

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 2 SPRING 2017

GOOD NEWS ON HOA MEMBERSHIP ~ GROWING AGAIN!

by Barry Sanders



Some of you know that *HOA* membership has dipped somewhat over the past several years, and our total membership has slipped to just over 100 members, and honestly, quite a few of those members are now inactive members, although still paying their annual dues to *HOA*.

The good news is that we are optimistic that we have now "turned the corner" with *HOA* membership. So far this year, we officially have two new members – **Bart Bartholomew** and **Wally Thornton**. Plus, on Tuesday night, May 16th, the *HOA* Board is voting on a third new member for 2017, **Nate Harper**, who not only has turned in his application for *HOA* membership, but who also is working hard to be able to sing all of our show songs and to be on the stage with us on June 17, for our annual show. Wally Thornton is also making good progress to be able to sing on the show with us! *(Continued on page 2*):

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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. 64131

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HOA Board meetings take place at 6pm on the second Monday or Tuesday of the month, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 100 East Red Bridge Road, Kansas City, MO 64131. Chapter members are welcome!

> HOA Website: www.hoachorus.com Web Address: webstaff@hoachorus.com Chorus Manager & Webmaster - Vince Perry



(Continued from front cover)

The other part of this "good news" is that we now have several of our "old" or inactive members who are in the process of rejoining *HOA's* performing chorus. **Frank Lasta**, back from an extended stay in Florida, is now singing both with New Harmony Handful as well as with the HOA performing chorus, and is working on being on the June show with us. Frank has also helped us "recruit" another member from way back, Max Dix. Welcome back, Max! Another member who has been singing regularly with *New* Harmony Handful since its inception, Jim Davis, has come back to the performing chorus and is diligently working to learn all of our songs to be on the show with us in June. Eric Weber, who really never went "inactive" but has had lots of conflicts due to family activities, is working hard to be able to sing on the show as well. Marlin Weidler, who has suffered with some health issues over the past several years, has now decided to actively come back to the chorus, and has stepped up to become our show ticket chairman for the June 17 show. Welcome back to all of these guys!

Finally, at the recent quest night that we held on April 11, for National Barbershop Quartet Day, we had over 65 people attend our meeting night, including 11 quests, with 11 of those guests getting "voice placed" by director Jerry Garrard. Nate Harper, mentioned earlier, is the first of those who has stepped up to actually join the chapter. Hopefully, Nate will NOT be the last!

Jerry Meier, our Membership VP, and I both have set some "goals" for 2017 that are very realistic and attainable. With the addition of this set of "old and new" guys, already, in 2017, we feel that we are very much on our way to significant growth of the chapter again.



NEW HARMONY HANDFUL...

by John Erwine

Pay attention, and read on! See, we've got this "booking agent control freak" by the name of **Tony Strub** who just keeps going on and on like that big pink bunny, beating his drum. Not that we're complaining mind you, but jeez! It's really getting to the point of needing a secretary, at least at my house.

Jokes aside, we love and congratulate him for continually promoting our message to the community. And when I say "our" message I mean also that of the *Heart of America Chorus*. That's who we're ultimately representing, and helping to promote along with the healing and entertaining benefits of barbershop style music.

If my calendar is correct, we have now performed 11 times so far this year. And this "agent" I spoke of earlier has us scheduled for 6 more very soon. At this rate we'll beat last years' number (25) by at least 10. I think we can start filing in line to sign autographs!

One of the things we do during some of our performances is sing patriotic numbers, depending on the venue. It always gives us great pleasure when asking veterans to be recognized among the audience, as well as in the *New Harmony Handful*, to especially recognize two of our own: **Ron Abel** and **Gordy Coleman**, both WWII Vets!

Recently we've missed **Val Putzier**, who is mending nicely from a successful cancer surgery. He's got a great long scar across his back, which I'm sure he's very proud of. However at our performance on April 30, who was in the audience? None other than the "Prince of Paola" himself, with wife **Ja**n. He looks better than ever, if that's even possible!

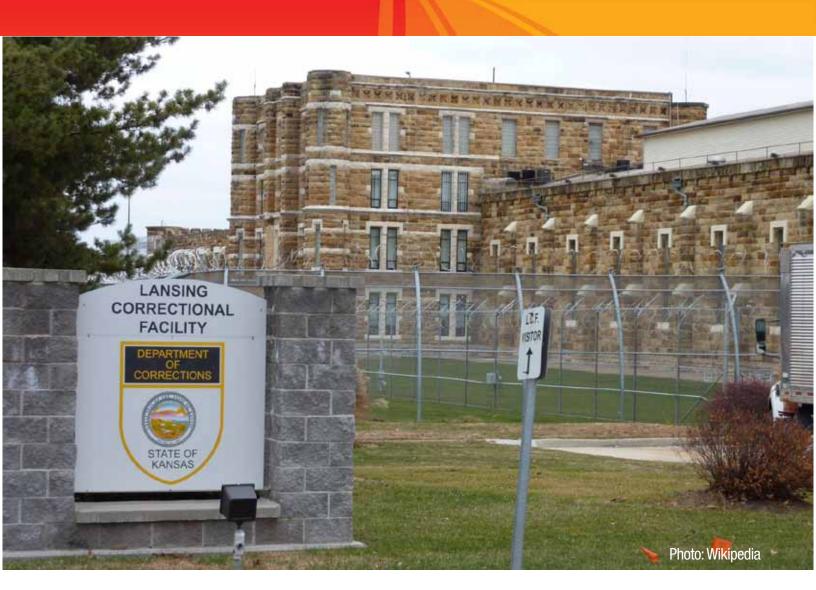
Two recent performances have been particularly rewarding for the *NHH*. On April 23 and 30 we had the privilege of performing with the *East Hill Singers*, directed by **Kirk Carson**, also the Director of Music for Colonial Church in Prairie Village.

Let me explain a bit more; the *East Hill Singers* are a group of men consisting of inmates from the minimum-security (the East) unit at Lansing Correctional Facility, and volunteer singers from the greater Kansas City Metro area. The inmates vary in number from 12-20, the volunteers from 40-50. Some are working men, some retired and some former inmates.

These volunteers not only share their voices with inmate singers, but act as role models and mentors. They all give generously of their time and long-time friendships are forged. We saw that as a true reality.

While interacting with the inmates, we saw many faces of hope. Some are getting out in a few months, some in a few years. They, during the performance, stand before a mic and tell a little of themselves: their regrets, hopes, some reciting their poetry, then introduce the next song. The thing that struck not only me but others of the NHH was that "there by the grace of God go I." Decisions in life – have we always made the best choice? If not, how lucky were we? There is hope!

(Continued on page 4 ⊨)



This program with the inmates is a function of Arts in Prison, an organization that receives no government funding. It not only includes music, but poetry, drawing and painting. AIP uses the arts to inspire lifechanging experiences for the inmates. It is geared toward reducing recidivism, and to help reconnect with their communities after release. It was very rewarding to see so many of their families in the audience, extending their support. And they have CD's! Also wonderful drawings, paintings and published poetry for sale at each performance, 2 to 3 times per year! For more information, info@artsinprison.org.

One reality check we experienced was thinking we saw **Carter Combs** performing as one of the volunteers. Thankfully it wasn't! It was his volunteer better-looking brother, **Gabe Combs**, who also plays an excellent snare drum. It was magically appropriate for the music and lyrics to *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. It was a magnificent arrangement and performance!

The third recent memorable *NHH* performance was in conjunction with National Day of Prayer, which we were privileged to be a part of in Raytown at the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. There were about 15 or 16 basses who showed up – at 6:15 a.m.! By 7:00 most were in full voice for the *National Anthem*. By the middle of the gathering we were in our groove. Another great outing. Love this whole BHS representation of song, as do you all. **•**

BELOW:

New Harmony Handful with East Hill Singers at Village Presbyterian Church in Overland Park in joint concert on April 23. Each group sang separately, then joined for Joe Liles' delightful double-chorus arrangement of "Fun in Just One Lifetime."



ABOVE: NHH Singers (from left): Don Fuson, Bob Howard, Charles Ramirez, Frank Lasta (partially hidden), Jim Davis, Wendell Shaffer, Roy Manade, Marty Oldehoeft, Denny Briley (behind director Jim Bagby), John Erwine, Tony Strub, Bob Murphy, Gordon Coleman, Ron Abel, Dale Neuman, Jon Gathright and Rich Huyck. Note seated singer in front of Rich, one of the minimum-security prison inmates who round out the East Hill Singers. Not pictured: Dave Hokansan, Val Putzier, Barry Sanders, Mike O'Dell. (Photos by Bob Howard's daughter, Robin Williams)

HARMONY EXPLOSION! 2017 "STAND BY" STEALS THE SHOW!

Article by Jerry Meier, Photos Courtesy of Rich Huyck

Harmony Explosion! 2017 on Feb. 18 was another fun-filled day of entertainment for the students. Its success can be attributed to the hard work and dedication of the volunteers and coaches from the *Heart of America Chorus* and the *Kansas City Chorus of Sweet Adelines.* I want to say THANK YOU to all of you for your contributions to this event.

I also want to say THANK YOU to *Dynamix* and *BoomTown* who entertained the students and judged their performances.

Once again the *Olathe Trails West Barbershop Chorus* stepped in to serve lunch to the students and volunteers – we truly appreciate their support.

And there was a tremendous turnout this year – more than 200 students in 44 quartets, representing twelve Middle Schools and High Schools from Lawrence, Topeka, Augusta, and the Johnson County Metro Area!

The highlight of the day was the outstanding performance by *Stand* By – a Blue Valley Northwest High School Boys Quartet. This young and talented quartet recorded a perfect score (100%) in Prelims, and went on to earn the highest score of the day. *Stand By* will be featured on the annual *Heart of America Barbershop Chorus* shows on Saturday, June 17.

Another highlight of the day was the performance by an octet of 6th Grade girls from California Trail Middle School. This girls' performance was good enough to qualify them for Finals and earn them a Silver medal. More importantly, this octet will turn into two quartets that will compete in Harmony Explosion! for the years to come!

The vocal music educators that supported our Harmony Explosion! 2017 event were:

- Jan Holthus, Olathe East and Olathe South High School
- Susan Scheibler, Olathe East High School 8 Quartets
- Elise Peterson, Olathe South High School 11 Quartets
- Pam Williamson, Olathe Northwest High School 3 Quartets
- Dr. Garrett Epp, Olathe North High School 2 Quartets
- Beth Richey-Sullivan, Blue Valley Northwest High School 1 Quartet
- Robin Christie, Bishop Miege High School 2 Quartets
- Dr. Dwayne Dunn, Lawrence High School 2 Quartets
- Michael Mills, Washburn Rural High School (Topeka) 1 Quartet
- Rachel Simmons, Augusta High School 2 Quartets
- Marcheta Pearson, California Trail Middle School (Olathe) 10 Quartets
- Beth Nelson, Oregon Trail Middle School (Olathe) 18 Students
- Cassie Sutherland, Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley) 2 Quartets

Medals were given to the following quartets:

8th Grade and Under Girls Division

California Trail MS	SILVER		
California Trail MS	SILVER		
California Trail MS	SILVER		
Lakewood MS	SILVER		
8th Grade and Under Boys Division			
California Trail MS	SILVER		
California Trail MS	SILVER		
California Trail MS	BRONZE		
10th Grade and Under Girls Division			
Olathe East HS	SILVER		
Olathe South HS	SILVER		
Olathe South HS	SILVER		
Olathe North HS	SILVER		
er Boys Division			
Olathe South HS	GOLD		
Lawrence HS	SILVER		
Olathe East HS	SILVER		
	California Trail MS California Trail MS California Trail MS Lakewood MS Boys Division California Trail MS California Trail MS		

12th Grade and Under Girls Division

Washburn Rural HS	GOLD
Augusta HS	GOLD
Olathe East HS	GOLD
Olathe South HS	GOLD
Olathe Northwest HS	GOLD
Olathe East HS	GOLD
	Augusta HS Olathe East HS Olathe South HS Olathe Northwest HS

12th Grade and Under Boys Division

Stand By	Blue Valley Northwest HS	GOLD
Fermatta Nowhere	Olathe South HS	GOLD
The Harmonics	Lawrence HS	GOLD
Element or Reprise	Olathe Northwest HS	GOLD
High Intensity	Olathe East HS	GOLD
Rolls Voice	Olathe South HS	GOLD

Video highlights are posted on YouTube (search the words "Harmony Explosion 2017 Olathe").

Please make plans to join me and a large cast of returning students next year **Harmony Explosion! 2018** on Saturday, Feb. 17 at Olathe East High School. ♥



FUN, FOOD, FROLIC AT FESTIVE APRIL 11 HOA GUEST NICHT, SOCIETY BIRTHDAY

It was appropriate that on the Barbershop Harmony Society's 79th birthday, its second-oldest chapter throw a spectacular party. And, that's just what the *Heart of America* folks did on April 11, with a guest night that attracted almost two-dozen singing guests, plus some former *HOA* regulars.

Orchestrated primarily by President **Barry Sanders**, past President **John Erwine** (subbing for absentee Membership Veep **Jerry Meier**) and with **Mike Schumacher** and **Jim Bagby** acting as program vice presidents, the evening produced no less than five quartets. Guests were offered a chance to sing with the foursomes, and most took advantage to sing at least a tag with the final quartet: the *Rural Route 3* plus tenor **Carter Combs**. One guest has since become a member and another is in the process.

"The most memorable moment of the evening for me was seeing the guests join the quartets to sing a tag," Schumacher said. "You know what they say: 'Once they hear and/or are immersed in the chord, you've got 'em hooked.' And for a lot of those guys you could see their eyes light up!"

The evening began with burgers and hot dogs cooked up by **Bob Valezquez** and **Ted Simon** (once the charcoal finally got going). Director **Jerry Garrard** voice placed 11 visitors, according to Erwine's count. *HOA* performed, and then the parade of quartets began – just as those foursomes broke out everywhere in the Alvin Plaza Hotel on April 11, 1938, at what turned out to be the first meeting of the *Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA*). That's still our official name, but now we just say BHS. We heard from our newest chapter foursome, *Vintage Edition*, who hope to make their public debut on our June 17 show afterglow. Two of our chapter quartets were in fine form: *Priorities* and *Armchair Chorderbacks*. The crowd went wild for the outstanding Harmony Explosion champs who will have a special spot on the June show, *Stand By*. Rounding out the entertainment and participation were three-fourths of our 1986 international champion *Rural Route 4*, with **Calvin and Willard Yoder** showing up from Cass County to join Bagby and Combs in a mini-set.

"It was great being able to cover for **Jerry Meier** that evening on the registration desk," Erwine said. "But what made it so special for me was the overwhelming number of guests to the point of it being difficult to keep up. Even better, **Nate Harper's** membership was recently approved as a result of this well-executed event."

The evening ended with members and guests on the risers singing the number that will bring the June show to a rousing finish, "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Singing guests, with their sponsors:

- Max Dix and his grandson, Tim Verschedlen (Frank Lasta)
- Darren Decker (Jerry Garrard)
- Nate Harper (Tony Strub)
- Drew Bodner and Bill Hopkins (Jim Bagby)
- Daniel Madenger (Vince Perry IV)
- Hank Rector (Bob Murphy)
- Tom Kentz (Coach of Stand By)
- Fred Speckman
- Austin Davis



CUESTNICHT PHOTOS!

Photos courtesy of Ron Mcintire



Member Surveys 🔗 Discovery Forum

by Barry Sanders, Chapter President

Hey guys! I have had several people ask me about the results of the member survey(s) as well as the Discovery Forum that we had on March 21. Well, the short answer is that we are still working on sorting out all of the results. Let me summarize where we are at this point:

- A) Active Member Survey 27 responses (out of 35 sent out)
- B) Inactive Member Survey 37 responses (out of 65 sent out) (there were 4 members with no email address or otherwise unavailable to contact)
- C) SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of past-presidents at meeting at **Jim Bagby's** house on Feb. 20, with 12 men attending
- D) SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of Board members at April Board meeting
- E) Discovery Forum March 21 with 35 guys attending

You may ask – what are we going to do with all of this data? Well, the ultimate goal is to put together a strategic plan for *HOA* for 2017 and 2018, and beyond. For right now the *HOA* board has already met one time – in April, and is getting ready to meet again on Monday, May 22. As in all surveys and data collection efforts, there is some "low hanging fruit" that we have already discovered, and we are already taking steps to work on those things, as follows:

1) More singing gigs – Annual Show, Holiday Show and going to Fall contest is not enough singing performances to satisfy the majority of our guys. We received guite a few suggestions for where and when HOA can sing more at the Discovery Forum, including men's philanthropic club chapter meetings (Kiwanis, Lions, Knights of Columbus, Rotary, etc.). Other suggestions include local community events around the city (similar to Theater in the Park that HOA has done for years and like the Blue Springs Fall Fun Fest, like we did last year. There are many of these around – we just need to get on their radar screens. Other suggestions included churches, schools and colleges, where we could sing along with choruses and choirs from those institutions. Finally, another fine suggestion was to sing at conventions coming in to KC who are looking for paid entertainment for their convention attendees. We already have a great relationship with VisitKC (convention and visitors bureau), so there should be opportunities there.

- 2) More fun on Tuesday nights We are already working on this area! Jim Bagby and Mike Schumacher have stepped up as "interim PVP co-leaders", since Tony O'Brien had to step down earlier this year as PVP, due to several health issues in his family. Anyway, Jim and Mike have been working with director Jerry Garrard to create "fun" events that we can do to break up the evening of practice, yet will be supportive of the work that Jerry has scheduled for the evening, as we prepare for our annual show on June 17. This seems to be working pretty well, and several people at the Discovery Forum mentioned that they could see a difference already. We intend to keep that going and growing!
- 3) Teaching all of us how to sing better At our first meeting of the HOA Board to discuss the results of the surveys and Discovery Forum, we discussed a couple areas where we feel that we can make some immediate improvement. Several guys had complained about guys getting to Tuesday HOA practices late (after 7PM) and keeping the chorus from getting maximum benefit from our time together. It was also discussed that one of the main reasons reported on the surveys that men joined HOA was to become a better singer. Therefore, the Music Team has already taken on the responsibility of working on "improving our instrument" as an early evening event, building it in along with 7PM warmups. The "win-win" there is that we are encouraging men to show up on time on Tuesdays, so that they can take advantage of vocal activities that will improve singing talents.
- 4) Other areas noted in surveys and Discovery Forum More community involvement, more "fraternal" involvement (like picnics, overnights, afterglows, etc.), and more things that take advantage of our rich chapter history. The HOA Board has not yet focused on these areas, but be assured that they will be addressed.

Finally, I want to let everyone know that your Board is working very hard to be good "listeners" and to take to heart the inputs that we are getting from both active and inactive members, who ALL have the best interests of the chapter at heart. As we continue down this road of "self assessment" and chapter improvement, please feel free to continue to make inputs and suggestions to any of us on the *HOA* Board! **♥**



Introducing the newest members of the Chapter! Photos by Ron McIntire



"Wally" Thornton

Wallace "Wally" Thorton is a semi-retired freelance broadcast advertising man living at Lake Lotawana, MO with his wife Rozenia. He is a first-time barbershopper. Although he is a first-timer, he sang lead in a barbershop quartet called 4 Towns, when he was in the U.S. Air Force. The name came from the names of the states of the members' hometowns: Texas, Oregon, West Virginia and New York. His musical background includes playing trombone in the New Horizon's Band and an MC/Soloist with the Butterfly Brass playing at parties. Wally singings bari in the HOA Chorus.

BARBERSHOP HISTORY QUIZ:

Author: 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?





"MY MARRIAGE IS FINE, IT'S THE QUARTET THAT GIVES ME TROUBLE."



Mike Mathieu December 2016

In grateful appreciation for planning and organizing the 2016 Salvation Army Caroling Caravan. Photo courtesy of **Ron McIntire.**



TRA MILE AWARD

Carter Combs December 2016

For attending the 2016 Holiday Harmony Spectacular to sing with *Heart of America Chorus* and *Armchair Chorderbacks* quartet, while suffering with a debilitating kidney stone. Photo courtesy of **Ron McIntire.**



Rich Huyck December 2016

For returning to sing all five performances with the 2016 Heart of America Caroling Caravan despite receiving stitches from slipping on the ice and suffering a painful head injury. Photo courtesy of **Ron McIntire.**



Harmony Foundation Report

by Jim Porter



Note that we will have our raffle each time we meet in our regular location. All of the proceeds of the raffle not given as prizes or used for expenses of the raffle goes to Harmony Foundation at

the end of each year. In return, we are able to have the Foundation designate up to 30% of the funds given to chapter activities such as Harmony Explosion.

As of May 10, after 19 drawings (16 since the last report):

- The total collected for Harmony Foundation since the last report is \$333.
- The total collected for the calendar year to date is \$421.

We had another big winner. **Kevin Tritsch** won TWICE in 3 weeks, winning \$195 on March 7, then won \$100 on March 21 (Kevin has won the drawing 7 times so far this year. No one previously has won this many times in an entire year.)

The carry-over jackpot as of May 10 is \$7 in deficit. •

ANSWERS:

- 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.



...to the following HOA MEMBERS!

- April 6 Ron Willard
- April 7 Raymond Schwarzkopf
- April 8 Jeff Wolff
- April 10 Matt Bostick
- April 11 Craig Wilcox
- April 11 John Erwine
- April 14 Bob Howard
- April 17 Mike Mathieu
- April 21 Dick Krueger
- April 21 Tom Elefson
- April 24 Marlin Weidler
- April 25 Bruce Wenner
 - May 4 Bob Murphy
 - May 6 Anthony Fortino
 - May 7 Carter Combs
- May 12 Keith Owen
- May 16 Ted Simon
- May 20 Dale Neuman
- May 21 Anders Sand
- May 24 Joe Mathieu
- June 2 Jeff Veteto
- June 3 Ryan Bradley
- June 4 Kevin Tritsch
- June 6 Phil Youngs
- June 11 Don Fuson
- June 11 Duane Lawson
- June 13 Tony O'Brien
- June 14 Tony Strub
- June 15 Dave Hokanson
- June 20 BIII Bay
- June 20 Dave Perry
- June 22 Ray Young
- June 25 Al Fehlauer
- June 28 Barry Sanders
- June 29 Keith Schweer

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The Heart of America Chorus membership owes it to our sponsors to be aware of their support. Please use and/or support their products/services whenever possible and make an effort to let them know that we are thankful for this support!



HEART OF AMERICA CHORUS CALENDAR

Saturday, June 17

HOA Annual Show • 2 & 7PM • BELL CENTER

July 4-9

BHS International Convention • Las Vegas, NV

THE KANSAS CITY CHAPTER OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

...is a singing fraternity whose mission is to learn, teach, and perform the highestquality, entertaining, a cappella music that embraces the barbershop style through the Heart of America Chorus and its chapter quartets, to bring about a spiritual and emotional response from the performer and the audience.