



the north shore harmony rag



Joseph Schlesinger, Third Assistant
Temporary Editor and Royal Keeper
of the Minor Typos

North Shore Chapter,
Society for the
Preservation and
Encouragement of
Barber Shop Quartet
Singing in America, Inc.

Meetings:
7:45 p.m. Wednesdays,
Presbyterian Home,
3131 Simpson St.
(Golf Rd.), Evanston, IL
(Guests are welcome!)

July 2003

27 Members

Volume 31, Issue 7

As long as we are discussing conventions, the Illinois District Fall Convention registration form has been posted to the district Web site. The address for the form and specific instructions is printed in a box on page 2 of this newsletter.

Please note that there has been a change in the way payment is to be made for the room deposit and for the convention registration. Read the instructions very carefully.

And, by all means, plan to share the fun of Fall Convention.

Power Play, Vocal Majority Lead the Pack in Montreal

More than 10,100 Barbershoppers, their families, and guests attended our Society's 65th annual International Convention in Montreal. This was only the third International to be held in Canada, the first since 1993.

Forty-two quartets competed in this year's contest. **Power Play** won the gold with a total of 8099 points, followed by **Gotcha!** (8072 points),

Metropolis (8051 points), **Uptown Sound** (7988 points), and **Riptide** (7967 points). Illinois District's **Cheers!** finished in sixth place.

In the chorus contest, 21 choruses vied for top honors. Most conventiongoers expected the **Vocal Majority** to pick up their 10th gold medal, and the superchorus from Dallas did not disappoint. The other medalist choruses were **The Northern Lights** (Toronto, Ont., earning their third consecutive silver medal), **Ambassadors of Harmony** (St.

Charles, Mo.), **The Alliance** (Greater Central Ohio), and **Midwest Vocal Express** (Greendale, Wis.). Illinois District's representative was the **West Towns Chorus** from Chicagoland West Suburban Chapter. They ended up in 19th place.



The college quartet contest was interesting. For the first time, two quartets from Illinois qualified to compete at international: **Fortunes Fools** (from Northwestern University) and **Vocal Tonic** (containing one Northwestern student). The former quartet had to scratch because one of their members was in a summer program overseas; Vocal Tonic sang their way to second place.

Next year's International will be in Louisville, Ky. It's not that far away, and we hope that Northbrook Chapter's **New Tradition Chorus** will qualify to compete there, so it might be wise to register for that one soon.



Here are the events we are planning for Evanston Harmony Days in October . . .

Sunday afternoon, Oct. 12: Shoreliner Chorus will perform a 20-minute set as part of the Evanston Arts Week Music Showcase at Music Institute of Chicago in Evanston. North Shore Chapter will provide various vocal/choral groups to fill about half of the show, including our set. The **Chordmasters** quartet will sing with the chorus and also perform a few songs on their own.

Monday, Oct. 13 through Friday, Oct. 17: Vocal groups (including, we hope, a barbershop quartet or two) will visit and perform at Evanston schools, nursing homes, and hospitals.

continued on page 4—
see HARMONY DAYS

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Rag Deadline: Second Wednesday of Every Month

Board Meetings: First Sunday of each month.
The August Board meeting will be held at 7:45 p.m.
Sunday, Aug. 2, at **Phil Schwimmer's** home, 3432
Salem Walk E., #AG, Northbrook. All chapter
members are welcome.

Chapter Web site:
<http://evkhome/northstarnet.org/bflat>
(Current Rag issue is also on the Web site!)

Chapter Charity Report

Labels for Heartspring for the second quarter of 2003 were received as follows, in ascending order:

6 - my friend, **Stan Sclove**
24 - yours truly

And the winner is . . . (drum roll)

36 - once again, **Pete Brandt**

—**Phil Schwimmer**
Charity Chairman

Guest Coach May Visit Monthly

Did you enjoy the coaching session we had with **Dan Smith, Jr.** last month? Through dialog with **Dick Yanow**, Dan has volunteered his time approximately once a month to visit our chorus rehearsals and offer some of his expertise. Not only is Dan the tenor of **Aces High**, our district's current champion quartet, he is also a certified Singing judge. Best of all, Dan is not charging us any fees for these coaching sessions. Let's pay special attention each time he visits and remember to thank him for his generosity.

COMING EVENTS

North Shore Chapter:
Every Wednesday night—**Informal Guest Night—BRINGASINGA!**
Sun., 7/27-Sun., 8/3—**Harmony College/Directors College**—St. Joseph, Mo.
Sun., 8/10—**"Rain on the Hamburgers" Party**—3 p.m.-? at **Marty and Flora Steigman's** home, 4322 Greenwood St., Skokie.
Sun., 8/10—**Shoreliner Chorus Performance for Skokie Park District**—6:30 p.m. warmup; sing for 20-30 minutes starting at 7:00 at Devonshire Cultural Arts Center, 4400 Greenwood St., Skokie.
Sat., 9/13—**Evanston Not-for-Profit Day at Farmer's Market.**
Sat., 10/11-Sun., 10/19—**Evanston Harmony Days and Arts Week Evanston.** See the story on page 1 for a list of events and tentative information.

North Shore Chapter Web Site:
www.nsn.org/evkhome/bflat

Elsewhere:
Fri., 7/18—**Interstate Woodshed**—8 p.m. (dinner at 6:30) at American Legion Hall, Hwy. B, Silver Lake, Wis. All Barbershoppers invited; \$5 donation requested to defray expenses. For information, call the hall at 262/ 889-8255 or **Gerry Carroll** at 847/678-0092.

Barbershop Harmony Chicagoland Web site:
www.bbs.singer.as

NOTE: The tentative Shoreliner Chorus performance at the Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival July 19 or 20 will NOT occur.

June/July Guests

Larry Kohn (Custer's Last Stand Art Fair)
Dan Smith, Jr. (Northbrook Chapter, guest coach)

The Illinois District Fall Convention registration form can be found on the Web at:
http://www.harmonize.ws/ILL/contest/fall2003/Fall2003_ConReg.pdf

(The form requires Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have this software on your computer, you can download it free from the Web site.)

Instructions are located at:
http://www.harmonize.ws/ILL/contest/fall2003/fall_2003_registration.cfm

Register before Aug. 4 to avoid the late fee.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:
North Shore Chapter of SPEBSQSA is a group of men of all ages who enjoy gathering in fellowship to sing in the four-part, a cappella, close harmony style known as barbershop. As we participate in our varied social and musical activities, including both choral and quartet singing, our members can develop their vocal skills and their appreciation of the rich heritage of American song, which we share with our community through performances in a variety of settings.

This craft article began in our June issue and continues with Chapters 3 through 5. Because it was intended for publication in nine monthly installments, there are references to subject matter that will be covered in a subsequent month when, in fact, the information appears in this article. If you like, pretend you're reading Chapter 4 in August and Chapter 5 in September . . . but don't wait till then to read those sections. Some of this information will look familiar. There's nothing new in what Fred is teaching us; it's merely presented in a different way.

Barbershop Craft: Singing In Tune—Part Two

—Fred King (Dundalk, Md. Chapter)

Chapter 3

The resonating cavities can be fully utilized only when the throat is relaxed, open and the upper throat arched in a high palate position. The mouth is best used as a resonance chamber when all the muscles, including the tongue, are relaxed and the cavity of the mouth is enlarged. The naso-pharynx and the nasal cavity are most effectively used when a slight opening between the oropharynx and the naso-pharynx is maintained, thus allowing an extension of the vibrating column of air emanating from the larynx. The feeling involved in this is similar to yawning.

Alert Posture

- + Accurate Hearing
- + High Arched Tone
Utilizing the Resonators
- = **No Flattening**

Next month, we'll get into more of the discussion of control aspects needed for good singing.

Chapter 4

Breath control is certainly an important factor, and material is available to make it possible to learn or to teach how to breathe properly. It's important to avoid flattening in particular because it is necessary to keep an adequate supply of air exerting pressure against the vocal chords. Wasting breath initially by uncontrolled attacks at the beginning of phrases or taking too little breath causes the singer to run out of air before reaching the end of the phrase. This will result in flattening.

Singing softly seems to cause special problems for many singers. They have the tendency not to energize themselves sufficiently, thus permitting the pharynx to collapse, eliminating the resonance and destroying breath support. This results in a lowering of tone.

To control this, have the singer show his upper teeth slightly when singing softly. This helps take the weight off the voice. An elongated movement of the jaw should be minimized. On the other hand, singing loudly with too heavy a tone quality also leads to flattening, as will excessive vibrato and tremolo. These last two do not allow the other parts to tune to the problem voice.

A quartet or chorus that fails to embrace the basic balance rules of volume relationships as written up in the singing category and the Basic Barbershop Craft Manual will sometimes produce a rough or dissonant sound. This impedes the singers' ability to hear good tuning. The dissonance also may be perceived as being out of tune.

Next month, we will touch upon other causes of flattening. Remember, there's a test coming. Actually, the test is given each time we have a chance to sing together. Next month, we'll get into more of the discussion of control aspects needed for good singing.

Chapter 5

In addition to the reasons covered in prior chapters, there are other causes of flattening. These are basically self-explanatory.

- Unless releases are precise and intensely vitalized, there will often be a slight drop in pitch.
- Slurring, scooping or approaching notes from below will result in flattening.
- Repeated notes in a phrase are often wrongly approached from below. This causes each succeeding note to be slightly lower in pitch.
- Faulty diction causes flattening.
- Attacking a singing consonant below the pitch of the following vowel, and then sliding up to it will produce flattening. The singable consonant must always be sung on the pitch of the following vowel. Particular attention must be paid to L, M and N.
- Insecurity in voice parts, guessing at notes and following rather than thinking for oneself will lead to flattening.
- Overlearning a selection (going stale) likewise leads to flattening.
- Having singers in the wrong voice part may cause them to sing out of tune.

—from Dundalk, Md. Chapter
Charivari,
Tom Wheatley, editor



"Cliff... you sing a tad flat!"

From: Mr. Gradgrind's Literal Answers to Rhetorical Questions

—source: <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/gradgrind.html>
submitted by **Tina Gunther**, Whittier, Calif.

Tell me why the ivy twines.

Not all ivies do twine, of course: some are mere creeping vines. However, climbing ivies such as are commonly seen covering academic buildings maximize their exposure to light by using twining tendrils to affix themselves to other plants and objects in order to gain altitude and escape their shade.

Would you like to swing on a star?

Even supposing that I were to wish to do such a thing, it would be quite impossible. Swinging requires that the force of gravity be exerted in the direction opposite to the pivot of the pendulum, whereas if one were somehow to succeed in attaching a pendulum to even so small a star as a white dwarf the predomi-

nant pull of gravity toward the star would convert any such attempt into a rapid vertical plunge toward its surface and almost immediate death by evaporation.

How are you going to keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paris?

Administered commodity prices resulting in an average profit per farmer of no more than \$50,000 per annum should be adequate to discourage profligate trips to France.

How high the moon?

It varies between 356,000 and 407,000 km in distance from the surface of the earth, its average distance being 384,400 km.

What shall we do with a drunken sailor?

D. Kolb and **E. K. E. Gunderson's** study, "Alcoholism

in the United States Navy," reports that attempts to prevent, diagnose and rehabilitate sailors suffering from alcohol-related problems are to a measurable degree superior to the older approach of simple hospitalization (published in *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 183-194).

Who wrote the Book of Love?

The earliest work that translates into English with that title was penned by the Sufi **Sadi** in the 13th century. **Rene of Anjou**, King of Naples 1435-1480, wrote and illustrated his *Book of Love* some time after 1473 while living idly in Provence. Since then there have been over two dozen books published in English with that title.

—from the PROBE Web site

Harmony Days (continued from page 1)

Tuesday evening, Oct. 14: Vocal workshop, probably at Elliott Hall, Presbyterian Home. Free admission; open to the public.

Wednesday night, Oct. 15: Guest Night/Open House, at our regular meeting time and place.

Sunday afternoon, Oct. 19: Vocal/choral showcase at a venue to be determined. North Shore Chapter will organize and produce a two-hour program featuring choral and vocal groups, including a 20- to 25-minute

set performed by the **Shoreliner Chorus**. Free admission; open to the public.

In addition, the musical programs on the two Sunday afternoons will each include a community singalong of approximately 15 minutes' duration.

The Evanston Arts Council, which sponsors Evanston Arts Week, is very enthusiastic about lending us its support. We plan a massive community-wide publicity campaign that will be launched shortly.

Rick Prieto has resigned as Evanston Harmony Days Committee chairman, but has consented to continue serving on the committee. Until his successor is chosen, **Joseph Schlesinger** will act as chairman pro tem. Most of the groundwork that has been laid for this pioneering effort would not have been possible without Rick's leadership. We thank him for his talents and time, and we thank the other committee members for theirs as well.

**THERE'S
TIME TO
REGISTER
FOR
HARMONY
COLLEGE.**

**A week of
total barber-
shop awaits
you at Har-
mony College,
and the good
news is that
there's still
time to regis-
ter. Harmony
College runs
from July 27
to Aug. 3 at
Missouri
Western State
College in St.
Joseph, Mo.
To register, go
online at www.spebsqsa.org/hcdc
or call
800/876-7464,
x8551. The
Web site also
offers detailed
information
about the
classes,
shows,
registration
fees and
more.**

LAST WORD
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be ordered
from Harmony
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by calling
800/876-7464,
x8410. It is
anticipated
that the
videos and
DVDs will be
available in
October.

The price is
the same for
video or DVD:
\$25 (U.S.).

Organizational Meeting for New Daytime Chapter

There will be an organizational meeting to set up a daytime barbershop group on Friday, July 18, at 1:30 p.m. We will meet at the Best Western Midway Motor Lodge located at Oakton and Route 83 in Elk Grove Village. Enter westbound off of Oakton/Higgins or southbound off of Busse.

Most of you know this as the place that the Pioneers have used for the past several years. They have two different rooms that we can use for **free** depending on the size of the group. If you're interested, their restaurant is open from 11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. and again after 4 p.m. The bar opens at 4 p.m.

“From the Top”

Some of you might have suspected that, in addition to wearing about half a dozen hats in this chapter, your president has two distinct personalities. Usually “Good Joe” is on his best behavior at chapter meetings and barbershop gatherings. But at the June 25th open house, “Bad Joe” made a rare appearance. Of all members, I should have borne in mind the sanctity of our meetings as a place where harmony is to be preserved, and I promise to keep “Bad Joe” under wraps in some remote closet on Wednesday nights.

That having been said, I hope those of you who had to sit through my little tirade understand and appreciate the passion I bring to this hobby. Most of my colleagues probably acknowledge that barbershopping is more than just a hobby with me; as is the case with many long-time Barbershoppers, it's a way of life.

In order to get this group started we need everyone's help. Every chapter will benefit by keeping their senior members singing. I'm also asking all chapter officers and members to contact those fellows who can't make evening meetings anymore. Many of us who are still involved in our chapters don't mind singing 2 or 3 times a week, especially those who are retired. As I said in my previous e-mail, this will in no way replace anyone's membership in their present chorus. Instead it gives a lot of guys an additional opportunity to enjoy their hobby.

If I can do one thing in my role as a chapter leader, I hope it is to inspire and feed *your* passion for barbershop harmony and for North Shore Chapter. Because, truly, this group isn't my baby alone—it's every member's baby—and without every member's individual and collective passion, there's nothing.

Do this: Think of the one thing you want most out of this hobby. It might be the thrill of ringing chords in a quartet, or the satisfaction that comes from learning a piece of music well enough to sing before an appreciative audience, or the reassurance that every Wednesday night will be an experience shared with your best friends. Trivial or paramount, whatever it is, if you're not getting what you want most out of barbershopping, tell one of your chapter Board members. One of the jobs you've chosen us to do is listen to your suggestions and respond to them.

Please get back to me with a head count, individual or group, so we can obtain a large enough room.

And yes, we do need someone to volunteer as director.

Thanks to everyone who responded so favorably to my last letter.

—Jules Kastens

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Mount. Prospect, IL 60056

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So bring your passion for this hobby to every meeting. I don't care what aspect of barbershopping your passion is for, just as long as it's for the common good and not destructive. We don't want to incite anybody to homicide (see the story on page 6). Make this your mantra: “This is *my* chapter, and it's up to *me* to make it better.”

Oh, and by the way, this is the time of year that the nominating committee convenes to pick next year's leadership team. I hope we can count on some new faces from within our group to share the responsibility for North Shore Chapter in the coming year. More about this next month.

I'll leave you with our Society president's motto for this year: “Singing Is Life . . . the rest is just details.”

—Joseph Schlesinger
President

P. O. Box 741
Evanston, IL 60204

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The North Shore Harmony Rag • July 2003

"Someone's
boring me.
I think it's me."

—Dylan Thomas
(in Rayner
Heppenstall,
*Four
Absentees*)

A Cautionary Tale from Down Under

(Let this be a warning to our leads . . . and anyone else tempted to let his pitch go south.)

Man Killed for Singing Sinatra Off-Key

A 25-year-old Filipino man has been stabbed dead for singing a **Frank Sinatra** classic out of tune during a birthday party.

Police officer **Noel Albis** said the victim, **Casimiro Lagugad**, was asked to sing Sinatra's popular song *My Way* during the party in the Manila suburban city of Caloocan on Sunday.

"Witnesses said the suspect, **Julio Tugas**, 48, one of the guests and a neighbour of

the victim, got irked because Lagugad was singing out of tune," Officer Albis said.

"Tugas suddenly attacked the victim and stabbed him in the neck," he added.

Guests rushed Mr Lagugad to the hospital, but he died while being treated.

Tugas later surrendered to village security officials, who turned him over to authorities.

Police are preparing homicide charges against the suspect, who apparently admitted to the crime.

—from *Sydney [Australia] Morning News*
June 25, 2003

(seen on the Harmonet—
it's amazing what one can
find there!)

Quartet News

North Shore Four (Mimura-Remien-Jones-Schlesinger) will entertain al fresco at an Evanston Historical Society ice cream social at the Dawes Mansion (225 Greenwood St., Evanston) Saturday afternoon, Sept. 20, from 2:30 to 3:30. (If it rains, the event will take place the following day.)

And thanks to **Chordmasters** for helping us out in our Oct. 12 performance as part of Evanston Harmony Days.

Tune It
Or Die!