



C-U Re-CHORDer

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Busy Month Coming Up

Well, February is looking to be a busy month for the Illini Statesmen. We should have plenty of opportunities to have fun singing together. We've got Singing Valentine's along with a performance for the Schnuck's Sweetheart Breakfast in the middle of the month.

At the end of the month we're having our big Illini Statesmen Reunion in conjunction with our Krannert Show. Lots of fun stuff should be happening and we've already gotten several responses from former members who will be joining us on stage for the Reunion Chorus.

Kevin says our 2007 Yearbooks will be done early next week. I saw the draft copy and it really looks great, can't wait to see the final edition. Thanks to Kevin and Paul for all their work on this project.

We're also planning several media events in recognition of our 60th anniversary and our upcoming performances. We should soon have an article in the News-Gazette, and some quartet appearances on local radio and TV stations to promote our chorus and all that we are doing.

Oh yeah, we had a board meeting last month, and Kevin wants to have another one this month! Nothing major was decided at last month's meeting, but we did talk over our plans for the coming year. Board meetings are open to all chapter members, if you'd like to attend this month's meeting, please RSVP to Kevin.

As you can tell, there's a lot going on for the Illini Statesmen. I hope to see you on Thursday night.

Krannert News

Things are plugging along for our 60th Anniversary Show. We've been working really hard learning old songs from the past to sing on our show, and I'm sure our audience will really enjoy it. We're planning quite a few things that should make this a special show.

In addition to our chapter quartets, Backroads and Roundabout, we have two of our old quartets getting back together to make an appearance. Timepiece and Fascinatin' Rhythm have agreed to come out of retirement for this show.

We've also signed Chicago Times to be our special guest quartet. They have been the Illinois District Senior Quartet Champions the last two years, and I'm sure they will put on a great show. Half of the quartet was in Chicago News, our 1981 International Champion Quartet.

As another special part of our 60th Anniversary, we've asked Dave Shaul of WDWS radio (and formerly Channel 3 News) to be our MC. Dave's father Vic Shaul was the first director of the Illini Statesmen Chorus, so he was the logical choice to be part of our celebration.

As I mentioned earlier, letters were sent to all the former members we could find addresses for, and we've gotten commitments from several to sing in the Reunion Chorus with us on the show. Won't it be great to see some of our old friends and have (hopefully) a huge Reunion Chorus for the end of our show?

I'm really looking forward to it. Now, if we can just sell a bunch of tickets...

From the Director

Fellow Illini Statesmen,

I thought I would pass on an email conversation I have been having with Jay Giallombardo, District VP CDD and the director of the Northbrook chapter. Because of our 5th place finish in the fall contest, he has asked me to do some “musical leadership” things throughout the district involving contacting some other directors and encouraging them to compete in the spring contest. Jay has been very involved in encouraging chapters to compete. The following is a portion of our email conversation.

Hi Jay

Thanks for you email and your invitation to IDAH. I am hoping to come to your class on the 3rd, I don't think I can make it for Friday night. I run my own business and have three active young kids so it's hard to give you a firm commitment at this time.

I think the work you are doing for the district is fantastic. I know it must be taking a lot of your time and I appreciate that very much. I am sure you have heard a lot of negative things about the change in the contest format. I personally was against the change, but now that the change has been made I will support it 100%. Because of the change, the Illini Statesmen have been discussing the possibility of trying to win a district championship and the work and commitment that it would take from every chapter member. We would not be having that conversation without this change. We had made the commitment to win our Plateau but that was a much easier goal to obtain than trying to score high enough to compete with all the “big guns”. I do believe we have enough talented singers in our small group to score very high if we put enough work into it and if the chapter decides to try and do this, win the district championship in 2009, and the members show me the type of commitment that it will take, I will be asking for your help. (I could use your help with or without this goal). I have been telling myself this for years that I need to come to a few of your rehearsals and just soak it all in.

On to district things.....

Again, thanks for your effort

Lee

Jay's response.

Lee,

Wow! What a great note. That made my day! Thanks for your very positive letter of support. Do you mind if I share parts of it with other district leadership? I am certain they would be encouraged to hear your words and perspective.

I'd love to help your chapter out in any way I can, music, coaching. And, I love to see your members make that commitment for a championship run. Anybody can be beat, and we often "beat ourselves" through lack of trying and preparation. I tell our guys, "The mark of a champion is not in winning, but in striving...." In striving, winning takes care of itself. And, you don't have to be first place to still be champion at heart. That is the real secret. And, it is interesting to note that groups that adopt the "striving" attitude seem to end up, eventually, very near if not in the top spot. I know this is the VM philosophy as well. A contest is nothing more than a measure at the moment. But it is the striving, using the creativity of a chapter to entertain and inspire an audience that provides a great reward in and of itself, not only for the audience, but for the chapter itself, and in sustaining its vitality.

So, I encourage you to share this note with others and to get the creative juices flowing. Go after the big guns and make 'em "sweat." When you are ready, let me know. I also have some other ideas for you.

Let's talk more...down the road.

Jay Giallombardo
District VP CDD

My response back.

Jay

Please feel free to share this with anyone you see fit. This is only my take on things and not necessarily how the chapter feels as a group. We have not (as of yet) decided if we will compete in the fall. If we do, we will go with the attitude of being the "talk of the contest" and having a very entertaining 6 minuets on stage. (However, our music selection might not score so well). I will be encouraging the Statesmen to compete. We are reworking our calendar and talking about moving our 2008 Krannert show from the spring to the fall.

Thanks for your thoughts on membership.....We do have a few other students who are on fire about Barbershop and will be doing a great job this year with the chapter. I feel like the Statesmen are on the edge of something exciting happening if we can keep the ball rolling. We have been here before; we just keep hitting that flat spot on the ball. I will share your note with some others.

Thanks so much for your encouragement

Lee

Marketing & PR Report

By Paul Stansberry

The Illini Statesmen have come a long way in 60 years. Chorus membership has been up and down, and currently is still in the "down" side. There are so many ways to increase membership, but there is really only one sure fire way. And that is every time we sing, including practice, we ask ourselves, am I singing at the best of my ability? If I were to hear this chorus as an audience member, would I be enticed to join? If we give everything we have each and every time we sing, I can guarantee, that people will want to join us.

According to research conducted among new members of the Society,

- 54 percent joined because someone asked them
- 33 percent joined because they saw or heard a barbershop performance.

Or, to put it another way, only one in eight joined because he saw a print piece or radio or TV placement.

So in reality, you are all Public Relations VP's. We can try to get us on TV or in the paper, but that won't mean a thing, if we are not selling the chorus individually. We need to give our director 100% attention every time we meet. We need to practice every day and do our part to better our chorus. We need to tell everyone we know about the Illini Statesmen. Not once, but every opportunity. And speaking of opportunity, do not wait for it, make it.

One more thing about practice. Thursday night rehearsals should be just that, a rehearsal of a top notch performance. It should not be "practice". Practice should be done on our own time, so we can be prepared for a top notch "rehearsal" on Thursday nights. We also need everyone attending rehearsals, whether you sing on stage with us or not. How are you to sing on stage with us if you do not attend rehearsals to better yourselves? Right now we have about 35 members. I can see only one reason why all 35 should not be on stage with us, and that is if you are out of state. The rest of you should be with us every Thursday, for the entire rehearsal.

Attend Harmony University

The Barbershop Harmony Society will return to St. Joseph, MO July 29-August 5, 2007 for one of the most exciting weeks in barbershop...Harmony University!

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jim Henry (Bass of The Gas House Gang and Director of the Ambassadors of Harmony) will be spending some time with us all at the opening session on Sunday evening.

New Classes:

- Professional Show Production for Amateurs
- Elements of Coaching
- Directing for the Non-Director
- Recording Barbershop
- Membership Matters
- Entertainment at a New Level
- Finale for the Computer Illiterate
- Finale for Arrangers
- Arranging for Directors
- Development of the Quartet Personality
- The Honors Chorus
- Permanent Performance Committee
- Make Learning CDs like Tim Waurick
- Talk the Top 10
- Warm-ups to Work With
- Ticket Sales-Butts in Seats
- Get Famous
- Make 'Em Laugh
- Website Design
- and many more...

The Best Barbershop Faculty Ever

People like: David Wright, Jim Henry, Ev Nau, Tom Gentry, Farris Collins, Joe Liles, Cindy Hansen, Kirk Young, Royce Ferguson, Russ Young, Nick Papageorge, Bill Myers, Brandon Guyton, Mel Knight, and many, many more come from all over the Society to share their talent with you.

Awesome Saturday Night Show

Featuring the Next Generation Chorus, Directors College Chorus, Honors Chorus (directed by Dr. Jim Henry), and Vocal Spectrum 2006 International Quartet Champions

Open Enrollment

Plenty of room for ALL Barbershoppers of ALL stripes, from around the world! Bring you, your quartet, or your entire chorus! There is enough room, classes/coaching, and ICE CREAM for all.

Scholarships Available!

Quartet College
Bring Your Baritone For Free! The first 20 quartets who register will receive a full tuition scholarship for one of their members. Act fast!
Larry Ajer Scholarship
Harmony College
Earl Moon Scholarship general studies scholarship
Lou Perry Scholarship for aspiring arrangers
Directors College
Up to 100 full tuition scholarships will be given to Directors College

Weekend Session-August 2-5, 2007

With almost 80 students at last year's Weekend Session this Thursday through Sunday experience captures the essence of Harmony University for those people who might not be able to make the entire week. This is definitely fly-across-the-county GREAT!

Krannert Show Lineup

Here are the songs we're planning on singing on the Krannert show. This is not the final order.

First Half

In The Mood
Sentimental Journey
Stardust
Jukebox Saturday Night Medley
Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy
Stars Fell On Alabama
Birth of the Blues
I'm Beginning to See the Light
Second half/60th anniversary tribute
The Old Songs/Hey Look Me Over
Coney Island Baby
German Band
Chordbusters March
Sweet Adeline
Tiger Rag
Wedding Bells
Bright Was the Night

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

Check out our Website!

If you haven't been to illinistatesmen.org recently, you'll hardly recognize it. Steve has been busy adding new stuff including old pictures of the chorus and quartets. He's still looking for more, so if you have some that aren't up yet, email them to him.

He's also set up an email list for friends of the chorus to receive notices about performances and upcoming events. If you know someone that would like to receive notices about the Illini Statesmen in their email, have them go to illinistatesmen.org and sign up for our friends@illinistatesmen.org list.

February Birthday

26th Hugo Feugen



2-3 FEB IDAH, Peoria
8 FEB Schnuck's Performance, Hawthorn Suites
13-14 FEB Singing Valentines
18 FEB Board Meeting, Kevin Swartz's house
24 FEB Reunion Chorus rehearsal/dinner/party
25 FEB Krannert Show
17 MAR Douglas County Museum, Tuscola
20-22 APR Illinois Dist. Spring Contest, Peoria
1-8 JULY International Convention, Denver