



The Voice of Rushmore



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



Volume 12

September 2010

Number 9

A HAPPENING OF HARMONY IN THE BLACK HILLS OF SOUTH DAKOTA

It is still a thrill to sing in front of the Men at Mt. Rushmore. I reflected on my last article and have restored the right descriptor to **Four Men** who did so much for our way of life. I hope our representation as the **Shrine of Democracy Chorus** and the effort we put forth in our singing that evening was worthy of us standing before those great leaders.

I have endeavored to work harder, make personal sacrifices, and endure the standing for hours to make my contribution to this great Society. I noticed that we all bore the work well, and I heard very little complaint, if any, about our hard work. Mike O'Neill's directions were very good and he expected a lot from us. I was disappointed when we didn't get to do **Drivin' Me Crazy**, but if he has to put his name on the work, it is his call. We all worked hard and I believe we all have a better understanding, that loud is not better, and sound will always come in tune if it isn't splattered all over the audience we are singing to. I have to work on the soft head tone more to develop a consistent sound that will be more like Curtis showed us. What a vocal sound that guy has. But, in talking with him, he said that it took years to develop that, and now seems more natural instead of work.

Ah, silver is a great metal when you have worked it for the first time, although working it was a very short time. I now know that thinking you know something and being able to perform it are in two different parts of the world. Again, some work needs to be done and I will have to get my "you know what" in a group, and work on the Barberpole Cats.

The **Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest** was great, and I was asked by some very formidable gentlemen to step up to the plate. Al Kelts, (the other Al Kelts), Aka Al Pitts, and John Elving asked me to join them. I can say I was truly thrilled to sing with this caliber of talent and will not try to

disappoint them next time. It is *Drivin' Me Crazy* that we have so much going for us, and I did not work my part of the bargain. **IF** there is a next time, I will come out with guns blazing. The other three have been to the OK corral, got the T-shirt and lived to talk about it. I have been a spectator long enough.

We now enter the time between the last great event and the fall lineup into Christmas. Some feel that their presence is really not needed until we get closer to time to perform. It is precisely this time we need to review and look for ways to improve our sections by following Mike's suggestions. If you feel your presence won't make a difference now, then how about rethinking that thought process, so that we know where we stand in our balance and in our tone when we have a riser full of men who represent those cherished four men on the mountain.

Thanks,
Pete



Our "Stalwart" and "S-teamed" quartet judges
Mike O'Neill, Curtis Terry, Matt Swann, Denny Malone

Shrine of Democracy

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The Voice of Rushmore

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The Mt. Rushmore Chapter is the home of the Shrine of Democracy Chorus. The chapter and chorus meet each Thursday evening at 7 P.M. in the choir room at Central High School on Mt. Rushmore Rd. in Rapid City, S.D. (Look for the banner.)

For more information visit our website, www.shrineofdemocracychorus.org, or contact the editor.

Articles, information and address corrections may be sent to the editor:

John Elving
6806 Peaceful Pines Rd.
Black Hawk, SD 57718
leaderman@earthlink.net
605.381.9680



SUPPORT YOUR QUARTETS!

Black Hills Blend

Al Kelts, tenor
Pieter Wouden, lead
Wayne Anderson, baritone
Pete Anderson, bass

Convergence

Jeff (JJ) Elving, tenor
Dave Sommers, lead
Clayton Southwick, baritone
John Elving, bass

High Mileage

David L'Esperance, tenor
Jim Olson, lead
Al Pitts, baritone
Chuck Knowlton, baritone
Del Beck, bass

Vintage Reserve (aka Trailer Trash)

Dwight "Digger" Edstrom, tenor
Doug Andrews, lead
Clayton Southwick, baritone
Gary Welsh, bass



Rex Field

Sept. 20

Print off two copies
of this newsletter
to share—one with
your family and
one with someone
you are bringing to
a chapter meeting.
Let them know they
belong here!

SOMEWHAT SERIOUS QUARTET CONTEST

On Friday evening, August 19, 2010, a momentous affair took place in Hill City, S.D. as members of the **Shrine of Democracy Chorus** met at the Best Western Golden Spike Motel for the inaugural **Bean Feed and Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest**.

Naturally, many of the SOD members gathered for a little liquid libation, both adult and non-adult beverages, and a great meal of barbecued hot dogs and Dr. Al Kelts' famous beans (*there are no finer*). Although the grill was ably manned by Rex Field, Bob Melvin felt he had to spell the tiring chef. (*At least get the dogs warm, Bob! -Ed*)

When all had their fill of the beans, chips, peanuts, hot dogs but not liquids, it was time for the quartet contest. Man-in-charge Pete Anderson drew names from four (slightly used) cups after the "mic" testing quartet, made up of four "ringers" sang their swan song. (After all, this was held very near the pool.)

Head Judge Mike O'Neill was getting a little worried that he would have to have the final, and only, decision in his hands. Fortunately the other judges, all members of **Ignition** quartet showed up to help.

The hand-picked quartets, all of whom had never sung in a quartet together before, had their practice time and it was time to begin the Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest. Six quartets sang their one song vying for the coveted gold medals. With names like **Harry and the Seeing Eye Dogs**, **Bean Feed Four**, **Black & Blue** and **TVTWW** (*you had to be there to hear the explanation*), the competition was hot and heavy.

When the competition ended, the judges retired to the judges lounge to collaborate and try and decide a winning quartet from this fine groups of unorganized singers. Much screaming and yelling was emanating from the ~~jury room~~ judges lounge, but soon all was quiet and three of the judges came out intact and announced the top three quartets.

Placing third and taking home the bronze medals was the **Bean Feed Four**, consisting of Jeff Elving, tenor; Jim Olson, lead; Wayne Anderson, Baritone; Steve Ferley, bass.

Silver medalists were the **Four Gone Conclusions**. This top notch and international quality quartet was made up of tenor Al Kelts, lead Pete (NA) Stach, baritone Al Pitts and bass John Elving.

Rounding out the medalists and taking home the gold was perennial favorite **Black & Blue**. Toodling tenor for this quartet was David L'Esperance, warbling the lead part was Todd Schultz, belting out baritone was Jim Price and belting the bass was Bob Melvin. According to head judge O'Neill, even though they exhibited fine stage presence by actually knowing where the moon was, the thing that put them over the top was their matching outfits. To show how in "sight"ful this judging crew was, the quartet derived their name from the fact that three of them were wearing blue shirts while the fourth, a baritone, naturally, wore black.

As each quartet was named for their placement, Chairman of the event Pete (NS) Anderson presented each with either their bronze, silver or gold medal and tried to kiss them as he hung the medal around their neck.

A fine time was held by all, whether singing in a quartet or not. That is by all but Pete (NS) who wasn't allowed to kiss the winners! Each of the medal winning singers is proud to have been a member of their quartet and they are now having a special window box made to house their cherished medals.

The most success from this contest is that several men were able to step up and sing in a quartet for the very first time. The fact that they were able to sing their part all by themselves is the best thing that could happen to them, and our chapter/chorus. As Mike O'Neill said during the weekend, the best thing that has happened to his chapter and chorus is the quarteting done each week. It makes each man a better singer and the chorus stronger altogether.

Let's keep working on learning our music to sing in next years "**Second Annual Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest**." By doing that you will have much more fun and you will become a better singer in the process.

One other success was getting the goose bumps and chills going on one of the bystanders. He lives in Cheyenne and was so taken by all the singing he couldn't contain himself. That is always worth the effort we put forth in singing our best and still having fun doing it.

See you around the pool area next year.



**It all began with a very attentive,
and lively group on Thursday evening
for a coaching session with Mike O'Neill.**

*All photos this month
by John Elving*

♪ MUSICAL NOTES ♪

John Elving, VP Music & Performance

Tradition. What's it worth to you? What's it mean to our chapter? Does tradition play a part in not only what we sing but also in HOW we sing?

Recently a discussion took place on the internet concerning the singing of **The Old Songs** to begin chapter meetings and **Keep the Whole World Singing** to end those same chapter meetings. It all stemmed around the idea that chapters begin and end their meetings by singing these two songs, but singing them badly. They seem to be "throw away" songs that are sung with no performance standards in place.

Now in our chapter we almost always have someone up front to direct our closing songs (we add **It's Time Now To Go** to the mix). It is a great training ground for our members to learn some of the ins and outs of directing. Some have experience in directing while others have never directed before. That's not the point, however.

Do we sing those songs, along with some others, the "way we've always done it" or do we work hard to sing them with our best performance skills? It doesn't make much sense to work as hard as we do during our rehearsal portions of the chapter meeting to then not incorporate those skills into singing everything that we sing.

There are those, even among our membership, who want to sing the old songs just like we've always sung them. There are also those who want to sing whatever we do better than we did last time. Which camp do you fall in? Or maybe you're somewhere between.

In my opinion, which may not match up with yours, if we sing things the way we've always done them, why sing them at all? You may not agree with me, but at least give it some thought.

From the Internet: "When was the last time you actually rehearsed either of these songs? Expecting that the answer is "never", do you perform any other songs in your repertoire that are never rehearsed? If not, is it surprising that the rest of your current repertoire probably sounds better?"

"Keep The Whole World Singing is an especially wonderful song, with a strong and heartfelt lyric, a well sculpted melody and some very ringable chords. Willis Diekema's arrangement can be a little tricky and is probably woodshedded incorrectly more often than not. Read through the lyric line by line and imagine how moving this song might be if sung with the kind of emotional involvement, correct notes, and rehearsal preparation you give your other songs. Then go do that rehearsing. Will you perform this in public? Maybe, maybe not. But even if you don't, sometimes it's worth a little rehearsal and commitment to a song you sing just for yourself." *(I checked my part against what the notes really are. It wasn't pretty! Then I checked the other parts. Not any prettier! I've learned all those parts wrong. -Ed)*

If I want to go out and, say, dance, do I want to continue

to go and dance the same clumsy way I may do it the first time? For me, at least, it all comes down to my personal pride. I want to do something better the next time than the way I just did it. I'm not satisfied with the status quo.

I learned from my father a long time ago (that's right, a L-O-O-O-N-G time ago) that if I quit learning or working at improving what I do, I might as well die. There's no reason for me to keep on doing what I do. After his retirement, which came well into his 70s, he started work on a second masters degree in a completely new field. He also started studying two new languages. Until the day he died, he was still studying and learning. It kept him sharp and focused on things besides becoming a couch potato.

We can continue to sing all the old songs the same old way, or we can continue to sing them better and with more musicality each and every time we sing them. There should never be any "throw away" songs. Every song has a special message for someone and it is our duty to make that song special just for that person.

Often times we don't even know that person or how a song affects them. But it does. Our challenge, then, is to work to make the most of that song, whatever song it is, the most powerful thing for that person at that particular time.

I challenge each of you to work at becoming the best singer of every song you sing each and every time you sing it. That is no easy task, but let's continue to learn and live!

Sing-cerely & Humm-bly,

John

CHARGE! AND I DON'T MEAN PLASTIC

By Bob Melvin, VP Member Development

What a wonderful week and what a time to be a barbershopper. If you missed the Harmony Happening, you missed a once in a life time experience.

Okay, it is time, once again to remind you that it is not Rex Field's responsibility to recruit a total of fifty members by next spring; it is the commitment we made as a group to our chorus and our community. I have five guests on the hook. How are you doing? Please make that extra effort that leads to success and ask away. The new members are out there, so let's go get them.

HARMONY HAPPENING IN THE HILLS 2010

The guest list of visiting barbershoppers at the 2010 version of Harmony Happening was extremely brief, perhaps the shortest ever. However, that didn't seem to diminish the quality of this year's outing. Even though the weekend possessed the makings of a Mt. Rushmore Chapter retreat, it blossomed into something much more. The kickoff was the Thursday night regular chapter meeting under the solid leadership of Clayton Southwick and guest clinician Mike O'Neill. The Friday night social started quietly but heated up in a hurry when Rex started pulling sizzling hot dogs off the grill and Kelts took the lid off a steaming pot of his delicious beans. Halfway through the chow session we were joined by the IGNITION, the high-energy, re-assembled quartet from Denver. Excitement was definitely building as Pete Anderson and John Elving pulled together a line-up of pick-up quartets from the members of the Mt. Rushmore Chapter. The quartet contest was on and would be judged by Mike and members of IGNITION. It turned out to be an interesting and fun-for-all event.

The Saturday rehearsal was one fine barbershopping experience with Mike O'Neill providing an energetic, beneficial and successful session at Hill City High School.

A well-prepared group headed for the Mt. Rushmore Amphitheater. After a day with temps in the high 90s, the evening on the Hill was gorgeous. A nice crowd greeted the festival singers and continued to grow as the Shrine of Democracy Chorus and the Festival Chorus delivered excellent performances. IGNITION provided a home run type hit to the program with their crowd-pleasing presentation of barbershop quartet singing.

With the program's end, the time had come for hungry barbershoppers to head for Keystone's Community Center where they enjoyed the delicious food prepared by Barbara Elving. Fellowship and quartet singing added to the happy gathering.

Sooo—there weren't many out-of-town participants at the 2010 Happening. But, those who were there had a terrific impact on the success of the event. Thanks to our chapter leaders who organized a successful festival. Those who participated came away with a good felling about being a barbershopper. It was a good week-end.

Del



THE CHORUS OF ALL THAT IS

From the Internet

You are part of a greater whole. Without you, the whole cannot fully express itself, and without the whole, you are desperately empty.

You are vitally and uniquely important. But that does not make you more important than others. Your thoughts, ideas and actions have the power to transform. But that doesn't give you the right to overwhelm.

Instead, it gives you the obligation to serve. It gives you the opportunity to contribute to something bigger than yourself, something that gracefully encompasses all you are.

By so giving, you enlarge your own life and the world around you. By so giving, you create real value and meaning, and experience profound fulfillment.

Sing your own song, with a passion that comes from the center of your being. And delight in how beautifully it resonates within the chorus of all that is.

-- Ralph Marston



Gold Medalists Black & Blue

David L'Esperance, Todd Schultz, Bob Melvin, Jim Price



Silver Medalists Four Gone Conclusion

Al Kelts, Pete Stach, John Elving, Al Pitts

BOARD SCRIBBLINGS

The August 2010 meeting of your Board of Directors convened at 7:03 on August 3, 2010 in a somewhat unique location: because our host was going to be quite late due to a City Council meeting commitment, **President Wayne Anderson** called the meeting to order under the shade of a large tree in front of the Law Offices of **Member-at-Large Jim Olson**. The secretary certified the presence of a quorum, and the minutes of the July meeting were approved as presented.



VP and COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Treasurer Jim Gogolin reported the Chapter finances to be in very good order.

President Wayne, pinch-hitting for **Music and Performance VP John Elving**, urged the Board members to review the **Compellingly Attractive Chapter Meetings** (CACM) podcast.

Chapter Development VP Bob Melvin noted we have 33 active members upon whom we can count. In order to achieve our goal of 50 men on the risers by next Spring, we need to recruit three new members /month.

Show Chair L'Esperance is digging through the Society Music Catalog to identify numbers which may fit the Crooner theme; he has narrowed it down to about 200 at this point! A performance venue is being sought.

OLD BUSINESS:

Harmony Happening in the Hills: Chairman Pete Anderson notes we have to use our risers and sound system and have to be completely off the stage by 7:45 p.m. Several members of the Spearfish Chapter will join us both for Chapter on Thursday and at Hill City. At this time, a quartet has not been determined with certainty! Pete reports the **Bean Feed** and **Somewhat Serious Quartet Competition** will begin at 6 p.m. on Friday. The Board approved \$50 to acquire medals for the top three placers in the contest. Quartet members will be chosen by "luck of the draw".

NEW BUSINESS:

A nominating committee of Jim Olson, Pete Anderson and

Wayne Anderson was selected. Steve Ferley encouraged them to consider some of the "younger guys" for positions.

Fall Convention in Layton Utah: President (and Delegate) Anderson will not be able to attend, so he will appoint a replacement.

M&P VP John Elving is a candidate for the post of **Executive VP** for the District; if elected he will become District President in 2 years!

CACM Workshop in Phoenix: the Board approved travel and lodging of \$700 if Clayton is able to attend on September 18.

BUSINESS from the FLOOR:

Gary Welsh suggested that with the construction at Central probably being an issue for the entire year, one possibility for chapter meetings would be at Dwight Edstrom's **Serenity Springs Chapel**. Another possibility would be an area church. Gary also mentioned the Chorus stays more focused when we have goals to work toward. In addition to the Spring Show and Harmony Happening, we should develop a "road show" which we could take to regional communities such as Wall, Pierre, Lead, Hot Springs, Gillette, etc. This will get a LOT of discussion in the next month or so.

CDVP Melvin will explore the possibility of getting another polo shirt as a uniform option.

President Anderson read a thank you note from Behavior Management Systems for our sponsorship for their golf tournament honoring long-time member Jack Cannon.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 7, convening at 7 p.m. at Jim Olson's offices. Perhaps we'll have it inside this time!

President Anderson declared the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
In Perfect Harmony,

DAVID L'ESPERANCE, Secretary
Mount Rushmore Chapter

IT WOULD BE A SHAME

By Del Beck

What? It would be a shame to ignore the outstanding coaching/teaching offered to us by Mike O'Neill. We proved to Mike and to ourselves that we have the ability to make the pleasing musical sound and the kind of vocal production which not only Mike but also the singer and the listener deserves and will enjoy. Mike's sincerity was obvious as he was closing his lead section coaching session with no less than a plea to the group imploring us to choose to produce

the vocal production which is pleasing and leads to quality harmony.

Here is an individual who has never seen us before Thursday night, yet obviously cares greatly about our success as a quality chorus. Does every member of the SOD care as much as this stranger does? If we do, we will not cast aside the teachings of a guy who traveled all the way from Nashville to help us sing better.

It's the start of the football season. Pretend the ball has been handed off—to YOU. What do you plan to do with it?

It would be a shame to drop the ball.

Del

VIEW FROM THE PILOT'S SEAT

Wayne Anderson, President



School has started, summer's over, and Harmony Happening has happened. What a weekend. It started with Mike O'Neill blowing into town from Nashville on Thursday and working with the whole chorus (plus some friends from Spearfish) for over two hours. He had us sounding pretty good, actually very good, shortly into the session. The hard part, of course, is remembering all the good stuff we learned that night and using it each time we sing.

The next afternoon, Black Hills Blend cornered Mike for another coaching session (quartet only this time) which lasted close to three hours. Again, we received some invaluable instruction that hopefully we'll be able to remember and put to use.

Speaking of quartets, later that night the chorus had a bean feed and Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest at the hotel in Hill City. I was fortunate enough to be in two different quartets, namely **TVTWW** (Two Vets and Two Want Vettes) including Jeff Elving, Rex Field, Tom Lippincott, and myself. I think it was the first time for Rex and Tom performing by themselves in a quartet. Way to go guys! Isn't it fun? The second quartet was The **Bean Feed Four** with Jeff Elving, Jim Olson, Steve Ferley, and me. We had a lot of fun preparing and performing and we even won a bronze medal! Thanks to Steve, by the way, for designing and creating the medals—they looked great!

The judging panel for the contest included Mike O'Neill and the members of **Ignition!** quartet. Some of their judging criteria included points for referring to the moon, points for matching shirts (it was dark out), and deductions for appearing in numerous quartets. All in all, they did a great job. All I can say is next year I'm learning the patter to Down Our Way! Congratulations to Todd and the rest of **Black and Blue** for winning the gold.

By the way, the beans and brats were delicious – thanks to the preparers and the cooks.



Waiting for the beans & dogs

Todd Schultz, Sharon Beck, Del Beck, Al Pitts, Mike O'Neill

Then came Saturday morning at 9 a.m. Mike worked with us all morning and all afternoon preparing the show songs for that night. What a pleasure working with him all day as well as Dan, Curtis, Matt, and Denny from **Ignition!** Speaking of **Ignition!**, they have recently gotten back together after singing with a couple very successful other quartets, and we were their first show since the rejoin. We're all looking forward to seeing **Ignition!** on the international stage in Kansas City next summer. They're sounding great!

So, it was six o'clock, and the **Shrine of Democracy Chorus** was formed on the stage beneath the other Shrine of Democracy, Mount Rushmore. We sang our set of songs, then, after a couple quartet songs, the entire chorus joined us on stage to perform the show we prepared all day for, and a great time was had by all, especially our audience. Thanks to George, Tom, Teddy, and Abe for sharing your stage with us (I wonder who sings what part in that quartet). All the singers involved in the show did a great job, and seeing **Ignition!** back together on stage was a real thrill. We even had a pretty good sized crowd who were very pleased with the whole show. Thank you so much to Mike O'Neill for working with us all weekend to put on a great show at the feet of the biggest quartet in the world.

Barbara Elving and her crew did an outstanding job setting up the afterglow and preparing the food. Thanks, Barbara. Also, thanks to Pete Anderson who did a lot of behind the scenes work to make the whole weekend possible. And finally, thank you to Jim and Lin Gogolin who opened up their Anchorage B & B to house **Ignition!** and their entourage. I was very tired when the day was over, and very pleased to have been a part of the whole weekend. What a blast! What do you say we do it again next year?

Wayne



Bronze Medalists Bean Feed Four

Jeff Elving, Jim Olson, Wayne Anderson, Steve Ferley

(ANOTHER) PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Having just returned from the BHS International Convention in Philadelphia, I can tell you that if the future success of our Society is based solely on great singing and great entertainment, then there would be nothing to fear. And if anyone is worried about whether the younger generation enjoys 4-part a cappella singing enough to keep it alive, then I can tell you that I have seen first-hand that a worldwide interest in our barbershop style of music exists with all age levels.

But the Barbershop Harmony Society truly exists only at the chapter level. Your chapter is responsible for Preserving and Encouraging our musical style in your local geographic area. Barbershop is an up-close and personal method of entertainment. The only place your neighbors will have the opportunity to witness a barbershop quartet is on your chapter show or by attending one of your chapter's community performances. There is rarely exposure on national media (and, when there is, it is rarely positive!) The citizenry of Goldthwaite, Texas, don't have a personal connection with supporting the Vocal Majority, as an example, but they will turn out en masse to support their own family, friends and neighbors singing at the local high school auditorium on Saturday night. And with that opportunity to perform locally, that Chapter can bring in a high-caliber guest quartet that not only knocks the socks off the audience, but may motivate their own singers to aspire to better musical production and "lock and ring" those chords more consistently.

A special THANK YOU to Mike O'Neill for a wonderful weekend during Harmony Happening in the Hills. It was one of the finest coaching sessions we have had in many years.



Honestly Mike, was it that bad?

I'm not convinced that all of us take our mission seriously enough. Yes, I know it is "just" a hobby, but did you know that each of our chapters has received a charitable tax exemption under the tax laws of both Federal and State government? The main reason we qualify for that exemption is that ***we have promised to provide education to preserve the American art form called barbershop music.*** Demonstrating our musical style in our communities is what keeps our chapters alive. Providing funding for music educators to purchase music and attend training workshops is part of our required mission. And your dues are helping send barbershoppers to Directors College at Harmony University the first week of August.

You have heard the phrase, "Charity begins at home." And charity consists of more than just money. In our nonprofit world, we talk about the "3 T's": time, talent and treasure. Not all of us have extra cash to donate, but do you take seriously the amount of time and talent you personally bring to your chapter each and every week? Your chapter will not be as successful without YOU and your time, talent and treasure. I believe that when we, each of us, focus on what it takes for our own chapter to succeed, then our mission to help barbershop music survive for future generations will be accomplished—seriously. And it is time to seriously focus on our chapter success.

Dwaine Cooper
SWD President

WE GET MAIL



John,

I love your bulletin. I always take the time to read it, because it is so interesting and because it gives me insight into the workings of local chapters. Better local chapters are the key to greater membership numbers, and that's what we need for Barbershop to thrive. Thank you for your great bulletin, thanks to your chapter for your great participation, and thanks for taking Mike O'Neill out of my hair, at least for a few days!

Keep the great bulletins coming, they make my day,

Ed
E. D. Watson
Executive Director/CEO

WE GET MAIL



Behavior Management SYSTEMS

350 Elk Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 343-7262
FAX (605) 343-7293
www.behaviormanagement.org



July 21, 2010

Mount Rushmore Chapter
Shrine of Democracy Chorus
4507 Buckhorn Place
Rapid City, SD 57702

Dear Shrine of Democracy Chorus Members,

Thank you for sponsoring a hole at the Jack Cannon Memorial Golf Tournament held July 16th. The weather was beautiful and a good time was had by all the participants. Ruth Cannon was able to join us and she was most appreciative of your kind remembrance of Jack,

All proceeds from the Golf Tournament will be used to educate the general public on mental health issues and to assist in relieving the stigma of mental illness. Through your sponsorship, you make a huge difference in our community and help us in our mission to build positive change.

On behalf of our Board, clients, staff and Ruth – I thank you sincerely,

Alan Solano, CEO

MAINSTREAM/IMPACT-WEST
111 North Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 343-0650
FAX (605) 342-3692

NORTHERN HILLS
623 Dahl Road
Spearfish, SD 57783
(605) 642-2777
FAX (605) 642-9356

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(605) 745-6222
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building
positive
change

SMART SINGING IS BETTER THAN LOUD SINGING

By Larry Robinson, from *The Heartbeat*

Let me first state up front that I do not have any formal background in music education. However, I am a good listener, and I used to be a prolific reader. After joining SPEBSQSA (a.k.a. BHS) in 1985, I availed myself of every opportunity to learn vocal technique. I sang with two competition choruses, and performed on the international stage four times. I took vocal technique classes annually for ten years at the Harmony Education Program School (*our Rocky Mountain Harmony College –Ed*). These schools brought in prominent BHS educators to create once in a life time learning opportunities.

When I replay videos of my early barbershop performances, I can hear my voice sticking out prominently in the chorus numbers—it's a bit embarrassing. As time goes by, it becomes obvious that I have learned to sing at a controlled (optimum) volume, and to blend my voice with the other lead singers. It is so much BETTER, CLEARER and BRIGHTER!

A good description would be: You must give up the vanity of hearing your own voice, and become indistinguishable in the more harmonious, single voiced **Unit Sound**. A good demonstration of how it sounds will come out during a section rehearsal. Using a chorus song that everyone knows well, form a circle with each member's right hand on the right shoulder of the man in front of him. Everyone closes their eyes and (at about a volume four or five) sings the song. Each person focuses on singing through the man in front of him so their voices match exactly (volume, timbre, vowels, breathing, etc.). The result should be a unit sound where no individual voice sticks out. Once this technique is learned, you will find that as you perform with the chorus you will no longer be able to hear your own voice—just the voices around you. This is exactly

as it should be. Sometimes I have to cup my hand over my ear just to reassure myself that I am actually singing. If you can hear yourself clearly, you are singing too loud and should reduce volume so that your voice blends better.

Another trick of the trade is when singing a post note on a tag—leave room for the sound to grow as the tag progresses. If you jump right to the maximum volume, the tag becomes flat and uninteresting. You are usually tempted to try to sing louder and end up shouting. A good rule of thumb is to begin the post no louder than a seven (on a scale where one is lowest, and 10 is highest), and grow gradually to nine. Keep volume 10 in reserve just in case the director calls for more.

On songs that contain notes that are very high in your range, we often strain to reach them resulting in an unpleasant sound. One solution when practicing is to sing that high note repeatedly until satisfied that you are singing it as pretty as possible. Then, keeping your throat in that configuration, sing the portion of the song leading up to and including the high note. You will find that you don't have to strain to reach it. If you still have to strain, try again. If you are still unable to sing it without straining, consider lip-syncing that note.

Before I sign off, I must emphasize that these tips in no way alter or dilute our main focus on tension and release, platforms, point of focus, target vowels and core movement. These are simply methods that I have found useful and which I hope may be of use to you.

Singing is fun; singing well is more fun. Let's sing better every week. Thanks for listening.

Larry



The Seventeen Districts of The Barbershop Harmony Society



THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY ADDS A NEW DISTRICT

The Carolinas District (NSC) was officially recognized at the recently concluded International Convention in Philadelphia. This region was formerly a part of the Dixie District.

While reviewing the map, you will be interested to note that only New York State and Pennsylvania have three different districts within their borders. In the case of New York, these districts are the New England District (NED), the Mid-Atlantic District (M-AD) and the Seneca Land District (SLD).

Pennsylvania, on the other hand, is trisected into the Mid-Atlantic District, the Johnny Appleseed District (JAD), and the Seneca Land District. Nine states—Arkansas, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, **South Dakota**, Nebraska, Kansas, and West Virginia have two districts within their boundaries.

Another interesting fact to note is that Canada is represented in only four of these 17 districts, three of which they share with the United States. The Ontario District (ONT) is Canada's sole independent district.

Shrine of Democracy Chorus

Mt. Rushmore Chapter, BHS
c/o John Elving, Editor
6806 Peaceful Pines Rd.
Black Hawk, SD 57718

The **Mt. Rushmore Chapter** and the **Shrine of Democracy Chorus** meet every Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. Meetings and rehearsals are held in the Central High School Choir Room (east side of the building, near the gym – look for the banner), 433 N. Mt. Rushmore Rd. All guests are welcome. All men are welcome to come sing with us. For more information, call (605) 209-3701 or (605) 574-4740.

Visit Us Online At:
www.shrineofdemocracychorus.org

Mission Statement

The Mt. Rushmore Chapter and the Shrine of Democracy Chorus shall promote, encourage and perpetuate barbershop-style singing in both chorus and quartets. We will recruit and welcome interested and motivated men who like to sing four-part a cappella harmony. We shall continually strive to improve our singing and performance skills, through the use of proper resources and opportunities. An attitude of fun, fellowship and teamwork will always guide our activities.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

| | |
|--|----------|
| Meeting of the Board Jim Olson's Office – 7:00 p.m. | Sept. 7 |
| Silver City Perf. & Chapter Picnic Pete Anderson's cabin in Silver City – 1:00 p.m. | Sept. 12 |
| Music Team Meeting TBA – 6:00 p.m. | Sept. 21 |
| Installation Banquet Minerva's Restaurant | Dec. 11 |



The 25th of
each month