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2006, 2007 Illinois District
Fifth Place Medalist Chorus
and Plateau 4A Champions

The C-U ReCHORDer

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Market at the Square provides PR opportunity for Statesmen

By Paul Stansberry

The Illini Statesmen had an awesome turnout both June 16th, and June 23rd at the Market at the Square. On the 16th, we were not allowed to sing at our booth, due to location, so Steve Severinghouse got us motivated to start moving around and once we got most of our guys, we really started pouring it on. We sang in three different locations, each time drawing a crowd and rounds of applause. It was both exciting and fun. I personally am proud of everyone that turned out and played a part. All of you helped make this worthwhile. The chorus sang several songs, including "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "Stars Fell On Alabama," "Sentimental Journey," "Shenandoah," "Tiger Rag," "Birth Of The Blues," "Sweet Adeline," "The Old Songs/Hey Look Me Over," "Irish Lullaby," "Irish Blessing," and more.



Having fun with "Tiger Rag" (Photo by Becky Stansberry)

On June 23rd, Mother Nature tried to drown us out, but the Illini Statesmen and the Sweet Adelines would have no part of it. Once the worst of the rain had stopped, we started playing volleyball, but with songs instead of a ball. The Sweet Adelines would sing a song, and we would chime in right afterward, leaving time for applause of course. What a fun time that turned out to be.

We handed out business cards and yearbooks to quite a few people. One of which was Barry Holley. Barry enjoyed hearing us sing and was excited about the opportunity to join us. He came the next Thursday, to our June 21st rehearsal. He is going to start out singing bass, with thoughts of possibly singing baritone. Please make him feel welcome. We met several other men that may come visit us in the coming weeks.



Trombone section from "Birth of the Blues" (Photo by Becky Stansberry)

I wish to publicly thank my wife for the hard work she put in by helping me set up each Saturday morning. We had to get up at 5 a.m. both Saturdays, get the car loaded up and then get set up by 7 a.m. at the Market. She never complained and helped out in any way she could both Saturdays. She even played photographer on the 16th. Thanks to Morris for providing the camera and copies of the photos. Becky also played a part in finding out who was filming us on the 16th. That was Emily Carlson of Channel 15 News.

Again, thanks to all of you that came out and supported us. What an awesome group!

Craft Corner

Breathing: the foundation for good singing

We all breathe quite naturally, yet it's one of the most difficult parts of good singing to master. If you don't breathe correctly, it's almost impossible to sing well.

We often hear that you should breathe with, or through, your diaphragm, so it might be helpful to understand where and what the diaphragm is and how it works. The Medline Plus Medical Encyclopedia gives this description.

The diaphragm, located below the lungs, is the major muscle of respiration. It is a large, dome-shaped muscle that contracts rhythmically and continually, and most of the time, involuntarily. Upon inhalation, the diaphragm contracts and flattens and the chest cavity enlarges. This contraction creates a vacuum, which pulls air into the lungs. Upon exhalation, the diaphragm relaxes and returns to its domelike shape, and air is forced out of the lungs.

In singing, as the diaphragm relaxes, the muscles around the rib cage contract to assist in forcing the air out of the lungs. This allows us to use more air than we would at rest when the diaphragm is doing all of the work. The diaphragm will quickly and efficiently provide us with all the air we need for singing if we can train our body not to fight against it. Three things needed for a quick, effortless breath are **good posture**, an **absence of tension** in the torso, and an **open air passage**.

Proper posture keeps all parts of the body balanced and supported. This allows your bones to support your weight so that your muscles only have to stabilize your body, not support your weight. Ideally, a straight line could be drawn through the ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. When you are standing with good posture, your internal organs and diaphragm are properly aligned. This allows your diaphragm the maximum range of motion and helps you get a good breath.

Good posture also helps in removing tension in the torso. As stated above, on inhalation, the diaphragm contracts and flattens and the chest cavity enlarges or expands. Tension in the shoulders, neck, back, chest or abdomen will prevent your rib cage from expanding fully and keep you from getting a good breath. Try placing your hand on different parts of your chest, back, shoulders and abdomen when you breathe. You should be able to feel the expansion as you inhale.

Opening the airway is equally important to good breathing, although it is not talked about as much. After singing a phrase, several things need to happen in the throat and mouth when we inhale. The vocal folds open, the soft palate raises, the tongue moves out of the way. You do all these naturally, and when done properly the breath intake should be almost silent. If you are making noise when you inhale, then you are slowing down the flow of air to your lungs and won't get as much air, or will take longer getting it.

If you're having trouble with this, think of the feeling just before you yawn.

So, how do we put this all together? Stand with good posture and exhale as much as you can. Hold for just a second and then release and allow your body to fill with air. In a good breath, your stomach muscles will release, your sternum will slightly depress and then rise, and your rib cage will expand. Pay attention to any tension in your torso, or noise that keeps you from breathing fully and try to eliminate them next time. Don't do this exercise too long, as it can make you light-headed.

As another exercise, think of breathing down, filling your lungs from the bottom to the top. You should flex at the knees slightly on the release that begins the inhalation. Take in as much air as you can and feel for a stretch in any muscles that have tension in them. You can also try varying your posture to see if this helps or hinders your ability to inhale and exhale fully.

It may also help to practice breathing lying on your back on a hard surface such as the floor or a firm mattress. This will allow you to just concentrate on the feeling of expansion in your torso without thinking about your posture.

Why is good breathing technique so important? First and foremost, you cannot produce a good, well-supported sound without good breath support. We need everyone producing the best sound they can to make our chorus sound the best it can. Second, singing is an aerobic activity. By using your air to make music, you are fighting your body's natural tendency to breathe whenever it wants to. You need to be able to quickly and efficiently get enough air into your lungs to not only produce sound, but also to satisfy your body's oxygen needs. And finally, good breathing technique is vitally important when we perform. As your pre-performance adrenaline kicks in, your body starts needing more oxygen and your muscles tense up. Developing good breathing habits, and understanding the techniques involved will help you recognize when you are not breathing correctly. This should enable you to correct the problems and give your best performance.

Now that we have all this great air in our lungs, next month we'll talk about how to produce a good tone with it. Until then, **keep breathing!**



The Illini Statesmen board of directors did not meet in June. The July meeting will be held on Sunday the 22nd at 4:00 p.m. Once again, we will meet at the home of President Kevin Swartz, 2403 Brookens Circle, Urbana. All chapter members are welcome to attend. Board members are expected to attend.

If you have an item for the agenda, please email it to Kevin at president@illinistatesmen.org

Youth In Harmony Festival announced

By Rich Hansen

Plans for the Ninth Annual Central Illinois Youth in Harmony (YIH) Fall Festival are currently underway! This festival is open to all high school age boys and girls and will be held at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Bloomington, Illinois on **Thursday, October 25, 2007**. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. An evening performance of the festival songs by both mass choruses will begin at 7 p.m.

The clinician for the boys' chorus will be Jonny Moroni, baritone of Vocal Spectrum, 2006 International Barbershop Quartet Champions. The girls' clinician is Diane Huber from Sweet Adelines International. Again this year, talented, experienced, and certified staff members within the Illinois District of the Barbershop Harmony Society and Region #5 of Sweet Adelines International will serve as section leaders and coaches. During the day, students will have the opportunity to learn songs, receive quartet coaching, and experience the camaraderie of barbershop, a cappella-style singing.

The best part is – this festival is **FREE!** Lunch will be provided and there is no cost for registration or music! Teachers will also receive free materials at a special one-on-one session with our guest clinicians.

The evening concert will be held in the auditorium of the Performing Arts Center. In addition to the festival choruses and student quartets, our featured guests this year are Main Attraction, 2007 Region #5 Sweet Adelines Quartet Champions and Men In Black, 2005 International Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Champions.

The festival committee is always looking for help. Volunteers are needed to serve in many areas, including as chaperones, coaches, and section leaders. If you would like to volunteer, or would just like more information about the festival, contact Rich Hansen at hansenr@mtzion.k12.il.us or by phone at 217-412-1876.

Cabaret Show date set

The date for our annual Cabaret Show has been finalized. The show will be held on Saturday November 3 at St. Patrick's Parish Hall in Urbana. Help is needed planning and organizing. If you can help, talk to President Kevin Swartz at rehearsal, or email him at president@illinistatesmen.org

Third Annual Big Weenie Tag Singing Contest

by Doug Wehrwein

The Third Annual Big Weenie Tag Singing Contest is to be held on August 11, 2007. The Big Weenie Tag Singing Contest is the invention of Doug and Cathy Wehrwein to promote quartet singing and to raise money to support the efforts of Youth in Harmony. It is held at the Wehrwein home in Elburn, Illinois.

The festivities begin at 4:00 p.m. with registration of all attendees and competing quartets. For those who do not already have a quartet lined up to compete, there will be plenty of time for pick-up quartets to form and choose two tags to sing. Some people just come to listen, and that's okay, too!

Included this year, as in the past, will be an expertly prepared barbequed dinner of pork chops and chicken, along with all the fixings. The cost of the dinner is \$12.50. (Reservations are required) Soda and water are included. If you plan to enjoy other beverages please bring them with you.

There will be a 5 person panel of judges scoring the contestants on Harmony Accuracy, Creativity, and Stage Presence. All competing quartets are requested to pay an entry donation of \$5 to Youth In Harmony. ***Competing quartets will be awarded 'Cheap and Tawdry' prizes, as promised.***

Our first year, we raised \$200. Last year, we raised over \$650. Our goal this year is \$1000. We can easily hit our goal (or surpass it) if we have your help.

Call Doug and Cathy at 630-365-5742 or email us at bigweenietagsing@yahoo.com to place your reservation. You can find more information online at: www.harmonize.ws/ILL/tag_singing_contest.cfm

Hope to see you there!

Fall Convention Help Needed

The Illinois District Fall Convention Committee is looking for five men or women to serve as contest escorts. The escorts check in the competing groups when they show up at the warmup rooms, and then lead them from the warmup room to the backstage area.

The good news is that the district has money to pay the escorts, either to a chapter that takes all the slots, or to individuals who volunteer. The downside of the job is that you will not be able to see any of the competition.

If you are interested or want more information, email Will Thorndike at watjr@mchsi.com

Happy Birthday!

July 10, Ryan Peterson
 July 23, John Williamson
 July 25, Lee Reifsteck
 July 26, J.D. Simmons
 July 27, Dave Carlisle

Barbershop on the web

Illini Statesmen – illinistatesmen.org
 Barbershop Harmony Society – www.barbershop.org
 Illinois District – www.harmonize.ws/ILL
 4-Cast, the Barbershop Podcast – 4-cast.tv
 Links to other Barbershop sites – www.harmonize.com
 Ultimate Barbershop Links – www.harmonize.ws/links/

Deadline for next issue
July 29, 2007

2007 Officers

President, Kevin Swartz
 Marketing & PR Vice President, Paul Stansberry
 Music Vice President, Andy Isbell
 Membership Vice President, Jordan Brotherton
 Program Vice President, Matt Carlen
 Secretary, Dave Sutton
 Treasurer, Denny Mulvany
 Webmaster, Steve Severinghaus
 Immediate Past President, Vern Knapp
 District Delegate, Hugo Feugen
 Chorus Director, Lee Reifsteck

Barbershop Harmony Society announces Denver webcast

As usual, there will be an International Webcast for those unable to attend the convention in Denver. More information can be found at www.bhs-live.com/

This is a great way to watch the convention and cheer on all your favorites as well as find new ones! It's not as good as being there, but it's darn close.

Upcoming Events

July 1-8, International Convention, Denver
 July 22, 4:00 p.m. Board Meeting, Kevin Swartz's house, 2403 Brookens Circle, Urbana
 July 29-August 5, Harmony University, St. Joseph, Missouri
 August 11, Third Annual Big Weenie Tag Singing Contest, Elburn, Illinois
 August 15, Illinois District Central Golf Outing, Kilborn, Illinois
 August 25, Performance, Hume, Illinois
 September 28-30, District Convention, Peoria
 October 25, YIH Festival, Bloomington
 November 3, Cabaret Show, St. Patrick's Parish Hall, Urbana

Unless otherwise indicated, all articles were written by the editor, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the chapter. Submissions are welcomed and encouraged at rechorder@illinistatesmen.org, or the return address below.

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