



C-U Re-CHORDer

October 5, 2006
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That's A Winner!

Well, it's been a big couple of weeks for the Illini Statesmen. We've been working really hard on our contest package. Last weekend in Peoria with just 19 men on stage, we finished 5th overall and were named Plateau AAAA Champions! (Don't ask me what that means. They changed the plateau system a few years ago, so most of us have no idea how they determine what plateau you are in.) Could we have performed better? Sure, there's always room for improvement, and I'm sure Lee will be working on some of those things as we get ready for our upcoming shows. Personally, I didn't do a very good job of mentally preparing myself before the curtain came up, so when the nerves kicked in I wasn't ready for them. Thankfully, the rest of the basses stepped up and carried me through the performance. Now, while I'm not very happy with my own performance, I am very proud of the way the chorus performed. I got several positive comments from audience members. The music team knew going into the contest that 5th place was an attainable but difficult goal, and we achieved it. Three of the choruses ahead of us qualified for International competition last year, and the other one outnumbered us more than 4 to 1 and sang really well. It will take a strong focus on musicianship and a commitment to increasing our membership if we hope to move into the top 4 in the district.

Speaking of increasing our membership, we had 3 men on stage that had never competed with the Illini Statesmen before, and all are college students. Stewart Gardner has been a member for almost a year now, and Brian Conrad and Matt Carlen (finally) officially joined last month so they could compete with us. It was also great to have long-time member Ron Davis back singing with us after a more than 20 year hiatus.

We also elected our 2007 Board of Directors in the last week. You can find the list of officers below. We still need someone to take on the job of Membership Vice President. President-elect Swartz would like to see (at least) two guest nights organized for next year. Increasing our membership is getting to be our critical need if we want to raise our chorus to the next level. If you would be at all interested in helping out with membership next year, or would just like to find out more about the job and expectations, talk to Kevin.

Finally, (at least for this article) our Cabaret Show is coming up in just a few weeks. Tickets are available from Arlie Saldeen, and we need everybody to sell tickets. The food committee is planning a good meal for us, and the music committee is working on finalizing the repertoire for the show. We're also looking toward our Krannert Show at the end of February. This will be our 60th anniversary show, and we're kicking around several ideas to help us commemorate the occasion. If you have suggestions, talk to Kevin, or the music team. Keep watching this space for more details.

(P.S. Look closely through the new Harmonizer to find the pictures of an Illini Statesmen member. I know there's at least one of us in there.)

Congratulations!

1st place plateau 4A chorus champions. 5th place overall!

The judge's scores are as follows.

Song	Mus 1	Mus 2	Prs 3	Prs 4	Sng 5	Sng 6	Totals
Stars Fell	69	73	67	72	70	64	415
Birth o/t Blues	67	73	63	73	69	59	404
Category totals	282		275		262		819
Category averages	70.5		68.8		65.5		68.3

It's not often when you go into a contest and achieve the results you hope to and work toward. We came a long way in the last three weeks in our preparation for contest. I felt like we performed on stage the way we perform in rehearsals. I felt very good and very optimistic about how we would be received by the audience and the judges. Every time the MC announced a chorus I was hoping they would not call our name and when they called out the 6th place chorus and it was not us, I knew we had 5th place and the 4A championship! GREAT JOB! I am very proud to be your director!

Where do we go from here? That's up to you and the new board. As I watch the DVD and think about the judges' comments in the evaluation session, I can hear and see many things we can do better. I also knew that going in, but we simply did not have enough time to start working on the fun stuff...the stuff that moves you up to that next level. We are very capable of performing at a higher level if everyone in the chorus wants to, but it will take more effort than we have been putting in. It took us a long time to learn those contest songs. I am not blaming any one individually but just saying as a group we all will need to do more if we want to continue to improve. I am a firm believer that you can never stay on a steady course. Whatever it is you are doing, your skills are either improving or diminishing. Sometimes those steps are smaller and less noticeable than other times. How would you judge this past year? First, as an individual, which way did your personal skills evolve? Secondly, as a performing chorus, are we more prepared for each performance? And thirdly, your contribution to the group, what kind of effect has your participation had on the group as a whole?.....How about this coming year?..... If each and every one of us can answer these three question in a positive way you will be surprised at how much we can achieve. Can we get the ball rolling?

Lee Reifsteck

Illinois Leadership Training

By Phil Rolfs - 2006 Illinois District EVP

We've taken your input over the last couple of years and as a result, we are attempting to provide you with training much different from the standard COTS material. The goal here is to make training available to each and every member who wants to be in a leadership position, at a reasonable price, giving those in attendance some tools that will help prepare for and achieve successes in 2007.

The Illinois District is attempting our own thing this year. It is not driven by the Society, rather it was developed (and topics selected) from the various feedback we received from COTS attendees and from various chapters' input. We are attempting to provide you "Illinois District specific training which you've requested". We've even changed the title to "Illinois Leadership Training" or ("ILT").

I'm doing everything in my power to provide the chapter leaders within the Illinois District training topics that will provide useful everyday tools that will help you. Now all I need is for you to attend!

You will leave with:

- The "HOW TO's" of planning Chapter-specific Goals (Music, Program, Membership, Marketing)
- Listings of resources to support you and your Chapter
- FREE CD with Standard Manuals
- New Ideas to help you and your Chapter have more fun
- Renewed outlook on your Chapter and "Barbershopping"

Better understanding of:

- Yourself and volunteers in a Barbershop world
- How to lead, manage and administer your Chapter
- The Barbershop Harmony Society, our District and how they work to help you and your Chapter

Activities include:

- Singing
- Leadership Training
- Getting to understand your leadership style and how it impacts on others while understanding theirs

- More singing

Open Discussions on HOW TO:

- Deal with difficult situations and people in a volunteer world
- Get others to listen and accept your ideas
- Create a Team environment of trust and acceptance

(ILT will be held November 18, 2006 at the Pere Marquette Hotel in Peoria. Talk to Kevin Swartz if you'd like to attend.)

More on Contest

With all the other discussion of contest in this month's newsletter, I just noticed there hasn't been any mention of the quartet contest. This was one of the largest quartet contests in Illinois in several years with 30 quartets competing. That included 7 senior quartets (all members over 55 with an average age over 60) and 8 novice quartets (two members have never competed in a quartet contest before.) Give some credit for the size of the contest to the Illinois Quartet Champions Association. They set up a calling committee and contacted every registered quartet in Illinois to encourage them to compete.

Champaign-Urbana was represented by Taylorville Connection (Brian Conrad, Matt Carlen, Kevin Swartz and Lee Reifsteck) as a novice quartet. Due to the number of quartets in the contest, the top 12 were chosen for the finals, so Taylorville Connection's 13th place finish earned them mic-tester duties for Saturday afternoon. Had they scored 3 more points on Friday night, they would have been in the finals. I think they were happy to be mic-testers, though. Since they had only been together 3 weeks and spent most of their rehearsal time on the songs for Friday, it was a bit of a stretch for them to come up with two more songs for Saturday.

The top three quartets in the contest give us some interesting trivia. Chicago Times was named Senior Champions, and also finished 3rd in the regular contest. That may be the first time a senior quartet has medaled in our regular district contest. Second place went to tsunami, and your 2006 Illinois District Champion quartet is Stolen Basses (Craig Ahlgrim, Joe Kroner, George Sotos, and Doug Smith.) All have sung bass in previous quartets. It's the first championship for Craig. George won for the second time, he also sings bass with 2003 champs Alchemy. Joe becomes the 4th person to win 4 Illinois District Championships, and the first to do it on more than one part (he sang mostly lead in Stolen Basses, but has also won singing bass with Renaissance in 1995, Bravo! in 1998, and Cheers! in 2001.) Doug Smith became the first 5 time Illinois District Champion, all of them singing bass. He also won with Friends-1980, Piper's Alley-1991, Echo Lane-1993, and Skyline-2005. As far as I can tell, Doug is also the first person to win the District Quartet Championship in consecutive years. The audience really enjoyed Stolen Basses, but I don't think their schtick would translate well to a show audience. You really have to know something about the guys to understand most of their gags. Unfortunately, we probably won't see much of Stolen Basses since Doug and George are both in other quartets.

Cabaret Show

We're still working on finalizing the list of songs for the Cabaret show, but the preliminary list of songs for the chorus is listed below. Quartets will be inserted into the list. If you are planning on singing in a quartet, or would like to put something together, let Lee or Andy know so we can be sure to get it into the lineup. Here's what we have so far.

First Half

In The Mood
Sentimental Journey
I'm Beginning to See The Light
Stardust
Jukebox Saturday Night
Nevertheless
Wink and a Smile

Second half

Paper Doll
Boogie Woogie
Stars Fell On Alabama
Birth of the Blues
Down By The Old Mill Stream
Orange Colored Sky

2006 Officers

President, Vern Knapp
Marketing & PR Vice President, Kevin Swartz
Music Vice President, Bill Severinghaus
Membership Vice President, Tom Johnson
Program Vice President, Andy Isbell
Secretary, Dave Sutton
Treasurer, Denny Mulvany
Immediate Past President, Andy Isbell
District Delegate, Hugo Feugen
Chorus Director, Lee Reifsteck

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Ring Lardner enumerates six deadly sins of close harmony

Who is Ring Lardner, nee Ringgold William Lardner? Well, if you're not a culture vulture, let me remind you, courtesy of my Encyclopedia Americana: "While Lardner is thought of primarily as one of the major American humorists, critics have pointed out that his satire is caustic, often picturing his characters as unhappy, shabby, exhibitionists. His stories are read, however, for their shining humor and the excelling character delineation of the lower middle class."

Long before our Society was founded, Sigmund Spaeth wrote a book, published by Simon and Schuster in 1925, Barber Shop Ballads. Ring Lardner wrote the introduction, which enumerated the six deadly sins of close harmony:

1. A tenor who, being the only tenor, takes a high tonic instead of a third for his finishing note.
2. A lead who says he knows a song when he doesn't.
3. A man who thinks there is nothing to baritone except winding up on the fifth.
4. A man who thinks bass is just the lead two, three octaves lower.
5. A tenor who would rather sing baritone.
6. And a girl who sings tenor and says it's alto.

—Research by Tom Pearce, Charlottesville Chapter

Upcoming Events

28 OCT Fall Cabaret Show, St. Pat's
11-12 NOV Perform on C-U Sweet Adelines' Show, St. Thomas Moore HS
13-14 FEB 2007 Singing Valentines
25 FEB 2007 Krannert Show
20-22 APR 2007 Spring Contest, Peoria

October Birthday

4th Jim Vliet

Also, a belated Happy 21st Birthday to Matt Carlen on September 27th! (Matt just joined last month, so I didn't get his birthday in last month's ReCHORDer.)