



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!)

May 2002

27 Members

Volume 30, Issue 5

Keep up with
the latest de-
velopments in
Illinois District
by reading the
Staccato, our
district's on-
line newsletter.

Access
Staccato via
the "Illinois
Update" link
from the dis-
trict home
page (www.harmonize.ws/ILL) or go di-
rectly to the
May issue by
entering www.harmonize.ws/ILL/news/update/pdf/v5-4.pdf.

Quartets Shine at District Contest

Shoreliners Judged "Most Improved Chorus"

Two quartets, **Cheers!** and **Gangbusters!**, qualified at the Illinois District Spring Convention to represent our district at International Contest in Portland, Ore. This year's quartet contest was marked by impressive performances by many of the 29 competing quartets.

Alchemy tied for fifth place. In addition, **FOURtunes Fools**, from Northwestern University, won the collegiate quartet contest, and **NaCl**, from Barrington High School, won the high school quartet contest.

Most notably, North Shore Chapter gave its best showing in many years with a sixth-place finish in the cho-

rus contest. In doing so, our **Shoreliner Chorus** won the "Most Improved Chorus" award. Our 641-point total was the best we've received since the current judging system went into effect in 1993.

South Cook Chapter's **Singing Men of Note** finished the chorus contest in first place (767 points), followed by Elgin's **Minutemen of Harmony** (711 points), Macomb's **Prairieland Barbershop Chorus** (681 points), Oak Lawn's **Plank Road Harmonizers** (666 points), and Joliet's **Blackhawk Chorus** (664).

For complete scores, see the Illinois District Web site (www.harmonize.ws/ILL).

Interchapter Bash Set

Come one, come all to the interchapter gathering set for Wednesday, June 12, at the Sokol Community Center, 4855 N. Elston Ave., Chicago. Join North Shore, Arlington Heights, and Chicago Metro Chapter members in an evening of song and socializing.

Chapter Directory Update

Paul Smalley (new address and home phone):
12030 Clarkson Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064
(310) 479-6452

Elmer Sweet (new e-mail):
esweet@attbi.com

We Get Letters . . .

April 10, 2002

Dear Mr. LeHew Noble:

Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your and for the Shoreliners Men's Chorus' contribution in making the Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening of the American Legion Memorial Civic Center such a rousing success last Sunday. I received several positive comments about the warmth of the facility's décor, the friendliness of the volunteers, and the melodic sounds that you produced.

Bud Swanson of our Civic Center staff expressed high praise for your cooperation and our visitors obviously were very appreciative of your efforts. Again Mr. LeHew, please know that our staff and I are extremely grateful for all you have done, and do, for our community.

With best regards,

s/ Daniel D. Scanlon, Mayor
Village of Morton Grove

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Rag Deadline: Second Wednesday of Every Month

Board Meetings: First Sunday of each month.

The June Board meeting will be held at 7:45 p.m. Sunday, June 2, at Phil Schwimmer's home, 3432 Salem Walk E., Northbrook. All chapter members are welcome.

Chapter Web site: www.nsn.org/evkhome/bflat
(Current Rag issue is also on the Web site!)



"From the Top"

We've taken a big step this past month, with our sixth-place spring contest performance, which earned us the "Most Improved Chorus" award. But it's only the first step of a long journey.

So, while we rightfully congratulate ourselves on a job well done, let's not forget that we must constantly strive to improve the quality of our singing and presentation.

Why? The bottom line is that the better we perform, the more fun we'll have, the more good singers we'll attract as members, and the more opportunities we'll have to share our music with the public.

Right now, we're trying to orchestrate a busy summer

season. We've contacted chambers of commerce and park districts in various North Shore communities to solicit invitations for our chorus and quartets to perform. If you know of any potential performance opportunities, please relay them—with names and phone numbers of contact persons—to me.

We're also setting our sights on a Rain-on-the-Hamburgers Party some time in August. Would any member like to host it? If so, please talk to **Bill Remien** as soon as you can.

For many years, Microsoft's advertising slogan was, "Where do you want to go?" We are asking you the same question. Where do you want to go in your bar-

COMING EVENTS

North Shore Chapter:

Every Wednesday night—Informal Guest Night—BRINGASINGA!

Wed., 5/29—"Fifth Wednesday"—???

Wed., 6/12—Interchapter Bash (with Arlington Heights and Chicago Metro Chapters)—7:45 p.m. at Sokol Community Center, 4855 N. Elston Ave. (one block north of Lawrence Ave.), Chicago. Guests are invited—in fact, they're encouraged.

Sun., 6/30—Sun., 7/7—**International Convention**—Portland, Ore.

Sun., 7/28—Sun., 8/4—**Harmony College/Directors College**—St. Joseph, Mo.

Sat., 7/20 and Sun., 7/21—**Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival**.

Fri., 9/27—Sun., 9/29—**Illinois District Fall Convention**—Peoria.

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

Elsewhere:

Fri., 5/17—**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 630/543-8808 (days).

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

bershop journey? Tell your Board members, and we'll do what we can to make our hobby enjoyable and worthwhile for you and your fellow Shoreliners.

—**Joseph Schlesinger**
President

April/May Guests

Scott Beatty (Schlesinger)
Cullen Cammers
(Schlesinger)
Jon Maxim
(Langley, B.C. Chapter)
Marvin Michnik (Yanow)
Chordmasters

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.

Ever wonder
what criteria a
judge uses to
adjudicate a
chorus or
quartet
performance?

There's no
need to be
baffled . . .
consult the
Society's
Contest and
Judging
Handbook.

It's easily
available on-
line at the
SPEBSQSA
Web site:
[www.spebsqsa
.org/C&J/
Handbook.htm](http://www.spebsqsa.org/C&J/Handbook.htm).

Many other
helpful docu-
ments are also
available on
SPEBSQSA's
Web site. For a
listing, see the
Document
Center at
[www.spebsqsa
.org/Docs](http://www.spebsqsa.org/Docs).

Here's What the Judges Said—Spring 2002

(From notes taken at the A&R session by Mindy Lazor and edited by Joseph Schlesinger)

Presentation Category (Visual, Vocal, Song Choice) – Joe Hunter:

"Hello Mary Lou"

- Theme is *rhythmic*, but we tended to vary between *rhythmic* and *lyric*. Presentation wasn't all SPICE—not *toe-tapping* enough—we sort of "trotted" through the song.
- Need more *body energy* (posture, knee bend, depth of singing, better support).
- Faces: no consistent level of commitment throughout the chorus.

"You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby"

- Theme is *rhythmic*—chorus did pretty good job, but lost meter on the breath (second time through) at ". . . must have shown the other kids how/I can see the judges' eyes . . ." This breath caused an "extra beat." Need to sing through this phrase without the breath.
- On the "wild" move, faces were *NOT consistent* with the move – remember the "believability factor" we keep talking about—take the life of the song into your own hands.
- On Joe's bow, need to have entire chorus acknowledge the bow—came across as "half-hearted"—only half the group actually achieved this—perhaps a hand gesture towards Joe should be added.
- On the "whole wide world" move: the move was unclear, worried, and mechanical.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Sing better—focus on this point.
- Smile more—genuinely.
- Make more out of body freedom.
- Better posture.
- Vocal support and stance—dynamic tension—resonation and vowels.
- Walk around while singing—greet each other—"paint the fence" while singing (to create constant wall of sound)—need to look

Singing Category – Bill Duncan:

"Hello Mary Lou"

- Need to be on a stage that's 75% smaller—very intimidating for a chorus our size to be on that size stage in that large an auditorium—definitely need to increase the size of the chorus—all that having been said, we did a very credible job.
- The "ahh" tune-up is the largest format on the scale and therefore the most difficult to master—takes the longest to tune. Should tune up on "oo" instead—would be quicker and easier. However, even tuning on the "ahh," we did very, very well. (As a side note, we should tune *all* ballads on "oo.")
- We have a "unity" or "unit sound" issue—heard 12 separate and distinct voices—a chorus our size needs to adopt the attitude (mentality) of a LARGE QUARTET: one bass, one lead, one baritone, one tenor.
- We need to use imagery—like a *farmer's fence*: each post should be in a perfect row; if you stand at one end and look down the line, you should see only one post, not 10, 20, or 100. Chorus tends to trail off the ends of phrases—need to *complete the ends of phrases and eliminate the white spaces*.
- Chorus needs to build more on dynamics (louds, softs) and know/understand the interpretive plan.
- Chorus needs to add more *warm air* to the vocal quality.

"You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby"

- The word "now" is like the word "ow"—chorus needs to turn and complete diphthongs—we're singing words, not word sounds.
- A "w," especially at the beginning of a word, is a singable sound and should be treated as such: an "oo" sound should precede the "w."
- Likewise, when singing the word "I," the "ah-ee" should be preceded by a slight "h" instead of a glottal start—this implies *warmth and color*.
- The word "you" starts with an "ee" vowel sound in the phrase "oh you" (what should be heard is "h-oh-ee-oo"—and *don't muscle the "B" in "baby."*)
- Need more *unity* in our vocal quality—sing with *warm air*.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Need more unison singing exercises in order to learn to carry sound through the phrase endings—pick a note comfortable for all voice parts and maintain constant pitch with constant singing.
- To develop uniformity in interpretive phrasing, build the song with the leads singing in unison, then add the other parts on the same pitch, one at a time, until the chorus gets it right.
- We have an opportunity to improve with rehearsal taping—shows a growth factor.

Continued on page 4—see JUDGES

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JUDGES (Continued from page 3)

Music Category – Jay Giallombardo:

"Hello Mary Lou"

- Need *sectional unity*—need to *marshal our forces*.
- When the pipe is blown and we begin to sing, we need to *maintain continuous breath pressure*—then there needs to be a release of pressure with the next breath. Currently, the chorus is singing with PUFFS of air—air pressure must be kept constant.
- Work more with the SINGER'S "AHH": sing a phrase on the "ahh," and when continuous pressure has been achieved, add the vowel sounds and then finally the consonants, but remember to *sing word sounds, not words*. "WORDS ARE THE SINGER'S ENEMY." Make the grouping of words look like a phrase, and use the words visually.

"You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby"

- We had a nice sense of the meter throughout the song.
- On "... handed you the prize/I'll bet you made ..." the break or pause should be a quicker breath.
- Need to have more *dynamic contrast*—start a phrase softly and *arc up* to the key words.
- Need more ACTIVE LISTENING. Singers should use their ears—have more awareness and use ears in a peripheral sense (analogous to using peripheral vision to see what's going on all around while paying attention to one thing). Singers tend to want to listen to themselves rather than to others—this practice is much less accurate than listening to others when singing.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Increase singing awareness
- Sing word sounds, *not* words
- Maintain better breath pressure—use "hissing" exercise to develop consistent breath pressure while singing.
- Let the face show the meaning of words.
- Internalize the interpretive plan.
- Work more with singer's "aah" (see note under "Hello Mary Lou").

Additional
comments
from Jay
Giallombardo:

We maintained
good tempo
and meter
throughout—
excellent job—
noticed some
"Northbrook-
like" techniques
—definite
moments of
"B-level" singing.