



The Chordsmen Chronicle



www.funcenterchordsmen.com

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December 2009

Volume 35 Issue 12



Trevor Garrabrant voted the 2009 Barbershopper of the Year



Trevor Garrabrant

The Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY) award is presented, each year, to a member of the chorus, who in the opinion of the membership, has done the most to benefit the chapter during the year.

Trevor Garrabrant was the recipient of the 2009 BOTY award. Trevor is a graduate of Bowling Green State University with a degree in Music Education. He is the vocal music teacher in the Crestview school system. Trevor

joined the Fun Center Chordsmen two and a half years ago and earlier this year was named as an assistant director of the chorus. He also sings lead in the chapter barbershop quartet, Bravada.

Trevor has worked tirelessly to improve the vocal quality of the Chordsmen. He has shared his knowledge, musical skills and his work ethic with the chorus during the past year and is well deserving of the award.

Congratulations, Trevor, and thanks for your commitment to the Fun Center Chordsmen. Well done! 🎵

2010 Chordsmen officers installed and entertained in style



Doug Smeltz
JAD VP CDD
Installing Officer

Monday November 9 was a night to remember. The Fun Center Chordsmen 2010 officers were installed by Johnny Appleseed District Vice President of Chorus Director Development, **Doug Smeltz**. He is also the Director of the Singing Buckeyes chorus.

Doug took a novel approach to the installation with stories of his early barbershop days and how it relates to the responsibility of the chapter officers. His quick wit, beguiling smile and dry humor served him well as he held the audience's attention.

To cap off the evening, **Test of Time** the 2008 International Bronze Medalist Senior's quartet entertained to the delight of the audience. They sang a variety of songs highlighted by "Ghost Riders in the Sky" with the solo being sung by the "youngster of the group," bass **Mark Stock**.



Test of Time

As usual, the table decorations by **Gayle Ray** and **Dan Strader** included a surprise for those who had a pumpkin on the back of the place mat. Each received one of the flower arrangements that adorned the table. Good food,

From the Boardwalk

Minutes by Dan Strader



Main issues of the Board minutes from the November meeting held November 2, 2009

Board Members Present: Bob Crowl, R.F. Miller, Lorin Weaver, Rusty Cates, Mike Craze, Lee Cook, Joe Dove, Terry Loughman, Dave Kracker, Dan Strader

- A motion to reimburse mileage plus meals to the assistant directors when Steve is absent, was seconded and passed. Reimbursement rate will be the same as in the existing, ongoing contract currently in place for the director.
- **Rusty Cates** is stepping down as Chorus Contact and **Tim Brandt** has agreed to take over that position beginning January 2010.
- **Bob Crowl** agreed to be 2010 show chair.
- **Bob Crowl** updated the board of the Music Team's review of expenses and music arrangements for the 2010 show. Hopes are that the music should be here within the next two weeks for distribution to the members. He shared preparations for the 2010 show, with some details on music selections and plans for the performance. 🎵



Back in the day December 1980

- December 26 was the date of the Officer Installation banquet. **Roger Humbert** was the president elect.
- The Barbershopper of the Year and the outgoing president was **Tom Nixon**.
- Several Johnny Appleseed District dignitaries were invited to attend.
- The Mansfield chapter added it's fourth registered quartet - The Villageaires with Hugh Clingan (T), Dick Arehart (L), Al Wacker (Br) and John Adams (B).

Chorus is charged to create Individual Excellence

By: Tom Hoover - Chapter Secretary



Tom Hoover

As some of you know, I am an avid reader. My favorite categories include biography, history, science, theology and finance. I tend to read late at night when my mind is starting to slow down and relax a little. Reading for me is not only an inquisitive process but also a reactive one. There are times that a passage of a book, in this case from a biography, jumps right off the page and declares "This is Truth!" "Learn from me!" "You can do this!" (Very similar to Steve's Truisms!).

Here is the quote that got my attention on a Monday evening following a chorus rehearsal where Good Company performed. *"Like a team of specialists in any field, our performance depended both on individual excellence and on how well we worked together. We all tried to figure out ways to make our combination more effective."*

The above quote screams "BARBERSHOP." At first I reacted to the quote due to my involvement in Good Company. Read the quote again and see where you think it speaks about a quartet. Since I know you followed my suggestion and read the quote again, I feel comfortable in knowing you are thinking "Sure does." Then I realized it spoke to our chorus music just as emphatically.

There is much more meaning in this quote than my comments below, but maybe this will get you started thinking about barbershop and what the quote has to say about it. Here are a couple of my thoughts.

"Individual Excellence." Each of us is challenged to perform the barbershop style to the very best of our ability. Yes, I know that none of us will ever perform perfectly, but that is not what "Individual Excellence" is all about. "Individual Excellence" is about being better today than you were yesterday, being better tomorrow than you are today, and not being satisfied with anything less.

For all of us it means striving to follow our Director's guidance on what we need to do to get better. For example, looking for the "Ah" vowels, knowing our words and notes, presenting the song, etc. Steve, Dave and Trevor state these, and many other requests, all the time. But until we can fulfill their requests consistently, without their even asking, we have not attained individual excellence. I know that each one of us has shown flashes of individual

See Excellence on page 3

You too should become an Ambassador of Song

By: Lorin Weaver ~ Chapter Treasurer

The Harmony Foundation has designed its fundraising programs to support the society at every level. This principle led the Foundation to create the Donor Choice feature in July of 2005.

Here's how it works: individuals give a gift to the Foundation as members of the President's Council, Ambassadors of Song, or give a general gift to the Foundation and can designate up to 30% of their contributions to go back to the Chapter or District, or in some cases, to both. More than \$150,000 has been budgeted to go to Chapters and Districts this year.

The Foundation holds the amount designated for each Chapter or District in individual accounts. The Foundation sends the first check no later than March 31 for cash donations received during the preceding July-December and the second check no later than September 30 for cash donations during the preceding January-June. Our March check was \$187.50 and our September check was \$167.00 for a total of \$354.50 received in 2009.

Chapters and Districts are allowed to use this money to further the causes they choose. A list of individuals who have contributed to the Foundation and have chosen the Donor Choice option are listed below. For confidentiality purposes, the Foundation does not give out the amount these donors contributed. ♪

Bruce Van Hesteren
Chris Rumas
Ed Hoffmann
Lee Cook
Lorin Weaver
Luther Hampton

Mike Craze
Bob Crowl
R.F. Miller
Roger Humbert
Walt Jewett
Bill Herdman

Excellence from page 2

excellence but none of us have performed consistently enough to have truly attained individual excellence.

“Work Together.” After reading this quote I came to the realization that “Individual Excellence” doesn’t mean much in barbershop if it isn’t also applied to the sections as well. Tenor, Lead, Baritone and Bass. Each composed of individual voices, working together, unified into a section sound that then blends into the corporate sound of the chorus. Each of our sections needs to strive collectively to attain “Individual Excellence” as a section.

Our directors provide guidance every rehearsal regarding our sectional sound and how one section relates to the others. The goals include everything that the individual needs to do. But it also includes blending voices within the section, creating a solid artistic section sound, and blending the sound of sections with each other to create a quality chorus sound. We “Work Together” as individuals and as sections to create the magnificent sound of a Barber-shop Chorus.

I wish there was space in the Chronicle to discuss the last sentence of the quote. There certainly is a lot of meat there as well. One brief comment. When our directors give us guidance, is it our individual responsibility to find a way to implement what they are asking? Or is it their challenge to find some way to make it stick?

Who gave us this golden wisdom that caught my attention about barbershop? **Bill Russell**, NBA Champion. It worked for him. Why not us? ♪

**He who has not Christmas in his heart
will never find it under a tree.**

Roy L. Smith

A tag to remember and teach

15. Heart Of A Clown

I had the heart of a clown_____

of a clown_____

Sure, if I had the heart_____ I had the heart of a clown_____

Lloyd Steinkamp
Sung by the Western Continentals, 1968

Just say Ahhh

By: Steve Kovach ~ Music Director



Steve Kovach

We've been concentrating on the *Ah* vowel for some time now and I think you'll agree that it's paying dividends. I wanted to talk a little bit about why the *Ah* vowel is so important and why its positive effects are so far reaching.

The number one reason the *Ah* vowel is so important is that it creates space. We've talked for many years now about the need for space in singing.

Without it, we've got a thin, wimpy sound that no one wants to hear. Creating space opens the door to good sound, comfortable vocal production, and consistency. Secondly, it can be argued that the *Ah* vowel (because of the space it creates) is the foundation for all other vowels.

These thoughts alone should convince you to find the *Ah* vowels in every word. And, as we've said in rehearsals, it's not only the pure *Ah*'s we should look for but the hidden one's as well. More about that later.

I want to discuss some of the pitfalls in the *Ah* vowel. I think many of you will find that you have one or two of these in your 'repertoire of errors'. We'll look at these one by one as I paraphrase David L. Jones from his website www.voiceteacher.com.

1) **High larynx:** Most singers have difficulty finding brilliance in the *Ah* vowel without "spreading the mouth opening. Actually part of the secret of the *Ah* vowel is that it achieves much of its higher overtones from having a slight "uh" or "aw" under it. When the slight "uh" or "aw" is present under the *Ah*, the acoustical space (pharynx) is more open allowing more resonance to be produced in the voice. The result is a balance of high and low overtones together.

2) **A dropped soft palate:** One most difficult problem in the study of singing is learning how to "feel" the soft palate. A feeling of singing on a 'yawn' will get the soft palate into place quite well.

3) **Tongue pulling "backward" into the throat:** When the tongue pulls back toward the uvula, it is like singing with a pillow down your throat. It absolutely blocks the "ring" in the voice by filling the pharynx with tongue mass. On your own, practice singing an *Ah* vowel with your tongue out past your teeth. Sing a full song like this. You may then sing that same song on an *Ah* vowel with your tongue touching the back of your bottom teeth. Practice in this manner until you can sing without your


tongue falling backward into your vocal apparatus

4) **Jaw position:** It is true that the *Ah* vowel needs a slightly more open jaw position than the closed vowels. The operative word here is "slight". Many singers "thrust" the jaw downward with pressure. This makes the tongue pull back as in a "gag" reflex and causes the soft palate to drop. This is, of course, counterproductive to healthy vocal production. I prefer a feeling of height in the soft palate over a large drop in the jaw.

5) **Spread "mouth opening":** One major problem in considering the *Ah* vowel is the mouth opening. Look in the mirror. Speak or sing the "Aw" vowel with the jaw slightly unhinged down and back. Gradually change to the *Ah* without spreading the corners of the mouth. This demands that the vowel change be controlled with the tongue rather than "spreading the mouth opening. Finally add a smile to the sound and physically on your face. This is the feeling you should have on all *Ah* vowels.

With all of this in mind, what words would we be looking for as we sing? There are obvious *Ah* vowels and maybe hidden or hybrid *Ah* vowels that we should attend to. Here's a list:

<u>A few obvious Ah's</u>		<u>A few hidden/hybrid Ah's</u>	
How	Fight	Love	Done
Wow	Mighty	Above	Begun
What	Mountain	Heart	Up
Not	Down	Part	Of
Honor	Vowel	One	Long
Stop	Drop	Won	Song
Want	Why	Fun	On
By		Begun	a
		Son	Sun

This is just a small list of each. I invite you to look at our music and search these *Ah* vowels out. Mark them in your music. If you're not sure, ask me...ask a section leader. The main point here is that you recognize them and sing them when it's appropriate. This small concept is key to us turning our vocal corner! 

**Christmas is forever,
not for just one day,
for loving, sharing, giving,
are not to put away
like bells and lights and tinsel,
in some box upon a shelf.
The good you do for others
is good you do yourself.**

Norman Wesley Brooks, "Let Every Day Be Christmas," 1976

It's about time

By: Bob Crowl ~ VP Music and Performance



Bob Crowl

As you can see by the header of this article, I want to talk about time. It is a most interesting word, since it can be used so many different ways. It can be a noun, a verb, an adjective, a direct object, and – oh well, enough of this. Let's get to the point.

Time is something that we all have. How we use it is a different matter.

Have you ever wondered how some folks get so much done, using the same amount of time that you have? Could it possibly be that to use our time allotment effectively, we must devise and implement a plan. A plan to use this precious commodity in such a way that we get the necessary work done and still have some time to enjoy those things that we all look forward to. Such as singing Barbershop with the guys?

Have you, as a regular chorus member, ever noticed how some guys always know the words and notes to the music that we are working on? Well, I'm going to tell you how they do it.

Remember the word "plan" that I used in the last paragraph? We have six days between rehearsals to plan and use our time to learn, review, practice fixes, etc. I can truly say that the Chordsmen, as a group, has more guys working harder to learn notes and words than ever before.

Some have to work even harder since learning notes and words takes more time to get into memory. There is that word "time" again. Your Music Team and officers are working hard to get every member all the tools for learning that we possibly can, so that planning and time can be minimized. That is all we can do. It then becomes each member's responsibility to use those tools effectively.

We are very close to getting the rest of the music for the 2010 show distributed, and putting as many learning tracks on the web site as are available.

Dave and I are going to have the learning schedule finished and distributed very soon. You will then have the tools to plan your time and use to get the new songs prepped and ready for rehearsal.

For those members who do not have a computer, ask someone to help by getting the tools like learning tracks and rehearsal plans to you. We are all in this together. We can learn together, rehearse together, have fun together, **and** by doing everything necessary to maximize our rehearsal time together, we can make the next show one to remember. 🎵

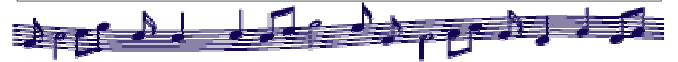


Special thanks

As the year draws to a close, a special thanks goes out to all the chapter members, who, during the year pitched in to help when needed.

From the Singing Valentines program to the show and through the summer church and other special performances during the past year, each member's participation is greatly appreciated.

May the same spirit of cooperation extend into the next year. The chapter will be the better for it. 🎵



Sergeant Stan Popp finds friendly witch cooperative

By: R.F. Miller



Officer Stan Popp captures witch Diane Miller.

It was the night that Lexington, Ohio celebrated Halloween trick or treat night. As is customary, the officers of the Lexington Police Department were on patrol. And this year they were walking their beat. Each carrying a bag of goodies to hand out to the children while

keeping vigilance for bad guys. Or witches in this case.

Sergeant **Stan Popp**, while patrolling the area of the 300 block of Sherwood, spotted a witch handing out candy to the children. Being an investigative type of officer, Stan wanted to make sure that this witch was not involved in anything sinister.

Asking the witch to step outside and after sampling her candy, Officer Popp declared the candy to be safe and allowed the friendly witch to continue her activities.

Lexington is indeed fortunate to have such an officer who is always looking out for the citizens, especially children. After a through investigation into the friendly witch's activity, Officer Popp continued his patrol looking for the next reason to sample the trick or treat goodies being handed out in the neighborhood. 🎵

Chordsmen privileged to take part in the Salute to Veterans

Photos by: Susie Cole



Trevor Garrabrant directs a contingent of the Fun Center Chordsmen at St. John's United Church of Christ.

Our country is free and will remain so thanks to the dedication of our men and women in the military. The veterans that have served our country so faithfully will forever be remembered.

The annual Salute to Veterans took place at St. John's United Church of Christ on Sunday, November 8, 2009. It has become a tradition that the Fun Center Chordsmen participate in this patriotic service. The Chordsmen sang "Follow the Flag," "God Bless the USA," "The Lord's Prayer," and other appropriate songs. They sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" with the St. John's choir.

The service also included a replica of the "Tomb of the Unknown," and a special flag folding ceremony with the 13 fold narration. It was a moving tribute to the men and women of the armed forces.

The chorus was directed by Assistant Director **Trevor Garrabrant**. This was Trevor's first solo directing engagement and he did a really great job. With fewer of the Chordsmen that normally take part, he was able to create a unified sound that added to the special service. 🎵



Members of the 179th Air Guard conduct the flag folding ceremony.

Sing hey! Sing hey!
For Christmas Day;
Twine mistletoe and holly.
For a friendship glows
In winter snows,
And so let's all be jolly!

BHS Mini-Forum a great learning experience

By: R.F. Miller DVP M&PR



Dallas, Texas was the gathering point for several Barbershop Harmony Society District Vice Presidents in November. The DVPs of Marketing, Membership, YIH, and the District President and Executive VP were invited to attend a two day Leadership Forum held at the Dallas Fort Worth Lakes Executive Conference Center.

This forum brought together those District Vice Presidents from all across the Society. From Hawaii to Alaska they came to share in the development of the various committees and sub-committees formed during the weekend. Each group held their own break out sessions where ideas were shared and plans formulated. The rule was that every 30 minutes he had to stop and sing.

Several of the Society staff were there including **Ed Watson**, CEO of the Barbershop Harmony Society as well as **James Estes**, BHS Music Specialist. These two gentlemen are what you would call "Tag Meisters." They can teach a tag at the drop of a hat. And trust me, on Friday night, after the sessions, they taught a bunch of them. Most everyone of the 80 some attendees stood around the huge lobby in small groups singing tags. Ed and Jim floated from group to group and sang with us. **Becca Box** from the Society staff joined several groups and sang tenor.

Rusty Cates, DVP of Membership and **R.F. Miller**, DVP Marketing and PR attended the forum and came away with many good ideas for the betterment of the Johnny Appleseed District (JAD) in 2010. These ideas will be discussed at the JAD Leadership Retreat the first weekend in December at Punderson State Park.

It was a very educational experience for both of us. We talked about several ideas during the two hour flight home. 🎵



Terry Reichenbaugh DVP YIH, **Bari Courts** DEVP, **R.F. Miller** DVP M&PR and **Rusty Cates** DVP Membership, enjoy the hospitality of the local lounge before the forum begins.

Points to Ponder

an editorial

You can if you think you can



“If you think you can or if you think you can't, either way, you're right!”

Now that is a heavy duty thought to be sure. But here is another rather weighted thought to go with it.

The mind has two separate and distinct sections. The conscious and the un-conscious. The un-conscious mind controls such things as our breathing and a lot of our muscle movements. The conscious mind controls things like our speech and our singing.

But you see, the un-conscious mind never sleeps! It just responds to whatever the conscious mind consistently tells it to do. If you continually tell yourself you can't do something, the un-conscious mind sets in motion the portion of the brain to make sure you can't do it. It assumes you really don't want to be able to do it.

However, if you tell yourself over and over, that you can do something, the reverse is true. The un-conscious mind sets in motion what it takes to make sure you can do it.


May I suggest that we take out of our vocabulary the words, *can't*, *won't*, *shouldn't*, *wouldn't*, *couldn't* and replace them with such words as, *can*, *will*, *should*, *could*...you get the picture.

It's all about a positive attitude. If we bring a negative, or the “I can't” attitude to our work in the chorus, then the result will be far less that desired. However, if we bring a positive, “I can” attitude to rehearsal, the outcome will be far more favorable.

We know what we need to do to vocally improve both individually and as a chorus. Yes, it takes work but with an “I can” attitude, it can be fun.

Here's my challenge. For the next 30 days, strengthen your “I can” attitude. Try not to use the word *can't* in any of your conversation. If you catch yourself using the word *can't*, start your sentence over and change the wording.

Example; “I can't read music” becomes “I can learn to read music and I'll work on it.”

None of us want to lead negative lives. At least I don't think any of us do. So develop a positive “I can” attitude and see how much better people respond to you and how much more you can accomplish. 

Man of Note honor roll 2009

New Member	Sponsor	Man of Note #
Ray Poth	Joe Dove	7

Happy December Birthdays

- December 2 ~ Andrew Matulich
- December 9 ~ Joe Dove
- December 27 ~ Dane Noe



Chordsmen Quartets

(alpha order & year founded)



Bravada (2001)

Tim Brandt (T)
Trevor Garrabrant (L)
Bob Crowl (B)
R.F. Miller (Br) (419) 884-2441 (Contact)

Chordially Yours (2004)

Gayle Ray (T)
Dan Strader (L)
Stan Popp (B) (419) 756-0098 (contact)
Frank DeWitt (Br)

Good Company (2008)

Tom Webb (T)
Lee Hull (L)
Tom Hoover (B)
Chris Rumas (Br) (419) 886-3163 (contact)

Home Edition (1991)

John Maurer (T) (419) 289-3635 (Contact)
Jerry Starrett (L)
Bill Herdman (B)
Dave Kracker (Br)

Mem'ries (2008)

Gary Oswald (T)
Frank Kovacs (L)
Mike Craze (B) (419) 566-3772 (Contact)
Ed Sterle (Br)

2010 CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

President

Dan Strader

Music Director

Steve Kovach

Assistant Directors

Dave Kracker

Trevor Garrabrant

VP Music & Performance

Bob Crowl

VP Chapter Development

Chris Rumas

VP Marketing & PR

R.F. 'Bob' Miller

VP YIH

Dave Kracker

VP Program

Rusty Cates

Secretary

Tom Hoover

Treasurer:

Lorin Weaver

Immediate Past President

Rusty Cates

Board Members at Large:

Terry Loughman

Dick Gahm

Mike Craze

Lee Cook

Special Performances and Noteworthy Events for 2009



- ◆ **Date:** Saturday, December 12
Time: 5:00 PM
Event: Christmas at Malabar
Location: Malabar Farm
Uniform: Black below the waist and Christmas attire above.
- ◆ **Date:** Friday, March 26
Time: 6:00 PM
Event: Annual show rehearsal
Location: Renaissance Theatre
Uniform: N/A
- ◆ **Date:** Saturday, March 27
Time: 12:00 noon and 6:30 PM
Event: Annual shows
Location: Renaissance Theatre
Uniform: TBA

Unless otherwise credited, all articles and photos are by R. F. Miller

All summer performances uniform:

Black socks, shoes, pants and belt
White, short sleeved FCC patch shirt.

Remember, no silver or shiny buckles on the black belt.

**Let Christmas not become a thing
Merely of merchant's trafficking,
Of tinsel, bell and holly wreath
And surface pleasure, but beneath
The childish glamour, let us find
Nourishment for soul and mind.
Let us follow kinder ways
Through our teeming human maze,
And help the age of peace to come
From a Dreamer's martyrdom.**

Madeline Morse

Merry Christmas

Editor: R.F. 'Bob' Miller
330 Sherwood Dr.
Lexington, OH 44904
Ph: 419-884-2441

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The Year of the Chapter

The Fun Center Chordsmen
Mansfield's Barbershop
Harmony Chorus
www.funcenterchordsmen.com

We meet every Monday
night at 7:00 PM at the First
Congregational Church, 640
Millsboro Rd. (corner of
Marion Ave. and Millsboro
Rd) in Mansfield.

*Visitors and guests are
always welcome*

Chordsmen Chronicle **December 2009 Issue**