

# Harmonotes

The Quarterly Bulletin of the  
Kansas City Heart of America Chorus

CHORUS AND QUARTET SINGING  
IN THE BARBERSHOP STYLE



SECOND-OLDEST CHAPTER IN THE  
BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Barry Sanders, Chapter President



SANDERS

One of the reasons that I accepted the nomination for president of HOA for 2017 was to see if I can have some success for making our Tuesday night meetings more fun again. If that sounds like "pie in the sky", it probably is. Certainly, if we would ask each member what he wants to emphasize on practice nights, we would get 104 different answers, since HOA now has 104 members, according to **Jerry Meier**, our membership VP. We each have our own opinion of what that looks like. Certainly we could all agree on a couple things: (1) that it has a lot to do with improving our singing skills, individually, and as a chorus; and (2) ***We all*** love to sing, and ***we all*** want to sing "better". However, getting us all to agree to anything more specific than those core principles might become quite a big task, because we are all different and we all have different opinions of what we are looking for when we envision what we would like to spend our time doing at our weekly meetings. Before I accepted the nomination for president, I spoke to several past presidents of our chapter and found that what I was thinking about this topic was pretty consistent with what they were thinking, so I began to build a vision for how we could make our meetings more fun again. However, I stopped short and told myself that I am only 1 of those 104 guys, so I shouldn't just presume that what is important for me is the same as what is important to everybody else.

I watched a 90-minute video by a guy who helps chorus chapters be more successful in retaining existing members and recruiting new members and he suggested that we poll the members and ask them to rank the possible 35 reasons that they joined the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) and then put all of their answers together into a single data volume, looking for consistent patterns.

(Continued on page 2 ➡)

# Harmonotes

**Harmonotes** is published by the board of directors of the Kansas City, Mo., Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society®, a non-profit organization. Photographs that are not attributed are the work of our photographers at large. 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.

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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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, content and spelling). Permission to reprint articles is granted to barbershop editors as long as the author and *Harmonotes* are acknowledged. The utmost care was used in preparation of this newsletter. Should you notice erroneous copy, please let the editor know!

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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](http://www.hoachorus.com)

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Chorus Manager & Webmaster - Vince Perry



MEMBER

PROBE  
BARBERSHOP

(Continued from front cover)

That sounded like a great idea to me, so in the next few weeks, we are going to carve out some time from one of our Tuesday meetings and go through that exercise – together. I am also planning to poll inactive and former members to see what they have to say about what might have caused them to fall by the wayside, or better yet, what might entice them to come back and start singing with us again.

Anyway, once we get all of this data collected, then we are going to start building a plan for how to incorporate more of that into our Tuesday meetings. Since we know already that there will be a large variety of opinions about what is important to our members, I think that we will need to add a lot of variety to our meetings so that we will at least periodically hit the mark with the huge majority of our active members. Another positive aspect of adding variety to our meetings is that they won't become too repetitious and stale. Our program chairman will be key to helping us with this variety, so I have gotten a sizeable group of people to agree to help the PVP (program vice-president) - **Tony O'Brien** - with ideas and suggestions for how we can make each Tuesday night a little special and a little unique from the previous Tuesday night. We want our guys to look forward to getting something a little different each Tuesday night, and maybe have a few surprises thrown in along the way. That will keep it from becoming stale, and keep them coming back to see what's new that will be a little different from the previous week.

None of this is intended to take away from the need for our director to have the lion's share of the evening for teaching us how to sing better, which he is most trained to do, so that part will remain the same. However, we must look for ways to make his job easier, such as learning our new music on our own time, rather than on Tuesday night time. We've given lip service to that in the past, but we must look for ways to make that easier for the members, like with learning tracks, section rehearsals, taping ourselves so that others can critique and make suggestions for improvement, and with other learning aids as we identify them. That will allow the director to do what he does best, and that is getting us to perform better - individually, and as a chorus.

I think we're going to find, as we study this with the data we collect, that most of us share similar ideas about why we joined the BHS, in general, and why we joined HOA, specifically. This is a chapter with a very rich and long heritage (more than 75 years!), one that we can certainly be very proud of, and one that many others will want to be part of, once we get back to doing those things that got us where we are today. As your new president, I certainly don't have a magic wand that I can wave to get us back to where we were 10 years ago. However, I have a deep love for this group of guys, and a strong passion to get us headed back in an upward growth pattern! I can't do anything on my own, but if I can get all of us to build a strong consensus of where we want to be headed (planning and setting goals), and look for ways that we can accomplish those plans and goals – working together side-by-side, then I think (no, I'm sure) that we will be successful. I'm going to give it my best shot in 2017, and hopefully each of you members will jump in and be willing to do your part. And finally, for all of you guys who are still members, but are sitting on the sidelines – **WE WANT YOU BACK!** ♥



# 2017 Awards Banquet

by Jerry Meier



This year's Awards Banquet was held on Saturday, Jan. 7 at the Jack Stack BBQ Private Dining Facility in Martin City, MO. Fifty-two attendees gathered to enjoy a delicious BBQ dinner of chicken, turkey, brisket, and pork.

Yours truly (**Jerry Meier**)

was the emcee for the evening and kept things moving along on schedule: start at 630pm; out the door at 930pm!

**Carol Ramirez** (retiring *Heartbeats* President) announced that the *Heartbeats* will still be active supporters of the *Heart of America Chorus*, but will no longer be a formal organization with officers and responsibilities. Lisa Templer (retiring *Heartbeats* Treasurer) closed out the *Heartbeats* bank account and gave a check for \$1,322 to the chapter. Thank you *Heartbeats* for many years of wonderful service to our Chapter!

**Paul Dexter** and his wife were guests of the chapter this evening. Paul addressed the meeting to announce the **Wade Dexter** Memorial Scholarship to Harmony University. Wade was a long-time member of the chorus—quartet man / front row performer / Internationally-recognized PROBE Award winning editor of the *Harmonotes* / 50-year member of the Barbershop Harmony Society / all-around-great guy! Paul will donate \$5,000 to the chapter for the development and advancement of the membership by providing a full scholarship to Harmony University for first-time attendees. Thank You Paul! for honoring the chapter in this way, and for making the necessary arrangements. And Thank You, Wade—May God Bless You!

Former Barbershop Harmony Society President **Don Fuson** provided insight on the Society and called upon the new officers to be lead by example as the 2017 Board of Directors was installed.

Chapter President  
Immediate Past President  
Executive Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Operations VP  
Music and Performance VP  
Marketing Vice President  
Membership Vice President  
Program Vice President  
Board Member at Large  
Board Member at Large  
Board Member Emeritus  
Chorus Director

**Barry Sanders**  
**Carter Combs**  
**Mike Schumacher**  
**Jim Porter**  
**Harvey Shapiro**  
**Steve Keisker**  
**Bob Velazquez**  
**Ted Simon**  
**Jerry Meier**  
**Tony O'Brien**  
**Bob Murphy**  
**Charles Ramirez**  
**Dale Neuman**  
**Jerry Garrard**

President **Barry Sanders** stepped to the podium to announce that he is the President of the Chapter, but his vision for the chapter is the Vision of the entire Chapter. He will include all of us in his goals and plans for 2017. All of us will have a voice and have the opportunity to participate and volunteer and become active in one way or another.

**Bruce Wenner** announced the 2016 awards for the evening:

1. John Cross Award - **Jim Porter** (presented by 2015 recipient **Steve Keisker**).
2. Barbershopper of the Year Award - **Carter Combs** (presented by 2015 recipient **Jerry Meier**).

Mark your calendars for next year's Awards Banquet, which is planned for Saturday, Jan. 13. ❤️

# Jim Porter and Carter Combs take the Awards for 2016

by Bruce Wenner, Awards Committee Chairman



Two very worthy chapter brothers came away with awards at the *HOA* Annual Banquet. **Jim Porter** was the clear-cut choice for the John Cross award. For years Jim's attendance has been outstanding, and this year it was far and away the best. As for doing the jobs nobody wants to do, Jim has also more than met this standard. He has served on the chapter Board of Directors, been Chapter Treasurer, and this year is the Chapter Secretary. All of this pales, though, in comparison with the time and effort Jim has poured into the job of Marbles Chairman.

Over the years Jim has raised thousands of dollars for the Harmony Foundation while entertaining the chapter with the marbles lottery. Every night we're greeted with a smile from Jim as he offers tickets for sale. Jim took on this project at the start and made it into something much bigger than anyone had imagined.



Then there's our new Barbershopper of the Year, **Carter Combs**. Carter has been our Chapter President for the past two years. These two years have presented more challenges than any two years I can remember, as *Heart of America* has had to adjust to being a smaller chapter than in the past. We all recognize how fortunate we have been to have Carter lead us, even while he was coping with family tragedies. The times called for an exceptional

leader, and Carter stepped forward with a masterful performance. Over the years Carter has become indispensable in many other ways. He shares his technology expertise with us to help us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He and **Jeffi** have been hosting glimmers at their abode. Most important – Carter is the only full-time tenor in the *HOA Chorus*. We depend on him to always be on the risers, and to balance with the rest of the chorus. And he is dependable enough and good enough to make it work.

Two guys who are the very epitome of the John Cross Award and the BOTY Award.

# HOA INSTALLATION DINNER PHOTOS

Photos courtesy of Don Fuson





# HOA INSTALLATION DINNER PHOTOS

Photos courtesy of Don Fuson





# HOA INSTALLATION DINNER PHOTOS



# HARMONOTES CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

By John Erwine



**Harmonotes** — a record, and the story of our experiences and hopes within this hobby of ours. It is the spirit and legacy of the chapter we're now enjoying the benefits of.

We have been told that *HOA* has one of the best documented pictorial history displays in the District, if not the Society. In addition to that, we have *Harmonotes*. When it was still a monthly newsletter it was twice-named the Society's Bulletin of the Year. The first was in 1988 when the late **Wade Dexter** was editor, and again in 2008 under current editor **Todd Anderson**.

As with many newspapers, it became more difficult to get contributed articles to make it a worthwhile monthly event. A few years ago it was decided to do away with the printed page, then becoming a quarterly on-line publication only.

Still today, we are finding it more and more difficult to attract contributors. Yes there is the continued pressure on the leadership to become more proactive in presenting their stories. But realize that this is not just their responsibility. As our village has shrunk in size it becomes more critical than ever that we all consider pitching in.

Wouldn't it be quite a thing for at least 2 or 3 members to share a few comments in each edition about how they feel regarding their experiences, expectations or memories of not only barbershop, but of music in general? Being a history buff, I kind of enjoy seeing my name in print on occasion. Dollars to donuts, I bet each of you do too. You guys are what makes this chapter tick; we want people to know and remember.

You don't have to be a **Mark Twain** to do this. The only requirement is that you have the desire and willingness to put a few thoughts into the printed word. It can be as small as this short paragraph or as long as this article. We have editors that can really make you read like him — and you still get the credit. But most importantly, you have helped keep our legacy alive.

To "say nothing" is possibly more powerful than "saying something occasionally." But by "saying something regularly," that is huge! And talk about making great promo pieces for us. Think of the help you'll be giving our Marketing VP.

Todd is doing his best to fill the voids with articles from the *Serenade* and other sources, but it's becoming ever-more difficult. Let's give him a helping hand. Let's see if we can get back on track. ❤️



# The Chapter Bulletin: An Endangered Species

By Todd Anderson, *Harmonotes* Editor and so-so Lead

Did you hear the news recently? Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus is going out of business, after 146 years. Let that sink it for a moment. The circus stated that it's become much more difficult to get folks to buy a ticket. One of the reasons: They had to get rid of their elephants to appease the animal rights folks. After the elephants went, attendance began to drop. But here is another fascinating fact they observed: The longest show act was the Lion Cage (12 minutes), featuring the typical lion tamer cracking a whip and the big cats all snarling, roaring, jumping through flaming hoops,...remember? But to the amazement of circus management, they noticed *today's* kids can't keep from squirming in their seats or yawning! They actually grew bored within a short time and were ready to move on to some other kind of entertainment! I guarantee you and I can't imagine that, because we were totally mesmerized as youngsters when that kind of wonder was in front of us.

Back when my father played baseball, the entire nation showed up at the ballparks to watch their teams play. You couldn't stay at home and watch it on TV. You had to be proactive if you wanted to be entertained. Fans arrived at the park early to get a good seat. Involvement was, and still is, exhilarating. That's a concept that many are missing out on.

Therein lies the issue. We are now entertained to death without having to try! Sensory overload is the norm. Today's kids begin life at a young age being thrust in front of an electronic baby-sitting device (TV). From then on, their minds become wired to seek more and more stimulation. It's a slow erosion—doesn't happen overnight. Reminds me of the experiment where a scientist puts a frog in a beaker. I'm sure you've heard it. A Bunsen burner is put underneath the container that the frog occupies. The flame is turned up slowly, over a long period of time. Long story short,...the frog becomes acclimated to what is slowly happening, but ultimately boils to death, never once trying to hop away from the problem.

Society doesn't seem to be concerned with what is taking place. Now, when you visit a local park, you can [figuratively] shoot a gun off in any direction and not hit a kid, because they're all in their houses,...plugged in.

Sorry to ramble, but this downward slide gets me thinking,...times are indeed a-changing. It's sad, but as much as we love barbershop, most of the younger bucks have no clue the joy singing can bring. Millennials like my son are captivated more and more by electronics than participating in harmony, for example.

We adults aren't a whole lot better. It's really no surprise that we have to beg for bulletin articles, etc. I'll wager the majority of our members would probably be content with not having a written record of our chapter. Sure, printed bulletins worked back in the '40s and '50s, but we've grown much more *sophisticated*. Translation: We're all so busy with "stuff" or being entertained, that taking time to pen something is like getting an act of Congress passed (just ask Congress how tough that is).

I recall the days when *HOA* published a bi-monthly bulletin. At some point, cost became a factor. Whatever the reasons, it was decided that a quarterly issue was more than enough. That officially took us out of the running to win gold *ever again* (I believe PROBE requires at least six issues annually to compete for first place).

Back when former Editor-extraordinaire **Wade Dexter** won first place out of all the chapter bulletins in the world, he did it all himself. Me? I relied on a team who really wanted to see *HOA* win again. I don't know about you, but my skills run out pretty quickly. I depended on **Jim Bagby, Wade Dexter, Ron McIntire** and many others to help us repeat another gold-medal effort in 2008. Yeah, I received the plaque, but I could have easily chopped it up and handed a piece to each of those guys.

I would have loved winning a medal by singing (Bagby rightly wears a gold medal for his RR4 win. I, on the other hand, have to wear this plaque around my neck, which is a real hassle). However, I moved south years ago and am now a long-distance member/editor, who catches rolls from time to time at Lambert's, and sings along with old *HOA* learning tapes. I don't say much via the bulletin, because I don't attend the meetings. I guess I feel sheepish commenting because I'm not there to participate. But I do live vicariously through the bulletin, and through any chapter communications.

Times are changing, but each *HOA* member gets to decide which direction our chapter will go. If we can't garner enough articles and photos in the future, we may have to say goodbye to our elephants,...*er*...our bulletin. Which makes me wonder,...if that happens, what ACT will the chapter decide is OK to lose *NEXT*?

Something to consider. ♥



# HARMONY EXPLOSION!

**Who:** YOU!  
**What:** Harmony Explosion! 2017  
**When:** Saturday, Feb. 18 from 8 am to 5 pm  
**Where:** Olathe East High School, 14545 W. 127th Olathe, KS 66062

You are invited to participate in a very exciting opportunity to support our youth – Harmony Explosion 2017! – to be held at Olathe East High School on Saturday, Feb. 18. Harmony Explosion! 2017 is a one-day clinic that introduces Middle School and High School students and teachers (and family members and friends) to the 4-part a cappella harmonic sounds created by singing Barbershop style music. *The Kansas City Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society* and the *Kansas City Chorus of Sweet Adelines* join forces to sponsor this event, as we have done for more than 20 years.

Harmony Explosion! 2017 includes vocal music activities for students that wish to sing Barbershop music in quartets or in larger groups – with a common goal to promote 4-part a cappella singing in a mistake-friendly environment that encourages participation and performance with plenty of support and fun!

- Goal #1 – get the students to sing on stage!
- Goal #2 – get the students excited about singing a cappella music on their own and with their friends!
- Goal #3 – get the students to understand that singing is a life-long hobby – they can participate in school, in college, as young adults, and throughout their lifetime.
- Goal #4 – provide excellence in vocal music singing through demonstration and education with wonderful Featured quartets such as *Harmonium, Legacy, BoomTown, Premium Blend, HEAT, and ZING!*

## Getting the students to sing on stage is a HUGE accomplishment:

1. Builds character and self-confidence
2. Improves their self-esteem
3. Teaches them responsibility and accountability
4. Uses Barbershop Music as the vehicle for fun!

## The schedule for the day will look something like this:

8:30 am Registration Opens  
9:00 am Opening Session  
10:00 am Preliminary Quartet Performances  
12:30 pm Quartet Finals Announcement  
2:00 pm Quartet Finals Performances  
4:45 pm Awards Ceremony

Make plans now to attend. You will thoroughly enjoy the experience – **I GUARANTEE IT!** ♥

**Jerry Meier**, Harmony Explosion! Director

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## ARE YOU A HARMONY EXPLOSION VOLUNTEER?

by Jerry Meier



Harmony Explosion is right around the corner. Can you be a Quartet Coach? It's easier than you think! Simply share your barbershop knowledge with the students – it's the most beneficial service that we can provide. All you have to do is give it a try!

The students want to sing their songs for the coaches. They are eager to get suggestions on how they can perform better. Your presence with a young quartet will help the students practice their songs. Just one or two days prior to Feb. 18 is all it takes – usually at 3:15 pm during the school day (sometimes at :15 am). Just 30 minutes of coaching can make a huge difference in a student's ability to sing on stage. Don't you wish that someone would have coached you when YOU were in school?

### Harmony Explosion! 2017: Saturday, Feb. 18

- 9 am** Opening Session with performances by the *KCCSA*, *Dynamix* and a Special Awards Presentation
- 9:30 am** Vocal Warm-ups and song (Boys Chorus will learn *Who Will Buy*)
- 10 am** Quartet Prelims
- 12:30 pm** Quartet Performances by *Dynamix* and *Boom Town*
- LUNCH -** catered by Olive Garden (\$5 suggested donation)
- 1:30 pm** Afternoon Rehearsal on the song or the tags
- 2 pm** Quartet Finals
- 4:15 pm** Performance by *Boom Town*
- 4:30 pm** Girls Chorus / Boys Chorus performances
- 4:45 pm** Hand out medals



- January 7** **Harvey Shapiro**
- January 9** **Bob Rutherford**
- January 10** **Oly Oldehoeft**
- January 13** **Roy Manade**
- January 20** **Michael Beck**
- January 25** **Bob Burdick**
- January 30** **Rick Foreman**
  
- February 12** **Charlie Greene**
- February 14** **Jim Bagby**
- February 18** **John Fortino**
- February 19** **Fred Hangartner**
- February 20** **Jim Porter**
- February 25** **John Marshall**
- February 27** **Jon Gathright**
  
- March 4** **Ron McIntire**
- March 16** **Eric Weber**
- March 17** **Don Young**
- March 19** **Jason Garder**
- March 23** **Charles Ramirez**
- March 29** **Jerry Meier**
- March 30** **Doc Jeppesen**

## John Sharp Hill 1914 - 2016

By Ron McIntire



**John Hill** sang bass in the *Heart of America Chorus* from 1974 until 1994. A loyal, friendly, quiet guy, his soft, deep voice was characteristic of the type person he was. Those who knew him remember him as an in-the-shadows type guy, not taking part so much in the

running of the chapter but contributing where he could to the success of the chorus.

John was born in 1914 in Burlington, IA and graduated in 1941 from the University of Iowa with a BS degree in Administration. After college, he worked for a period of time as a meteorologist for the U.S. Weather Bureau then served in the U.S. Navy during WWII as an Aerographer, another name for a meteorologist. In the Navy, He rose to the level of Chief Aerographer by the end of the military service. Nearly all shipboard and naval air station Aerological units, at the time, were led by Chief Aerographers. After the service, he spent the last 34 years of his career as an Aviation Forecaster for the National Weather Service.

I talked with his daughter, **Patty Rogers**, at his visitation and she told me he was a very devoted family man who lived his Catholic faith, often volunteering for numerous parish programs over several decades of his life. He enjoyed poetry, music, and especially singing with the *HOA Chorus*. We ran into John in December of 2009 at a retirement home in Overland Park. The chorus was performing at a Caroling Caravan for the Salvation Army at the time and saw him sitting at a table in the back of the room. He was his same old friendly self and remembered many of singing friends.

John Sharp Hill, 102, died at his home Sunday, Oct. 2, 2016. He joins his wife, **Mary**. Rest in peace, John, we remember the good old days. ❤️

## Wade Dexter 1923 - 2016

By Ron McIntire



**Wade Dexter** – If you knew **Wade Dexter**, you no doubt heard him called “Mr. Bulletin Editor.” He was born in Elderon, WI, in 1923; the eldest of three children. His father was a school teacher and principal and his mother was a homemaker. He graduated from high school in Oshkosh, WI in 1941, married his high school sweetheart, **Joyce Elmer**, in 1942, was inducted into the U.S. Army in 1943 and served in Europe during WW II. He eventually accepted a commission in the Regular Army and served in the Medical Service Corps in Japan, Iran, Fort Leavenworth and Korea until he retired in 1969, at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Wade joined the Barbershop Society in 1965 and parlayed the knowledge of music he learned in high school into singing with the St. Joseph chapter. He later moved to Lawrence, KS where he held every chapter office except treasurer as a member of the now defunct Lawrence chapter. In 1983, he transferred to the Kansas City chapter and sang bass with the *Heart of America Chorus*. He and Joyce had two sons, **Paul** and **Steve**, both of whom are former barbershoppers.

Wade was the bulletin editor for the *Harmonotes* and the *CSD Serenade* for a number of years and wrote regular columns, “A look at the Past in *Harmonotes*” for the *Harmonotes* and “Bulletin Browsing” for the *Serenade*. He was chosen society Bulletin Editor of the Year in 1988 and always considered that his most memorable barbershopping experience.

Wade became inactive in the chorus in the 1990s when driving from Liberty became difficult, but he kept in touch with his friends in HOA and visited the chapter occasionally. He helped Bulletin Editor, **Todd Anderson**, with the *Harmonotes* as well as writing *Focal Point* articles and his signature “Look in the Past *Harmonotes*” articles until April, 2010.

No funeral was scheduled for Wade but a celebration dinner in his honor was held at the Mt. Zion Baptist church in Edgerton, MO. His son, Paul, delivered a eulogy after the dinner remembering how his dad was a devoted family man, a good and proper man of good taste, a good planner and organizer and had a great bass singing voice. He succumbed to Alzheimer's and advanced age Oct. 4, 2016 at the Leavenworth VA Community Living Center.

Four members of the *Harmony Handful*, **Dale Neuman**, **Rich Huyck**, **Jon Gathright** and **Val Putzier** were on hand to sing *Love At Home*, *Precious Lord*, and *Beautiful Dreamer*.

We miss you Wade and that great singing voice. Rest In Peace. ❤️



# Thomas “Tom” S. Millott 1919 - 2016

By Ron McIntire



**Tom Millot** was a well-known member of the Barbershop Harmony Society, a three-time member of the Kansas City Missouri Chapter, a past president of at least three chapters and served in all the chapter offices. In 1982, he became associated with the *Ancient*

and *Harmonious Society of Woodshedders*, and over the years he was Certifier and Chief Certifier in the Mid-Atlantic District and Central States District and served on the International Board of AHSOW.

Tom was born in 1919, in Pana, Illinois and graduated from McKinley High School in St. Louis, Missouri. He received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Washington University in 1949 and served in the U.S. Navy before and during WWII, and in the Korean War. After the Korean War, he worked for various architects and architectural firms and for the U. S. Postal Service in the early '60s, as an architect.

He joined the St. Louis Chapter in 1946 and later joined the St. Louis Suburban Chapter as a dual member. In 1970, his job with the Postal Service transferred him to Kansas City to work with the Corps of Engineers, and he joined the Kansas City Chapter. He had no formal training in music but sang all his life. He attended Harmony College 18 times.

Tom recalled that he worked with **Jim Henry's** father, **Bob Henry**, and discovered that Jim was an above average singer. After a hard sell he persuaded him to attend a No Fishin' Trip with the St. Louis Chapter.

The outing included woodshedding behind a tent 'til 4:30 in the morning. That was the spark, Tom said, that got Jim into barbershopping.

Over the years, Tom sang in a number of chapters in cities where his work transferred him. In the Washington, DC area, he sang with the Fairfax Virginia Chapter, and in 1998 he returned to Kansas City and rejoined his friends in *HOA* and joined the Overland Park Chapter as a dual member.

He's been in many quartets over his 70-year barbershopping career, the most memorable, he recalls, was the *3 Generation 4*, singing with **Floyd Lankenau** and two of his sons, **Gordon** and **Wayne**. He didn't remember competing but they did a lot of sing-outs.

Tom visited the Kansas City Chapter again in 2014 after a long hiatus and planned to rejoin *HOA*. He was part of the heritage of the Kansas City Chapter and the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Rest in peace, Tom, chances are you'll find someone to woodshed with.

Ed. Note: Information was based on the Focal Point article in the May 2007 *Harmonotes*. ❤️

# New Harmony Handful Starts New Year

By Dale Neuman, Photo courtesy of Don Fuson

**2016** was a busy year and 2017 promises to be even more so for the *New Harmony Handful*. With more than 25 performances in the old year and two already completed by Jan. 11 of this year, the *Handful* continues its busy schedule of singing as replacements for church choirs, performing at retirement communities, nursing homes and for senior organizations. A day-long singing valentines program for nursing homes is scheduled for Feb. 13 where we will perform for the residents of five or six. Our busy schedule is the handiwork of our performance manager, HOA's **Tony Strub**, who takes the calls, visits the venues, makes the arrangements and herds the singers to get them all there on time. He often arranges the schedule so that we can enjoy lunch together since eating is also among the favorite activities of the *NHH*.

The annual Christmas Dinner was held on Dec. 19 at the Mt. Washington United Methodist Church in Independence, hosted by **Jim and Denise Davis** along with two of their granddaughters. All but two men and their spouses were able to attend. The *NHH* sang several songs as did the two quartets in our group. **Ron Abel** was announced at the winner of the "Handful Hero" award for 2016 although

he did not receive his award until just recently. (See accompanying photo). **Dona Neuman** was able to attend her first event away from home in more than a year and enjoyed a meal not prepared by **Dale** in almost as long a time.



Ron Abel receiving the 2016 "Handful Hero" award from director, Jim Bagby.

Two new members (also from HOA) increased our ranks in 2016. **Gordy Coleman** has been with us since early in the year and **Frank Lasta** joined us near the end of the year after moving back to the Kansas City area from Florida. He now lives in John Knox Village. And, on Frank's first visit to our rehearsal site he discovered how the many hands in the Handful can be very helpful as he managed to miss a turn and ran his car up over a curb. But with 12 men lifting and pushing, he was off the curb in less than a minute!

**Jim Bagby** continues his patient musical leadership as our repertoire is increasing and the quality of our singing seems to be better each year. He and I and all the men of

the *NHH* want to applaud one of our own, **Barry Sanders**, as he takes on the Presidency of HOA for this year. And we all wish each of you a happy new year! ❤️



# FOCAL POINT – Jim Bagby Up close and personal

By Ron McIntire

He stands a shade under 5 foot 7, but he commands the respect of everyone he meets. He can conjure a barbershop tag on a moment's notice and sing and teach all four parts at will. It's hard to find a man as full of love for barbershopping as **Jim Bagby**, and it's hard to describe how this extraordinary man affects the life of everyone he meets in one way or another.

In the spring of 1982, my wife and I were students at the *Missouri School of Music*, improving our church choir singing. Jim and the RR4 were working to solve a voice problem with one of the members. Two months later, I became Jim's sixteenth Man of Note. The events of that day are as fresh now as they were that sunny day in May.

Jim was born in Colorado Springs in 1943, a stone's throw from snow-covered Pike's Peak, if you can throw one fifteen miles that is. Most of his early life was spent in various parts of Colorado and living in Denver with his grandparents when his father was in the war, until he moved to Oklahoma just before he entered junior high school. Following his graduation from Norman High School, he spent two years at OU then graduated from Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma with a BA in English and a minor in music.

Vietnam was heating up about that time so it seemed logical to jump the gun and audition with the U.S. Army Band. He was drafted shortly thereafter and, on the heels of basic training, was assigned to Fort Sill in Lawton, OK where he was trained in artillery fire direction control telling the 105 and 155mm Howitzer batteries where to aim. In the meantime, the band commander put in for a request for his transfer. When his advanced training was completed, the request was approved and he was transferred to the 97th Army Band as trombonist.

The primary mission of the band was to provide a boost in moral to the troops to instill in them the will to fight and win battles, and to promote national interests at home and abroad. "We played at least one major outdoor honor ceremony each week the year round, and at smaller change-of-command ceremonies inside various headquarters across the post. If no jobs were scheduled, we practiced. We also had an army chorus for the annual GI inspections. Guess who volunteered to lead that? And guess where I ordered the music--with government funds? And, since we had no use for it the rest of the year, I had it donated to the local barbershop chapter--which I also directed."

Most of the performances were at Fort Sill for soldiers returning from Vietnam. For the most part, Jim enjoyed his years in Army. Many of the musicians he played with had trained at the Armed Forces School of Music in Norfolk, Virginia, and many were career musicians. When he got the call to go to Vietnam, he did not have enough time left in the service to go.

Jim and Joann met in Norman, Oklahoma and were married there at the First Presbyterian Church, April 24, 1964. They remained in Oklahoma until 1971 when they moved to Kansas City. They have one daughter, Kristin Anne.



Jim has never been far away from the newspaper business. His first job was delivering newspapers when he was a kid and, aside from being a sacker at Safeway, and a softball scorekeeper at the parks department, he has worked for most of his 34 years at the Associated Press as broadcast editor for Missouri and Kansas.

Music was a big part of Jim's life. "When I was young," he recalled, "My mother always sang around the house. Singing was a daily class in grade school in the '50s. Almost everyone sang back then. It was part of the culture. I never had a great voice but I always liked to sing." Everyone in his family sang and all six kids--five boys and one girl, played different musical instruments.

His introduction to barbershop came when he was eleven. He went to his first meeting with his grandfather, **Marion (M.D.) Bagby** a charter member of the Colorado Springs Chapter. When he was twelve, he and his three younger brothers formed the *Bagby Brothers* quartet. The next time you're at Jim's house, ask to see the photo of the quartet hanging in his downstairs rec. room. He'll be happy to show it to you, unless he's packed it away of course. But then...

(Continued on page 16 ➡)

(Continued from page 15)

He visited the Oklahoma City Chapter with his dad when he was in junior high and joined the society in 1961. He went to his first International convention in Kansas City in 1962. When the Associated Press hired him in 1971 and offered him a job in Kansas City, he jumped at the chance to check out HOA. "Everyone had heard of the *Heart of America*," he recalled.

In his barbershopping career, Jim has been in three barbershop chapters: Oklahoma City, Lawton and Kansas City, directed two Sweet Adeline choruses, the Lawton Chapter Chorus and the *HOA Chorus*, more than a dozen registered or organized quartets and no telling how many disorganized ones. He sang with *RR4*, *Hubbub*, *Tone-Henge*, *Harmony Spectrum* and, as of late, *Armchair Chorderbacks* quartets. *Harmony Spectrum* won the 1982 CSD Quartet Contest, *RR4* took the 1986 International Quartet Championship, and *Armchair Chorderbacks* were the 2015 CSD Seniors Champs. All together, he has spent almost 40 years with the *RR4*, 15 years with *Tone-Henge* and the years are mounting with the *Chorderbacks*. And, he directed HOA for 25 years over three separate occasions, justly earning the title of Director Emeritus.

Jim tells the story that he was coaching the original *RR4* when the bari, **Rufus Kenagy**, left the quartet. The remaining members asked if he would replace Rufus. They consulted the legendary **Oz Newgard** who listened to the new lineup and he said, "I believe this will work." That was in December of 1976 and, in the early '80s, **Don Kahl** replaced tenor, **Everett Roth**, and in 1986 the *RR4* won the International in Salt Lake City.

And it doesn't stop there. He has served as Chapter President, Program VP (twice) and Membership VP in the Kansas City Chapter. At the district and society level, he has contributed mightily and has been on the staff of Harmony College, has coached choruses and quartets around the nation, and judged chorus and quartet contests for years. He's retired from much of that now but he adds his two cents worth to the chorus from time to time.

If you were around in 1984, you might remember how **Don Kahl** often stood on a chair behind him during the singing of *Keep the Whole World* and motion to the chorus to continue when Jim ended the song. It's doubtful if Jim ever got accustomed to losing control of the chorus and it's doubtful we ever got accustomed to enjoying his surprised reaction. Yep, that's Jim. ❤️



**STILL GOT IT** — Paul Dexter was eager to get in some baritone licks at the Jan. 7 HOA installation/awards banquet, where he announced the Wade Dexter Harmony University Scholarship to honor his late father and longtime Kansas City Chapter member. Joining the makeshift quartet were (from left) past HOA presidents Carter Combs, Dexter, Jim Bagby and Mike Mathieu. (Photo by Joann Bagby)

## 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.

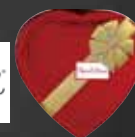
As of Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> (end of year), after 48 drawings (12 since the last report): The total collected for Harmony Foundation since the last report is \$295. The total collected for the calendar year 2016 is \$1,107. This amount was donated to Harmony Foundation at the end of the year.

We had another big winner. Yours truly, **Jim Porter**, won \$143 on Oct. 4. To date in 2017, there have been three drawings and \$88 has been collected for Harmony Foundation. The carry-over jackpot as of Jan. 18 is \$110. ❤️



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## HEART OF AMERICA CHORUS CALENDAR

**Saturday, Feb. 18**

**Harmony Explosion 2017 • Olathe East High School**

**Friday, April 21**

**Central States District Spring Covention • Wichita, KS**

**Saturday, June 17**

**Heart of AERICA Annual Show • 2pm & 7pm  
Bell Center**

## THE KANSAS CITY CHAPTER OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

...is a singing fraternity whose mission is to learn, teach, and perform the highest-quality, 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.