmony College.

Session 4 included Convention Videos with Rick Spencer and Tag Singing with David Wright. Once again, I don't think these qualified as classes because it was too much fun, but I did learn some great new tags. I also got to sing some tags with the best of em, like **Jim Kline** and **Chris Vaughn**, the bass and lead from *Gotcha!* I was bustin' tags with these guys until 5:30 in the morning on Saturday. Pretty Salty!!!

Sorry, **Charles Ramirez**, there were no beanies this year either.

Just 3 red, green, and blue ribbons for the "First-Timers." All "First-Timers" had to sing in their appropriate colored chorus. I sang with the Red Chorus that sang a parody of "Down Our Way" that included jokes about walking too far across campus and not enough ice cream like St. Joe. There were many mixed feelings about the location of Harmony College this year. From the comments I heard, I wouldn't be surprised if it were moved back to St. Joe this next year. Although, many thought it should stay in Ohio for another year. Either way, I'll be back! ♥

Take 4 Talk

by Grant Hunget



It's very busy these days.....By the time you read this, two major events will have happened - **Jeff** will be a Newlywed (Aug.26 to his Sweetheart & Dance/Theatre

companion, **Courtney**), and **Aaron & Irene's** 2nd baby is due Sept. 1.

Although only able to meet once a month during May, June, July, we're on track for Des Moines! Jeff returned to the area Aug.15 after completing his Summer Theatre job in Illinois. We were able to meet twice in St. Louis & grabbed a great coaching session with **Kevin Keller!**

Sept. 10 we perform on the Sunflower Harmony Sweet Adelines Show, featuring the "Kready Bunch"—All of the groups & quartets in which various Kready Family members perform, will appear! Should be fun! See you in Des Moines! ♥

HOA PICNIC!

Many thanks to **Dick Korek** for providing us with these candid shots!

1. The overall picnic group shows off the shelter and everyone is being entertained by *Tone-Henge*...
2. **Vince Perry** serving his "home-made" ice cream to **Don Peck**... enjoyed by everyone! Somehow he was able to serve just about everyone
3. Some of the ladies at the picnic—**Estyl Bowser**, **Haley Mathieu**, **Jan Mathieu**— sporting smiles and enjoying plenty of food.
4. Even the chief chef (**Carl Turlin**) got to enjoy his own cooking, while **Keith Schweer** (5.) took over the burger flipping . The menu included: hot spicy chicken wings, appetizers, then hot dogs and hamburgers. Thanks to everyone attending for bringing ALL THE TRIMMINGS, plus desserts! A WOW event for all who made it. PLUS, the weather was absolutely perfect!



A LOOK AT THE PAST IN HARMONOTES

by Wade Dexter, Editor Emeritus · wadeliberty@aol.com

TEN YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER, 1995:

Chapter President **Dale Neuman** said “the food is great, the facilities quite comfortable, and the opportunity golden.” Music V. P. **Ron Abel** was a bit more specific when he told us that “we’ve engaged some outstanding coaches and that weekend will provide a great opportunity to enjoy one another and improve ourselves musically, which will not only benefit the chapter, but will provide each of us with greater enjoyment of our barbershopping hobby.” But Music Director **Jim Bagby** was really more to the point when he assured us that “THIS IS ONE HOA EVENT YOU DON’T WANNA MISS!” *And what were they so excited about?* Why, it was the upcoming Second Annual Fall Retreat to be held at Atchison, Kansas, on the weekend of Sept. 22-23. The clinicians were to be **Fred King**, who directed the Chorus of the Chesapeake of Dundalk, Maryland, to an international championship in 1971, and sang with the *Oriole Four* when they won the quartet gold in Atlantic City the previous year. Also on the program was former HOA member **Lance Heilmann**, who was well known throughout the Society as a coach for four international champion quartets, including the *Rural Route 4* and the 1995 gold medalist, *Marquis*. At one time, Lance was a member of the Interpretation Category Board of Review.

TWENTY YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER, 1980

Ever hear of an HOA quartet named *Four-the-Fun-of-It*? It seems these guys wanted to compete in the fall district contest—just for the fun of it. They couldn’t have had any serious plans for doing well and perhaps winning the district championship, because they’d never sung before, and only had about a month to get ready for the contest in Cedar Rapids. The four members of the quartet were **Jim Bagby** (tenor), **Dale Neuman** (lead), **Jim Davis** (bari), and **Keith Schweer** (bass). Dale has a two-and-a-half column article in the Oct./Nov. 1980 *Harmonotes* in which he describes in great detail the quartet’s experience, even right down to the judges’ critique the next morning. I’ll try to boil it down to permit use in this space in the Sept. 2005 *Harmonotes*.

In the notes from the September board meeting, it’s reported that **Fred Whisman** had chapter board approval to use his place at 4th and Delaware Streets to put on cabaret-type shows as a means of raising funds for chapter operations. I don’t recall that there was ever a follow through on this proposal. Does anybody recall the reason? Sounds like an interesting idea.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER, 1965

The **Koenigs, Ray and Nellie**, suffered painful injuries on the afternoon of Sept. 14 when their car was broadsided by a city bus at the intersection of Volker and Troost Avenues. Nellie suffered a broken shoulder and cuts. Ray received a severe cut about the neck. One of the Koenigs’ French poodles was also injured and was placed in an animal hospital. The Koenigs were taken to St. Luke’s Hospital. ♥

You Just Might Be Married To A Barbershopper If...

- ... Your most prominent bumper sticker is “I Can’t, I Have Rehearsal.”
- ... You have 1-800-876-SING on your speed dial.
- ... Your kid tried to blow a pitch on an Oreo cookie.
- ... When the pastor starts reciting the Lord’s Prayer, you can’t help but hear the chords.
- ... You’ve tried to tune your wind chimes to a barbershop seventh.
- ... You mistake the hum of an air conditioner for the sound of a quartet somewhere in the hotel.
- ... He can memorize 20 arrangements for a show, but forgets your anniversary.
- ... You’ve used old chorus uniforms for Halloween costumes.
- ... Your grass is a foot tall around the first week in July.
- ... The greeting on your answering machine starts with “Hello, hello, hello, hello; well, hello” as sung by *The New Tradition* quartet.
- ... You plan on celebrating Valentine’s Day on Feb. 15 because you know your sweetheart will be busy Feb. 12-14 delivering Singing Valentines. ♥



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816 W. 121st. St. · Kansas City, MO 64145-1011
Donors are listed from June 30, 2005 through July 1, 2006



Heartbeat Hilites ♥

by Sharon Oldehoeft, Heartbeat President

Ladies of HOA,

The *Heartbeats* extend an invitation to you for two fun filled events in September.

Jan Mathieu has invited us to her home for a “pot luck” picnic Sept. 13. Please bring a side dish (salad or dessert) and join the *Heartbeats* for an evening of fun and fellowship. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. at St. Peters Church and carpool to Jan’s home. We will return to the church by 9:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Jan before Sept. 10 at 913-685-7408. We hope you will join us.

Our second outing will be Sept. 17 to Weston, Missouri, where Oak and Maple trees line the historic district. We will have lunch at The Vineyards Restaurant and visit the quaint little craft and antique shops. This is a great place to start or continue your Christmas shopping. We will stop at Vaughn’s Apple Orchard on our way home if time permits. We will meet at Metro North Shopping Center at 10 a.m. to carpool to Weston. Weston is about a 45-minute drive Northwest of Metro North Shopping Center. Metro North Shopping Center is located at 169 Highway and Barry Road and HOA caroled for Salvation Army there last year. Please RSVP by Sept. 14 to Sharon at 816-436-3305 if you would like to join the *Heartbeats* for this fun filled day.

The *Heartbeats* have a fund raising opportunity and we would very much appreciate help from the HOA family. We will be taking tickets and ushering at the Music Hall for the **Billy Joel** Show the evening of October 5th. Please call **Carol Ramirez** at 816-373-9311 for instructions and details.

I would like to remind the *Heartbeat* Board of our Sept. 6 meeting at St. Peters Church at 7 p.m. Have a great September! ♥

DEADLINE FOR THE OCTOBER HARMONOTES



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

The Banner To The Left Says It ALL!
Music in the Park 2005 allowed HOA to share their harmony with an eager audience.
Below: *Sounds Like Treble* (photo left-right: Al Fehlauer, Bill Bey, Rob Varney, Carter Combs) leading off the evening at the Overland Park Concert!



Music IN THE PARK



Photo courtesy of Julie Bilyea



Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire



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Quartet Photos courtesy of Don Fuson

1. The Olde Arm Waver (**Jim Bagby**) with the "right side" of the Chorus
2. The HOA Chorus warming up
3. *Command Performance* (left-right: **Carter Combs, Jon Gathright, Monty Duerksen, Rich Huyck**) in front of the patriotic section of lawn chair admirers.
4. **Mike Neff** directing the strong "left side" of the Chorus
5. Elvis (**Jack Selby**) takes a bow!
6. *Rewind* (left to right: **Marlin Weidler, Thom Tisdall, Dick Irwin, J.B. Witham**) telling a story in song
7. An idyllic setting for a wonderful evening of music!



Photo courtesy of Julie Bilyea



Photo courtesy of Julie Bilyea



Quartet Photo courtesy of Don Fuson



Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire

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Five Easy Steps To Good Vocal Technique

by Bill Biffle, Courtesy of Albuquerque Chapter New MexiChords Serenader, Used by permission

I will address the subject of good basic vocal craft on a step-by-step basis. The idea is to give you one thing to think about while you're on the risers (or even—perish the thought!—for a few minutes at home each day!) for a month.

Step One: POSTURE

All right, kiddies, try this:

- Place your feet about shoulder width apart.
- Distribute your weight evenly between each foot and slightly forward (on the balls of your feet)
- The legs should be fairly relaxed with the knees unlocked.
- Tuck the pelvis slightly to the front to align the spine (and allow deep, back breathing)
- Raise and expand the rib cage
- Relax and lower the shoulders
- Center the head over the body with the chin level (or even slightly below level) and the neck relaxed. Think “neck free”
- **STAND UP STRAIGHT!** (LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER!)

Like trying not to think of pink elephants certainly produces thoughts of naught else, trying to relax while doing all of this will produce a little tension for a while. Don't despair, happy campers, soon this posture will be as natural to you as smiling when you hear a good barbershop chord. The result will be a comfortable, invigorating posture with a feeling of being **READY** to sing!

Practice this every day at home and try to think of it every few minutes while you're singing. (You might try to reinforce it at the end of every phrase or some such.) You'll be amazed at the difference it will make in the way you feel and perform, and you'll be ready to add Step Two: Breathing IN!

Step Two: INHALATION

O. K., you say, what's the big deal, I already know how to inhale—I do it all the time! Well, so you do, but maybe not in the way to best help you enjoy singing. Read on!

Proceeding from the position of good posture (well balanced body, pelvis tucked, chest expanded, shoulders tucked down and relaxed, head centered, neck free), slowly breathe in through the nose, very deeply, and feel the area around the belt line expand (front, rear and sides). Remember, the chest should be comfortably raised and expanded. If you have difficulty producing this feeling, sit on the edge of a chair with your elbows on your knees and breathe deeply through the nose. This will let you feel the expansion around the belt line that is the basis for the “singer's breath.”

Secondly, stand in front of a mirror and monitor your chest (look at the top button of your shirt) as you breathe in deeply as described above. There should be no, make that **NO**, movement of your upper chest area (which is, of course, already expanded). Repeat this process a number of times. (Be careful of hyperventilation! If you get dizzy, stop for a while.)

It may be helpful to think of this process as expanding the muscles around the belt line, thereby creating a vacuum into which the air will rush. However you visualize it, it is vitally important for the sides, front, and back of the area below the rib cage to be involved.

As a last point, try to feel (and imagine) the area below the stomach going down as you inhale. This will further allow the expansion you need to occur.

Now, kiddies, you **MUST** practice this for a few minutes each day. If you will, these movements will become habitual in a very short time. Good inhalation habits, coupled with an upright, relaxed posture, will MEA-

SURABLY improve your singing and your enjoyment of this great hobby.

Step Three: INHALATION II

This session I want to discuss the rest of the inhalation process, that is, what should happen to the “upper apparatus” every time you inhale?

The idea here is to make the area where the sound resonates (the area from the larynx to the lips) as large as possible while not inducing any unnecessary tension. The components to this process are:

1. Lowering the jaw - both in front and in back (the space between your back teeth should increase, too). Now, be careful and don't overdo this! You should **NOT** create tension in the base of the tongue!
2. Opening the throat and gently raising the roof of the mouth (primarily the soft palate at the back). You can make this happen by producing coolness with the breath as you inhale. This is the “inner smile” or “bowl” feeling. It's very akin to the movement you make when you have a bite of very hot food in your mouth. (Another way to create the sensation of space is to imagine that you're listening to a very faint sound that's very far away.)
3. Lightly placing the tip of your tongue on the back of the lower front teeth **AND** letting the tongue **RELAX** forward in the mouth. It should be pretty high in front. This will keep the space at the back of the mouth (top of the throat) as open and large as possible—without undue tension, of course.
4. Extending the lips off the teeth, gently tucking the corners of the mouth, and creating a tall, oval mouth shape.

The idea is to make these four events happen simultaneously every time you breathe in. This will take a little practice to isolate the muscle groups, but the effort will, as always, repay you handsomely. You'll be a ♦

better singer and that will make singing more fun, and, gosh, that's what we're all in this for, right?

Now, gentle readers, we are ready to **SING!** What, after only three short months of preparation, we can now **EXHALE** and **MAKE SOUND WHILE WE DO IT?!** Read on!

Step Four: EXHALATION

There are several ways you can think of this action, so experiment until you find one that's right for you. They all have a couple of elements in common, though. Throughout the exhalation process:

Keep that erect posture with the chest raised.

Maintain the **RELAXED** openness of the vocal tract and the shape of the mouth.

Now, you may feel firmness—**NOT** tension—in the stomach and back muscles while they slowly lift under the breath, **OR** you may think of maintaining the expansion of the lower rib cage and back muscles while the diaphragm (muscle in the lower middle) rises under the breath. No matter which method you use, always monitor the larynx to make sure that no tension from the breathing process is being communicated to the singing apparatus. Your neck, throat, larynx, jaw, etc. should **ALWAYS** be free and relaxed.

Most people prefer to bring the stomach muscles slowly up under the outgoing air, but some folks get good results by trying not to let the ribs and chest collapse as they sing. Both methods work. Experiment to find the one you can do best. In fact, some great singers feel that they're pushing the diaphragm **AWAY** and **DOWN** as they support the breath and tone. The point is, **SOME** management of the breathing muscles is essential to control the tone. Through it all, you should be completely **RELAXED** from the chest up and feel the work being done **ONLY** below there.

A caveat: the key here is “firmness” in the lower abdominal area, not “tenseness” or “tension.” Throughout the process of managing the outflow of

breath, you should be able to move your stomach wall with a fairly gently push in. If your “abs” are too tight to be moved, you're setting up tension in the larynx. Try this: tense your stomach muscles **REALLY** tight. Notice what you then feel in the larynx. **TENSION**, right? Well, tension is **ALWAYS** wrong. So, don't overachieve.

One last check as you sing a tone. You should be able to gently cradle your chin in your hand and feel the space between your teeth with your thumb and first finger (one on each side, Silly!). **RELAX** your jaw and tongue. Remember, **UNWANTED TENSION** is the singer's worst enemy.

Well, men, we've come to the end of this five-part, discourse on vocal technique. If you diligently practice these techniques, they will become habitual with you and you'll enjoy singing as you never have before!

Step Five: FACIAL INVOLVEMENT

Keep the face as involved in the act of singing as is the rest of the body! You must raise the cheeks slightly (**SLIGHTLY**) and express the emotion of the song in your face. We call this the “active” face and it is not only essential to your stage presence, it really affects your sound in a positive way, too. I repeat, the facial expression you have is as much a part of vocal technique as is good posture, breathing, or anything else we have discussed. This is the “**UP**” face :-) as opposed to the “**DOWN**” face :- (“**UP**” is better! (Remember to keep the lips off the teeth and shape the mouth in a more “vertical” rather than “horizontal” way. Keep the corners tucked in slightly for all vowels.)

Spend five minutes a day in front of a mirror, singing your part. If you look like a singer, you'll be a better singer. It's really that simple. Watch your posture, your inhalation and

exhalation techniques, your mouth shape, and **YOUR FACE!** If we would all spend just **FIVE** minutes each day for few weeks doing this simple task, the chorus's contest scores (and audience appeal) would **SKYROCKET—I MEAN SKYROCKET!** Let's really dedicate ourselves to being the best chorus member we can be.

Thank you for your attention. Good luck and good singing! ♥



Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire

FOCAL POINT Up Close And Personal!

George Park is not a tall man when you stand him near a yard stick but his friends and those in the Chorus who know him would all agree that he has lived a tall life for his 83 years. He was born and raised in Atchison, Kansas, graduated from Maur Hill High School and attended Benedictine College, both in Atchinson and later attended Kansas State University. He is an amateur radio operator, enjoys reading and listening to classical music and he takes great interest in his six children including, two sons, and his five grandchildren. His sons have earned their Eagle Scout badges and a grandson will become an Eagle Scout in November, 2005.



George Park

He is a veteran of World War II having served in the U. S. Army Signal Corps during the campaign in Italy. When the war ended he joined the U. S. Army Reserve while he worked as an electronic technician for the Federal Aviation Administration. He retired from the Army after 26 years. George and **Mary Jo** have spent much of their retirement traveling throughout the British Isles, Italy, France, Switzerland, and Germany.

Musically, he has done more than most. He plays the bugle, the trumpet, the clarinet, and the saxophone and he has sung in his church choir for a number of years. And, he is very proud to have marched with the American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps in New York City in 1938.

George joined the Barbershop Society through the Northland Chapter but dropped out when the chapter closed. He then turned his attention to his family and children and when they had grown he found a new barbershop home in the Kansas City Chapter. Though he is now retired from barbershopping and the *Heart of America Chorus*, he enjoyed singing Lead for the 27 years he was active. "Why didn't you ever sing in a quartet, George?" someone once asked. He pondered for a moment then said in his characteristically soft voice, "I just felt my voice was not strong enough." One of his greatest experiences as a member of the Chorus was singing at the first International contest. He has always been a fan of *HOA* and while he was singing in the chorus Mary Jo was helping out as a member of the *Heartbeats*.

George's health has had its ups and downs lately and he has spent a few days in the hospital. We're all pulling for you George, and hope you're back on your feet in short order. ♥

A TIP OF THE HAT!

The Tip 'O The Hat is recognition to both members and non-members men and women who have made a contribution in time and effort to the betterment of the Kansas City Missouri Chapter over the past month.

A TOTH to the four guys who have signed on as Administrative Section Leaders in our run up to the 2005 district contest: **Marlin Weidler** (Tenor), **Mike O'Dell** and **Mike Schumacher** (Lead), **Doug Brott** (Baritone) and **Walt Patterson** (Bass). They will be tracking attendance of the competition chorus and helping new members get oriented and acclimated into the chorus.

TOTH kudos to our man at the grill, **Carl Turlin** who put together the HOA picnic at Lake Jacomo. And who can forget **Vince Perry** who designed and put the picnic information on the HOA web page.

A major TOTH to Editor **Todd Anderson** who landed fourth place in the 2004 International Online Bulletin Contest.

Judging categories were: Design and Graphics, Accessibility and Functionality, Content and Grammar and Style. Good job, Todd! ♥

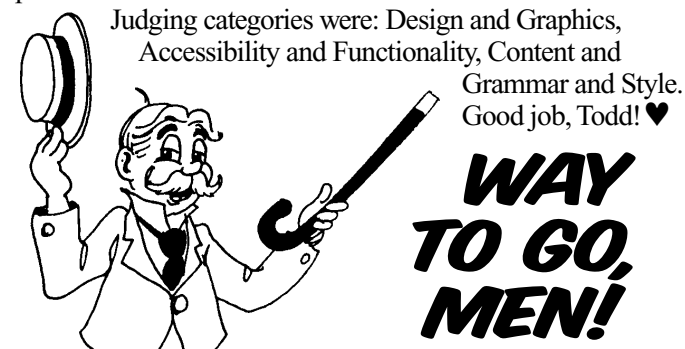


Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire

June Barbershopper of the Month: **Mike Schumacher**

In grateful appreciation for your beyond-the-call staging work in preparing the *Heart of America Chorus* for the 2005 International Convention in Salt Lake City, UT July 3-9, 2005.

Board of Directors Meeting Highlights

by Kevin Tritsch, Secretary

MUSIC & PERFORMANCE: **Keith Schweer** **Kevin Keller** will be here for coaching on Aug. 30, **Bill Biffle** is scheduled Oct. 4 and **Dwain Brobst** and **Jim Henry** will be on hand at the retreat.

Everyone must tape to qualify for the District Contest plus they must use a self-evaluation form provided by the Music Committee.

A Christmas learning CD for the Holiday Harmony Spectacular will be out soon.

Improved organization and management of the meetings was discussed as well as recognizing that the transition to the 9:30 Breakout Sessions breakout sessions has design problems. Some members are leaving before the end of the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Charles Ramirez

The current balance in the checking account stands at \$6,175.00, with an additional \$9,200 in funds available.

In 2000 an account was set up to spend money on International Competition pins. Total amount in this account as of 7/31/05 is \$352.58. The money will be moved to the General Fund.

The balance in the Money Market account stands at \$861.13 as of 6/30/05. The money will be removed from the account and the account will be closed.

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT – Stew Grosser **John Renfro, Jr.** - a past member of the Kansas City Chapter, was approved as a new member.

The last Guest Night of 2005 will be Sept. 6. The board approved \$50 for gift certificates to Outback Steakhouse and a movie to members who bring 5 or more guests.

PROGRAM – Jerry Garrard

Aug. 14 is set for the HOA picnic. **Carl Turlin** will officiate.

The HOA Fall Retreat will be Sept. 16-18 in Atchison, KS. **Al Fehlauer** will be the Events Coordinator.

MARKETING – Dick Korek and Tony Strub Sunday, Sept. 30, 2006 is set for the next Music In The Park performance in Overland Park, KS. Dick will register HOA with the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

The Kansas City Chapter will participate in the KCPT- PLUS Member Discount Card program that earns valuable savings for Plus Card members at area entertainment venues, bookstores and cultural events. There is no charge to the chapter and it will provide additional visibility to the chapter and chorus. Dick will work out the details.

OLD BUSINESS

The final Singing Valentine report was submitted. Total margin dollars were \$5,593.53.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Mathieu will pursue selling the extra Music Man pins from the 2000 International Convention on Ebay.

The riser trailer was repaired at a cost of \$418 for four new tires and \$118 for a new fender.



Barbershop History Quiz:

Here are the answers to the questions posed on page 3:

1. Barbershops, first in England, then here, were places of extemporaneous, amateur music making since Elizabethan times. A song written in 1910 and entitled [Mister Jefferson Lord] "Play That Barbershop Chord" iced the cake.
2. Minstrel shows in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and, thereafter, vaudeville.
3. Radio, more so than any other factor. For the first time in human history, radio brought affordable and widely available entertainment into almost every home. This led to the rapid demise of vaudeville shows, barbershop's most important venue during the first third of the twentieth century.
4. They began their show biz careers as professional barbershop quartet singers.

