



Celebrating 60 years of harmony!

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

The C-U ReCHORDer

A monthly publication of the
Champaign-Urbana, Illinois Chapter
of the Barbershop Harmony Society
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Volunteers Make It Happen!!

By Kevin Swartz, President (a volunteer)

In case you haven't noticed, the year is flying by at an astounding pace. Much has been accomplished within the Champaign-Urbana Chapter so far in 2007. Our volunteers have generously stepped up to the plate this year, advancing the cause of 4-part a cappella harmony. We owe each of them our thanks. As we approach October, it is time once again to begin the ever-important process of planning for next year.

As a member in good standing of the Champaign-Urbana Chapter, there are written expectations of which you should be aware. The following excerpt is taken directly from the Chapter Operating Principles, Rules and Regulations.

2. Expectation of Champaign-Urbana Chapter members is as follows (It is expected that a member in good standing of the Champaign-Urbana Chapter is encouraged to support the chapter by participating in these activities):

2.1. Serve and actively participating on the Board of Directors 1 out of every 3 years. Board of Directors offices include the following:

- 2.1.1. Chapter President
- 2.1.2. Chapter Secretary
- 2.1.3. Chapter Treasurer
- 2.1.4. Chapter Development
- 2.1.5. Charitable Services

- 2.1.6. Music Vice President
- 2.1.7. Program Vice President
- 2.1.8. Young Men in Harmony
- 2.1.9. Quartet Activities Chairman

2.2. Support the chapter by leading and/or participating in committee assignments.

2.3. Each member is encouraged to support the chapter by accepting responsibility for one or more of the following 1 out of every 3 years:

- 2.3.1. Annual show chairman
- 2.3.2. Fall show chairman
- 2.3.3. Maintain Web Site
- 2.3.4. Bulletin Editor
- 2.3.5. Ad Sales
- 2.3.6. Teaching Quartet Member
- 2.3.7. Contest hospitality room
- 2.3.8. Chapter meeting room setup and refreshments
- 2.3.9. Singing Valentines chairman
- 2.3.10. Uniform manager
- 2.3.11. Other Significant Committees

As you can see, the success and good health of our Chapter does not happen by magic. It takes the dedication and willingness of its loyal members to keep it on track and

moving forward. If you have not been an active member of the Board of Directors in either 2006 or 2007, then 2008 is your year. Likewise, if you have not volunteered for one of the tasks listed under bullet point 2.3 in either 2006 or 2007, then 2008 is your year.

In a chapter of our size (small, but mighty) it is everyone's responsibility to help the chapter to function and grow. There are definitely some current volunteers who deserve a break. By rotating volunteers, we're less likely to experience membership burnout. If you've never done any of these jobs before, *Fantastic!!* We're always looking for new ideas and fresh viewpoints on how to do things. If you're afraid of making mistakes, *Awesome!!* At least you are trying to do your job, which is much better than no one doing it at all.

If you're interested in a position but have questions, please talk to someone about it. Get your questions answered. If you don't see a position listed you'd be interested in serving, talk to the president or a current board member. There are definitely other jobs and activities that are needed that aren't listed.

Whatever's been keeping you from volunteering, just let us know. We'll find a way to help.



Barbershop Harmony Society moves to Nashville

After nearly 50 years in Kenosha Wisconsin, the Society headquarters

has moved to Nashville. As of this writing, most staff offices are set up and functioning. They are still setting up the Harmony Marketplace and music library in Nashville. Orders for merchandise and unpublished arrangements may take longer than usual to ship.

The main website, www.barbershop.org, is still up and running. The Members Only site is down until the arrival of equipment from Kenosha. Until the Members Only site is restored there is no online registration for contest competitors. There will also be no online renewal of dues until the site is up again. This may affect those members with expiration dates at the end of September. Dues notices were sent via regular mail, and can be paid through regular mail.

The new Society contact information is:

Barbershop Harmony Society

110 7th Avenue N
Nashville TN 37203-3704
Toll-free: 800-876-7464
Regular: 615-823-3993

Fax: 615-313-7615 (after September 15)

Email addresses remain the same. When possible, use functional addresses such as quartet@barbershop.org , marketplace@barbershop.org , etc.

Harmony Foundation

Harmony Foundation will continue to serve our members from its Chicago offices. Contacts remain the same:

Send donations to:
Harmony Foundation, Inc.
225 W. Washington Street, Suite 2330
Chicago, IL 60606
Phone: (800) 876-7464 ext.8447
(312) 701-1001
Fax: (312) 701-1005

hf@harmonyfoundation.org
www.harmonyfoundation.org

September is membership month

We have designated every Thursday in September as a guest night. While we love singing with each and every one of our members, we think it would be more fun to sing with even more members. So bring a guest or two (or four or five!) And make sure you come to rehearsal, too. We really do miss you when you are not there, and it makes it more fun for all of us when everyone is on the risers. We get a lot more accomplished, too and get better as a chorus.

So, bring a guest, bring yourself and let's have some fun singing.



September events

Several things will be happening in September, including a tailgate party before the Illinois football game on September 8. The game is at 6:00 p.m., so there should be plenty of time for partying. We should be set up in the NorthEast Assembly Hall lot. The chapter is providing the food, and Chef Jorden will be grilling for us. Plan on eating around 4:00. More details to come on Thursday night.

We also elected to compete in the fall contest in Peoria at the end of the month. The chorus contest will begin around 11:00 a.m. We will mainly be trying to win the District's new Most Entertaining Chorus Award. We still want to sing well, but we may choose repertoire songs that might get us disqualified from the regular contest, but would help us win the MECA. More details as we get closer to contest.

CRAFT CORNER

Vowel Matching

The last couple of months we have discussed good breathing technique and good tone production in this column. As a reminder, we are talking about the fundamentals of good singing as we work our way towards achieving artistry with our music. This month's focus is on the importance of matching vowel sounds.

There are at least 12 main vowel sounds we use in singing English. Beat, bit, bait, bird, bet, but, bat, boot, bought, boat, book, and ball all have different vowel sounds. English has many special cases which are between the main vowel sounds, but we will ignore those for now. We will also save discussion of vowel combinations (diphthongs, as in "boy") for another time.

There are three main reasons we want to match vowel sounds: to help our audience better understand the words we sing, to make our singing sound more "in tune," and to create the "expanded sound" characteristic of barbershop singing. The majority of what our listeners hear are the vowel sounds we sing. We need to be uniform in our sounds to make it easier for our audiences to understand the words we are singing and the meaning of the songs. If they can't tell what some of our words are, they will have to backtrack and infer the words from the context and we have lost the chance to convey the emotions of the song to them. Not only do we need to be all singing the same vowel sounds, we need to be singing them with the same tone quality. We have been working on this in warmups for several weeks, trying to achieve the same resonance and forward placement in all of our vowel sounds to create a more uniform chorus sound.

Matching vowel sounds also makes our sound more consonant and pleasing to the audience's ears. Every vowel has its own set of unique resonating frequencies. Our ears hear these differences and enable us to distinguish between similar words (bit and bet, for example.) If half the chorus was singing "bit" and half was singing "bet" on the same note, it would probably not sound in tune because the resonating frequencies would be clashing. We run into this on occasion when a chord just won't tune right, and we finally decide it's a vowel matching problem.

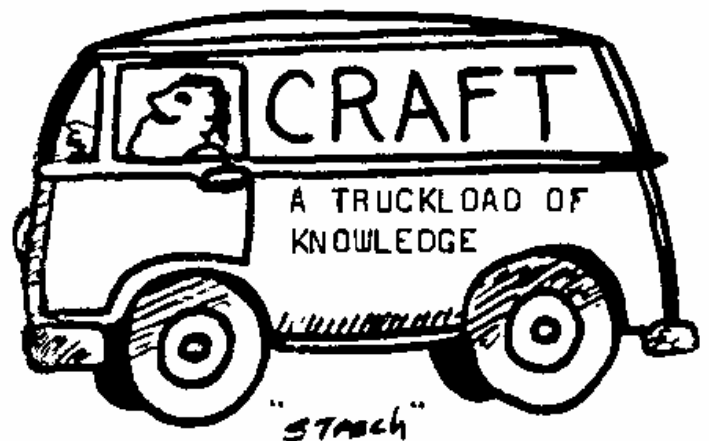
Finally, well-matched vowels reinforce the harmonic series produced by our voices and create the magic of overtones that are a special part of barbershop singing. The resonating frequencies of our vowel sounds, called *formants*, stay relatively constant independent of the fundamental pitch being sung. The

chords and voicings used in barbershop style singing tend to reinforce the natural harmonic series of our singing voices. When everything lines up properly, we have the potential for "screaming overtones," frequencies that are not one of the pitches being sung, but sound like a "fifth voice," or "expanded sound" as the judging category describes it.

So, now that we understand the importance, how do we match our vowel sounds. The easy answer is **practice!** We have been working on matching vowel sounds in our warmup exercises, and each of us should strive to sing our vowels during the rest of rehearsal the same way. It also takes a bit of analysis in each song to figure out what vowel sound each word should have. Once you get in the habit, it becomes second nature to sing the right sounds, although good old English has ways of tripping us up. (Should we sing "mel-oh-dy" or "mel-uh-dy"?)

As to actually producing the vowels, the vowel formants give us an indication of what is important. The lowest formant is controlled primarily by the opening of our jaw. The formant frequency rises as the jaw is opened wider, or the tongue is lowered. The second formant is controlled by the shape of the body of the tongue, with higher frequencies associated with the tongue moving forward. The third formant is controlled by the tip of the tongue. Interestingly, mouth and lip shape do not play much part in vowel formation. The first and second formants are usually enough to determine the vowel being sung, which reinforces what Vern has been telling us. Tongue position and jaw opening are the most important aspects of vowel formation.

So, for this month, let's keep practicing our good breathing technique, good vocal production, and concentrate on matching our vowel sounds with the rest of the chorus. Keep practicing so this all becomes habit and you'll be well on your way to our goal of artistry.



Happy Birthday!

September 4, Tom Johnson
 September 8, Ron Davis
 September 15, Bill Severinghaus
 September 27, Matt Carlen
 September 28, Stewart Gardner

Barbershop on the web

Illini Statesmen – illinistatesmen.org
 Barbershop Harmony Society – 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

September 23, 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



Upcoming Events

September 8, Tailgate party before Illinois football game, Assembly Hall parking lot
 September 28-30, District Convention, Peoria
 October 25, YIH Festival, Bloomington
 November 3, Cabaret Show, St. Patrick's Parish Hall, Urbana
 November 8, poker night, details TBA

Date TBA, party at Reifstecks' (this is a change, the date announced last month is during Sweet Adelines' International convention, so we are rescheduling)

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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