



The Voice of Rushmore



Mt. Rushmore Chapter "Shrine of Democracy Chorus"
Rapid City, South Dakota

Volume 8

April, 2006

Number 2



Presidential Pontifications

I guess everyone is completely satisfied with our chapter just as it is. No one has come forward with anything they think should be changed, or suggested any ideas for improving our chapter musically, operationally, or membership wise. Does this mean we have reached the pinnacle of success? Or have we become stagnant, stuck in a rut, unwilling to make the extra effort needed to attract and retain new members, to sell one or two more ads than you did last year, to sell five more tickets than last year? The small things that make a chapter thrive and grow won't happen unless you MAKE them happen, and that means sacrificing some of your time for the end result of ensuring the longevity and growth of this hobby we all love. I'm open to suggestions.

Less than a month to showtime. Show Chairman, Jim Olson, wants to start running the entire show at each practice so we get the timing down and learn where we belong and where we move as the show progresses. **PLEASE GET TO PRACTICE ON TIME AND STAY**

UNTIL IT'S OVER. It goes without saying that we need everyone at each practice from now until after the show. As former President Clinton once remarked, "If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure."

Bassically yours,
Pete

♪ Musical Notes ♪ Al Pitts VP, Music & Performance

It sure was good to see all you guys again after nearly 2 months of being absent from chapter meetings. It was a joy to see the interest displayed by the chorus in getting the songs right, and it sounded to me as if you really are getting it right. Also, it was good to see Clayton getting the attention he deserves. Even though there was a fair amount of fun coming out of the chorus, everyone was working to get it right. That was great.

I was getting a little tired, so I left early, but was humbled when the chorus sang the **IRISH BLESSING** for me. That meant a lot. It's great to be associated with such a fine group of men through the medium of music. May God bless each of you and our chapter.



Who is/are *The Summit*? Since they are headlining our show, I thought it would be good to know a little about them.

I first heard them at the spring contest in Cheyenne last April. What a smooth sound.

This past year (2005) they competed at the prestigious Buckeye Invitational in Ohio where they were crowned Entertainment Champions. For those of you not in the know, the Buckeye is one of the top festivals in the nation, outside of our own International Convention.

They have been singing together since 2002, although they have a wealth of talent and experience between them. Currently they are ranked as one of the "Top Gun" quartets in the Rocky Mountain District. All are members of the Duke City Chorus in Albuquerque, NM.

You can find out more about them, and hear samples of their sound by going to their website, www.smmmt.net.

AI

Shrine of Democracy

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Note: Articles without bylines are written by the editor.



Board Minutes

Dave L'Esperance
Secretary

The **March Board of Directors** meeting was held at the Coldwell Banker Training Conference Room on **March 7th**. Larry Putnam is recovering from pneumonia and wasn't able to provide a treasurer's report. Both President Anderson and Doug Andrews spoke with Michael's Mens Wear, and good quality vests to upgrade our class A's would cost \$40-60 each. Steve Ferley will manufacture new name tags for the chorus members. Doug reported recording studio costs would be about \$50.00 per song. Jim Gogolin presented some ideas and costs for greatly improving the lighting capabilities at Dakota Middle School, and funds were approved to purchase equipment and accessories. Jim will get quotes from certified electricians. Dick Wade has volunteered to "clean up" the area in our rehearsal room. The board discussed rehearsal length, members' focus and responsibilities to the organization and to each other, and restricting cell phones to vibrate only if their presence is absolutely necessary during rehearsals. Several sing-outs, including St. Patrick's Day in Deadwood, Hart Ranch, on May 27th, and the Parade of Presidents in downtown Rapid City June 29-July 1 were discussed. Pete mentioned the Durango/Silverton Festival, similar to our Harmony Happenings is July 21-22 in Silverton, CO.

The next Board of Directors meeting is April 4th at the Coldwell Bankers Training Conference Room at 7 pm.

In Perfect Harmony,

DAVID

Ode to a Mexican Restaurant

"It was a dark and snowy night," to quote Snoopy. As the snow continued to fall on Sunday, March 12th, 30 plus members of the Shrine of Democracy Chorus met to pay one last homage to a loyal supporter of the annual chapter show as Rapid City is forced to say goodbye to the Casa Del Rey restaurant. The building on Mt. Rushmore Rd. will be torn down in the near future and be replaced by a drug store. (Are you listening, Chuck?)

After a fine meal, accompanied by some VERY large Marguerites, it was time to dive into some not-so-serious singing. Of course, with only one lead and one tenor, we had to pick something that they knew. Unfortunately, we discovered that they knew more than the rest of the chorus, as evidenced by all the mumbling on the other parts.

We also discovered that our chorus is like a strawberry shortcake. You will need to ask Wayne Anderson about this. It had something to do with his wife's wonderful cake, some strawberries that are most of the time there, and the occasional dollop of whip cream. (*Guess you had to be there!*)

After fumbling for the correct pitches, we soon exhausted our three song repertoire, said our good-byes, and drove/walked home through the drifting snow. It was over the river and through the woods, but not necessarily where the road went for some, but we all got home safely.

Is there time for another get-together soon? How about Gene Hovland's retirement party (*to have taken place by publishing time.*)

ON WITH THE SHOW



It's the final big push to get ready for the show. This is the time for the chorus to shine. How do we do that? I found some good ideas in the Harmony College @ Estes class on "RISERS 101".

First: This is a team project. There is no "I" in "Team". Check your egos at the door and become part of the chorus. We are only as strong as our weakest member, and only as good as our teamwork. When you are presented with the show package, (lyrics, music, interpretation, or presentation) you should endeavor to embrace it and do your best with it. If something about the package displeases you greatly, please tell your section leader, the music VP, an assistant director or the director so they can fix it if necessary, or better explain it to you.

Second: We need teamwork in singing. No matter how good your solo voice, we need a unit sound from your section as well as the entire chorus. To do that you must embrace the unit sound and subdue your individual skills for the better chorus sound. If your note is not exactly right, then the chord won't tune properly, and the overtones are reduced. If the vowels don't match, then the chord won't produce the overtones we so want to hear. If vocal placement doesn't match, then the overtones won't naturally occur. No matter how good the note you are singing, if it isn't balanced in the chord, then the overtones are not produced. If the emotion in your voice doesn't match, it interferes with overtone production. It is your job to get the notes, vowels, volume, vocal placement and emotion the same as your section, and correct for the chord structure on each note/word that you sing.

Third: We need teamwork in chorus sound. Ever think, "Gee, I wish the guy standing next to me sounded better?" You can help him sound better. The very best way is to sound better yourself. Know your part and sing it confidently,

not louder. Produce the best unit sound that you can. The better you do, the more the guy next to you will try to emulate you.

We can all make smarter choices in singing. Sometimes the smarter choice is for us to choose to not sing at a given spot until we have learned the control that is needed to do justice to the song as well as to maintain the unit sound that we are seeking. Any note above a "D" above middle "C" that needed gentle treatment is a good note for me to choose to sing softly, or in falsetto. Are there notes right in the crack for your voice? If so, consider a smarter choice in how you sing them. We all need to know what our limits are and make smart choices to help the chorus sound its best - *UNIT SOUND*.

And we can work to listen better. In the Risers class we learned that we have two ears and one mouth, so that we can listen twice as much as we sing; and if we were meant to listen to ourselves, we would have an ear hanging off the end of our nose! We need to listen to the members of our section to have a unit sound. We need to listen to the other sections for chord balance and tuning. And we need to listen to the director.

What does all this have to do with our show? If we all strive to produce a unit sound and presentation, we will sing and perform the entire show at a higher level each time that we do it. Let's continue to work together on the unit sound for this show and for each time that we perform, whether in practice or in front of an audience. From now until the show we will try to run the entire program including quartets and script at each rehearsal. Your attendance is vital to our preparation and performance. We all need to commit our Thursday evenings, from now through the show date to work for the best unit sound and unit performance.

Jim Olson, Show Chairman

Articles, pictures, and other submissions for publication need to be submitted to the editor by the 25th of each month. Submissions may be made by emailing the editor at: leaderman@earthlink.net, or by hard copy at 6806 Peaceful Pines Rd., Black Hawk, SD 57718

Did you?

by Ed Hinkley, Asst. Chorus Director,
Sarasota FL Chorus of the Keys

- Did you call a friend and offer to pick him up and take him to chapter meeting?
 - Did you offer to sit in the role of buddy for a new visitor?
 - Did you spend some extra time working on the new music so that your contribution at rehearsal will help speed up the learning process?
 - Did you practice your stage face in front of the mirror?
 - Did you help the librarian distribute the new music?
 - Did you offer to help make learning tapes for all the guys who don't read music?
 - Did you set an example in your section by keeping conversation to a minimum?
 - Did you compliment the new man on his performance at the last singout?
 - Did you hold out your hand and smile at the guys coming in the door?
 - Did you sing all the notes and words in the new song....correctly?
 - Did you help set up the risers for rehearsing the new choreography?
 - Did you find it hard getting to sleep after the great rehearsal?
- How many of these things are on your check list?

--Taken from Harmonet E-mail list,
June 19, 1999 and used by permission.

Favorite Barbershop Pastime

Q: Why do baritones love to be out in lightning storms?

A: Because they think they're getting their picture taken.

Harmony Happenings Makes the Big Time

If you haven't checked out the latest **Harmonizer** from Kenosha (*yes, we're still there*), then you need to do so. If you are one of those who hasn't joined this great society and therefore don't get the afore mentioned magazine, then you need to find someone who has a copy and borrow it.

Turn to page 34 and read the article by Jim Bagby about The World's Largest VLQ. The article centers on Jim's unique experience of being on top of Mt. Rushmore. There's a great picture of Jim & Abe, along with another of Jim Gogolin, Del Beck, Pete Anderson, Chuck Knowlton & Jim Bagby.

The Shrine of Democracy Chorus and Harmony Happening both get a great boost from Jim. They even sang while on top of the world's biggest quartet.

You really need to read the article to understand the whole thing. Thank you, Jim for making us famous. And thanks go to Chuck Knowlton for arranging the trip

There are also some very great articles on improving your show, changing repertoire, etc. that everyone needs to read. Pick up your copy & read it cover-to-cover to keep up on society affairs and gain more knowledge about this great hobby!

St. Patrick's Day - The Parade



On St. Patrick's Day, members of the **Shrine of Democracy Chorus** traveled to Deadwood to be part of the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Highlighting the parade, besides the singing of the chorus, which goes without saying, was our very own Leprechaun, Dr. Gary Welsh. (*Those of you who read the Rapid City Journal, saw Gary's picture with the article about the parade in the Wednesday, March 15th edition.*)

As we know, after the parade, which was enjoyed by all, there were undoubtedly adult beverages involved.

Grandfather-Father-Son Chorus Slated for Indy

Looking for something different to do this summer? Here's something that is being offered by the BHS at our annual convention in Indianapolis in July.

The beloved family-singing event returns for the 2006 international convention.

Share the big stage with your family! The Grandfather/Father/Son Chorus will perform on the main stage of the Conseco Field House on Saturday evening just before the Quartet Finals.

Tom Metzger, bass of Real-time and his father Charlie, bari of seniors champs Antique Gold will share directing duties. Those Metzgers know about family singing; with brother Mark (Realtime bari), they sang with Charlie in international semi-finalist Counterpoint.

The chorus will be limited to 200 singers. Deadline for sign-up will be May 15th. The rehearsal will be from 5:00 – 6:00 pm on Friday, July 7, on the main stage of the Conseco Fieldhouse.

The music

The two songs selected are both Tom Gentry arrangements and were sung by Power Play. The songs are "Side by Side" and "When There's Love at Home."

To sign up

E-mail jdebusman@barbershop.org for a registration form.

Your fee of \$15.00 per singer will cover sheet music for the two songs, a part-predominant CD, and a shirt you'll pick up in the Convention Office in Indianapolis.

Pete Anderson (4/5)
Doug Nahrgang (4/13)
Wayne Anderson (4/18)
Richard Pendelton (4/24)
Bruce Mehlhaff (4/25)



*Any birthday missed only means you didn't age this year, but get me your DOB and we'll make sure you age next year!

*Happy
Birthday!*



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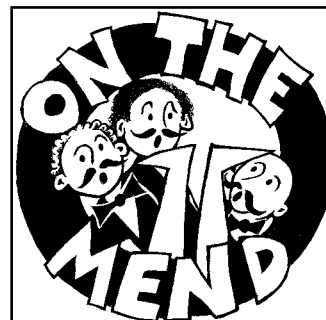
Al Kelts - tenor
Dave Sommers - lead
Wayne Anderson - bari
Pete Anderson - bass

Risky Business

Dwight Edstrom - tenor
Todd Schultz - lead
Doug Nahrgang - bari
Dan Brousseau - bass

Justin and the Grandpas

Jim Gogolin - tenor
Justin Smith - lead
Chuck Knowlton - bari
Del Beck - bass



Al
Pitts
Larry
Putnam
Steve
Ferley

LEARNING A SONG

by Jay Giallombardo

While there are many ways to learn music, some methods are more effective than others. When it comes to part singing, how you go about learning an arrangement will certainly affect the quality of your performance.

In a cappella singing, barbershop specifically, tuning, that is locking and ringing of chords, is a hallmark of the style. How you go about learning a piece will have a considerable impact on how well you stay in key and how well you tune chords.

There are three things that affect tuning: 1) Pitch, 2) Volume/Balance, 3) Color. Of course learning pitches is actually the easy part. Fine tuning the pitch in a chord requires proper balance (volume relationships between parts) and lastly color matching. Color matching can also be thought of as vowel matching. Vowel matching gets you in the “ballpark,” but true intonation in chord-singing comes from the matching of resonance and vocal color.

The following method has 3 simple steps: 1) Pitches, 2) Word-Sounds, 3) Integration.

If you learn your part on “Loo” of “Doo” you will accomplish some very important things that you would not accomplish if you had just plunged ahead the old way - attempting to learn notes and words at the same time.

Our brain is actually a big tape recorder. If you learn pitches first on “Doo” or “Loo,” some very interesting things begin to happen. First, there is nothing else for the brain to focus on other than the pitches and pitch patterns. There are no words, no changes from vowel to vowel, no changes in color or resonance, no consonants. Because we use the same sound over and over (“Doo/Loo”), we can sort of forget about it and focus on the pitches and pitch patterns. It is all those “other things” which complicate the learning process and which invariably cause us to go out of tune in very short order if they are attempted in the early learn-

ing stages, or not applied with considerable skill.

If given a chance to focus on a single task, the brain will actually record the pitches and they will remain in memory in the subconscious. A few times through the song, listening to a part tape/CD that has no words, just the pitch sung with “Doo” is the simplest and easiest way for the subconscious to “record” the pitches of the song. If there are a few tricky places, just spend a little more time listening and “Doo”-ing those places.

After a few times through on “Doo,” the pitches are recorded in the subconscious. How do we know this? At first you have to trust, because it is difficult to accept the presence of things that we are not aware of. But that fact will soon be made clear enough.

The next step is 2) word-sounds. To begin to master the flow of word-sounds, use a method called “silent audiation.” That is the process of “mouthing” the word sounds, the vowels, the consonants, the “m’s and n’s” as if you are performing the song. BUT. . . you make no singing sound. It is more than just saying the words silently, it is actually singing without making sound. You breath, articulate consonants, form vowel shapes, keep the throat open, lift the palette, arch the tongue forward, place in the mask, i.e., all the things you would do when you sing, but you make no sound. So steps 1 and 2 are “Doo”-ing pitches and “silent audiation.” You can do these steps, separately, over and over until you are ready to move to the last step. By doing so, you will be laying excellent ground-work for the final step. . . Integration.

Before talking about integration, a word on “silent audiation” is in order. The purpose of this activity is actually to train the vocal muscles of the body to memorize the flow and positions of the word sounds, while actually hearing the pitch in your head. What makes one song different from another is the combination of pitches and how the phonetics flow. The elements of

the performance are always the same. The same 12 pitches are used, maybe in a different key; words are comprised of the same vowels and consonants. What is different is the order. That is what makes each song unique. So learning the order of events is 90% of the learning process. “Silent audiation” allows one to focus exclusively on the order of “events,” from shape to shape, so that the muscles learn the vocal movements and learn to anticipate the movements as the pitches and word-sounds flow along

By doing this silently, it gives your brain a chance to associate the subconscious pitch with the muscle movement. That is very important, so I will say it again:

By doing this silently, it gives your brain a chance to associate the subconscious pitch with the muscle movement.

Every vowel and its duration of sound is therefore associated with a pitch. If we hear it or can imagine it, the vocal mechanism will go through the process of preparing to sing. When we actually engage the mind and say, “Sing,” the shape, if practiced, will be there and the pitch, if previously reviewed (with “Doo”), will associate itself with the shape (i.e. the vowel).

Lanny Bansham, Olympic Sharpshooter, the first to score a perfect 400, (all bull’s-eyes), and to win the Olympic gold medal, was unable to go to the practice range to shoot 6 weeks before the Olympics. So to keep in shape, he practiced the motions of shooting “bulls-eyes” without firing a shot. He steadied himself, cleared his mind, aimed, squeezed the trigger, and imagined the perfect shot, every time. In that 6 week period he never even fired a rifle. At the Olympics, he just repeated what he had practiced “silently” before. Such is the nature of the mind, use of imagery, and training the muscle-memory.

At first, you can practice word-sound flow listening to the pitches from the learning CD, but eventually you will

(continued on next page)

Learning A Song *(continued)*

want to do “silent audiation” and attempt to hear the sounds of the pitches in your head. That’s the “audiation” part. . . hearing in your head. As you practice, you will discover it is not that difficult. You have to use your imagination and memory, but the “Doo” activity will provide a very strong experience from which to draw.

The integration part will actually be quite simple now. The pitches have been recorded in the subconscious. The muscle memory has been trained to shape and flow through the word sounds. As you now start to sing, you shouldn’t be surprised to find the notes come booming forth from your subconscious as they are associated with the space and shapes of the vowels that you have already practiced.

Many a singer struggles with poor learning habits; they often say, “I may be slow, but this is the way I learn.” Too often they discover they learned many places incorrectly, or sing many notes out of tune. The fact is that learning a song is not so much about learning notes and words, as it is giving the pitches a “place to be heard”. This method does just that.

Experience shows that singers using this method learn faster and more accurately. They maintain tonal center and sing more chords in tune. Take advantage of learning CDs that use computer-accurate tone generation in a “Doo Voice” sound that works in concert with this learning method.

Harmony Singers. . . a special tip for you.

Spend as much time at first listening to the lead part as well as your own. Ultimately, your harmony part is tuned to the “anticipated” melody line. So, you need to know where the lead is going. (Of course, it helps if the lead actually “gets there”.)

Don’t learn your part as melody from note to note. A harmony part sung “independently” from the melody will tend to sound out of tune. “Doo” the pitches so that you learn the

note patterns. And practice “silent audiation” to get the muscle-memory activated. But then the integration process for you is one of listening to the melody as you sing your harmony part and allow your ear to make the fine-tuning adjustments.

Have Fun Singing. . . Have More Fun Singing In Tune!

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A Positive Outlook

Jim Gogolin
VP, PR & Pub

Remember when your mother told you that if you did not have something good to say, don’t say anything at all? Remember that? I heard it often - perhaps I needed more frequent reminders than most, but it sticks in my mind. Said another way: **Think, and be positive!** And it applies in so many aspects of one’s life experiences.

We are at the point in our barber-shopping year when we approach people to buy tickets for our show, or purchase advertising in the show program. Professional sellers learn many methods to increase sales. A couple that I have found to be helpful in promoting sales are: Smile, and be positive about your self and your product. That should be easy for each of us because we are presenting a great show, and we are having fun doing it. Right? Nod your head up and down.

And while you are conversing with your client(s), let them know that our show is entertainment suitable for the entire family - jokes and music that their twelve-year-old daughter can hear without causing embarrassment or nightmares. Be certain to let them know about the other good things that our chapter does - our other performances, for sure, including the ones at Christmas in the nursing homes and assisted living centers.

Don’t forget to mention the donations we are making to the community, especially in the upgrades to the Dakota Middle School Fine Arts Department. The lighting system improvements that will be ready for the coming show include dimmers and controllers for the overhead stage lights, new gel frames and colored gels to set the mood, and perhaps the ability to remotely control the balcony mounted spots. The new equipment and capabilities are being given to the school and will be available for any group that uses the facility.

Let us all put on our best positive attitude and show our public that we appreciate their patronage, and besides presenting good entertainment, we care about our community!

Jim



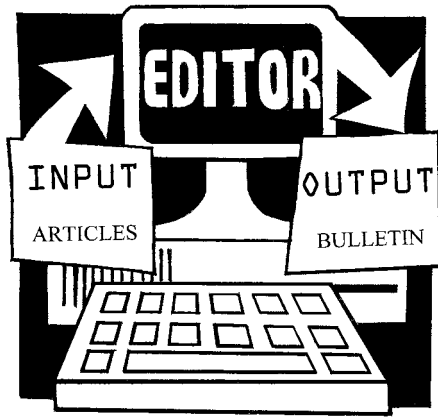
RMD Spring Convention:

April 28-29

Ogden, UT

go to: www.rmdsing.org
for all the information!





In an effort to curb costs, we will now be offering the newsletter in two different versions. If you have internet access, it will be up on our chapter website in PDF format. You will need to download a copy of Acrobat Reader, which, I'm sure, will have a link on the website itself. When a new edition is on the site, usually right around the first of each month, (*unless, of course, it isn't*) you will be notified by email. (*Make sure that I have all of your current addresses!*)

For those of you without internet access, or those preferring a hard copy, we will mail your version to you, or deliver it to you at the chapter meeting.

Please send me your current email address and let me know if you want it by mail. Send it to: leaderman@earthlink.net. We can then not only notify you when it is ready, but also update the chapter roster on our chapter web page (members only section).

As always, articles, photos & suggestions are welcome.

John



Where do I fit into my chapter?

by Tom Vizzi, Buffalo Billboard Editor, Buffalo, NY

What can we do to improve our chorus?

Am I a Competitor, Leader, Hobbyist, Affiliator or a Tag-a-long? "Where do I fit in my chapter"? Every chapter's membership roster consists of individuals who fit into one or more of the above categories.

Improve Chapter Membership

Improve chapter quality, attract singers, not just numbers.

This is not one of those panic, browbeating articles but it is an article of enlightenment.

Last fall at the SLD COTS school, I heard a talk on the membership structure of our Chapters. This talk brought out the fact that each Chapter has members that fall into 5 categories;

- *The Competitor*- he's the guy that wants to win! He is willing to sacrifice and work hard to accomplish his goal.
- *The Leader*- this guy is willing to be an officer, a committee chairman, section leader, and do anything he can to help out the Chapter. He's not too sure where he stands when it comes to competition.
- *The Hobbyist*- this guy loves to sing, it's his hobby! He's been told that he has a nice singing voice and he probably does! He's not interested in competition, he just wants to sing!
- *The Affiliator*- this guy just wants to belong. He comes to the weekly rehearsals, sings, and has a great time. He hardly ever volunteers to help the Chapter in anyway but, just wants to belong.
- *The Tag-a-long* - this guy goes along with anything the Leader says, does whatever the Hobbyist wants to do, and just tags along with the chapter flow.

What is your Chapter attitude and where do you fit in?

Take a long look at your Chapter, see if you can recognize any of the above member types. Now ask yourself, "Where do I fit in?" Is there room for improvement?

A chapter full of competitors is a chapter that wants to go to a national convention. And why not! In our lifetime, how many opportunities do we get to do something that really makes a difference. Think how exciting it would be to travel to a national convention and compete on stage with the best in the world. Wow! Win or lose, it's the experience that counts.

The non-competitors in our chapters need to analyze themselves and ask the question; "Why do I belong to my chorus?" Our common denominators are that we all love to sing, and entertain or we would not be here in the first place. Would our audiences rather hear the blah "Blahville Harmonizers" from Blahville, USA or the exciting Vocal Majority chorus?

The Youth of the world are our future!

Our youth today, want to win! They are growing up with competition. A chorus can not attract a youthful singer if they have the "Blahville attitude". Our choruses must meet the new millenium with a year 2000 attitude.

Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks. If we want to attract youth of the 21st century, we must become a chorus, a District and a Barbershop Society of the 21st century.

Let's all sing with excitement, enthusiasm, focus, and then we will all have more fun. I for one have changed my mind about my attitude. I have decided to move up to the competitor level.

It seems to me, that if viewing a rainbow is exciting, imagine what it must be to find the gold.