



The Chordsmen Chronicle



www.funcenterchordsmen.com

1-877-754-SING

October-November 2009

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Happy Thanksgiving



Scores at District contest boost Bravada to a B quartet



Bravada
Tim, Trevor, Bob and RF

Since the District quartet competition October 2008, **Bravada** has worked harder than ever to improve.

Having won the 2008 JAD Novice Quartet Championship, we felt we had to have a good showing as we stood ready to pass the trophy

to the new champs.

During the past 12 months, we've rehearsed every Wednesday night with very few exceptions. If one of us had a conflict on a given Wednesday night, we changed our rehearsal to Tuesday night or on the weekend so we could keep on schedule.

Every third Wednesday night we had a session with our coach, **Mark Stock**. It is his ability to not only see and hear what we're doing incorrectly, but to correct it in such a way as to encourage us and make the fix permanent. Most of the time, when we finish working a coaching session, we're physically tired.

Trevor takes what Mark teaches us and makes sure we continue to implement all the techniques that lock chords. He doesn't let us slack off one little bit. Thanks T-Rev!

We can't forget our presentation coach, **Gary Wulf**. He helped us with the plan for "Little Street." It was a great presentation plan but we didn't pull it off like we should have. Steve is absolutely correct when he says you must

"over do it" to make the expression and the story come across the footlights.

We went into the contest feeling confident that we'd score well. But for those of you who have competed, you know that it's a "roller coaster ride," to quote **Tom Webb**. We left the stage feeling that we had done a good job on our first song, "Little Street," but did not do our best job on our second song, "Red Head Mamma."

When we received the score sheet we were really disappointed. When we realized that we had improved from last year and moved into the B range, it took a little of the sting out of the disappointment. But nonetheless, we had hoped to score much better.

During the judges' evaluations, the common ground between singing, music and presentation, was found to be the fact that we sang the song on the page. We didn't sing the story. We didn't make the judges believe us.

At the JADAQC show on Friday night, Bravada watched intently as **Cadillac Jack** took the stage. It was obvious that in every song they sang, they were indeed singing the story. That's what Bravada needs to learn to do better.

And speaking of the JADAQC show, it was a real hoot. Great JAD Quartet Champions entertained us until the wee hours of the night Friday, I mean Saturday morning. This was followed by several hospitality suites open on Saturday night. All the top quartets rotated among the suites and sang. You could "mosey" from one hospitality suite to another, or you could just sit in one and let the quartets come to you. Each suite had its own food and beverages for your enjoyment. And if you were lucky, you could get some sleep during the weekend.

So another contest is history. Mansfield was well represented with three quartets competing and we all learned something from the experience.

See Bravada on page 3


Board creates new VP position



The October board meeting was held at Southside Christian Church on Monday, October 12.

The Board discussed the need for someone to schedule and control the flow of the Monday night rehearsals. Steve has asked for someone like this to assist in the rehearsal time management.

A motion was made to create the Position of VP Program. It was seconded and approved unanimously. In as much as this was a new position, effective immediately, the President of the Board has the power to appoint someone to this position. President **Dan Strader** appointed **Rusty Cates** to fill the position of VP Program until the next election.

The board also approved the Music Team recommendation that the Chordsmen will do no Christmas singouts other than Malabar Farm. Preparation for the show, the CD and the Spring Convention prompted this recommendation. 



Back in the day October 1977

- In 1977, the Fun Center Chordsmen chorus was only three years old.
- On Saturday, October 22, under the direction of **Dave Kracker**, the Fun Center Chordsmen put 43 singers on the stage in Pittsburgh for the JAD District Chorus Contest. They placed 9th out of 15 choruses entered. The score was 675.
 - The top scoring chorus was Southern Gateway with 990 points
 - The lowest scoring chorus had 585 points.
- Administrative VP **Ed Sterle**, in an article in the Fun Center Hub-Bub (bulletin) told of two chapter quartets that had been busy that month.
 - "Four-in-a-Chord" with Gary Oswalt (T), Dick Gahm (L), Roger Humbert (B) and Ed Sterle (Br)
 - "The Note Quotes" with Gary Oswalt (T), Russ Glenn (L), Al Wacker (B) and Hugh Clingan (Br)

Chordsmen to make Christmas memories at Malabar Farm

By: Joe Dove ~ VP Membership



Joe dove

The Christmas season, one of our fun times of the year, will be here before you know it.


Malabar farm on a cold Saturday evening. Does that bring back memories of fun times? You bet it does. The food, fellowship and song that we enjoy along with the company of our wives and girl friends makes for the season to be jolly.

The children that come with mom and dad to the farm develop some of the best memories that the child is going to have. There is enough sadness in the world and we can bring many smiles to many faces with our efforts. I for one will not miss the opportunity to see smiles and a few tears on friends' faces at the holiday season.

I have had many Christmases in my life. Some were pretty sparse. Like the time mom and I got off from work on Christmas eve and we didn't yet have a tree. We both felt bad about that. We remedied that by buying a good ole Charley Brown Tree. You know the kind.

There weren't many trees left that cold night in the big city of Chicago and yes the tree cost a whole ninety nine cents. Fifty three years ago and the memory is still with me to this day. Mom and I even had a good laugh about that tree when we finally got the tree decorated. There's more to that story and its mine to keep.

Lets make some memories for others again this year. Help us sing for a stranger that just might need a lift. You never know how much a song and a smile may mean to a total stranger. Yes we can do it even if takes a little effort on our part, we will be better for it.

I am proud to be a Chordsman, especially at this time of the year. That's what we are all about! Invite someone you know to help us make memories. 

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.

Vince Lombardi

FCC sings in the rain at Ashland County Fair

By: R.F. Miller

It wasn't an ordinary rain, it was a "frog strangler." The night of September 22 found the members of the Fun Center Chordsmen making their way through the mud and puddles of water to the main tent in the Ashland County Fair Grounds.



Try as they might, they couldn't run in between the rain drops and arrived somewhat damp to say the least. The rain fell so hard on the tent roof that it was difficult to hear much less sing. The warm up was delayed hoping for the rain to stop. But fearing that it would not, Trevor began the warm up while a few brave souls brought in the risers.

Although the tent had rivers of water running through it, the show went on as scheduled. As luck would have it, the rain stopped about 10 minutes prior to show time.

The chorus performed for about an hour interspersed with a couple of quartets and an audience "sing a-long." The quartets *Mem'ries* and *Bravada* entertained and **Dave Kracker** led the audience in several of the old favorites. **Steve Kovach** wowed the audience with his presentation of "Ride the Chariot" and "Amen."

The Chordsmen perform rain or shine and here lately it's been more rain than shine. But Mother Nature can't put a damper on the fun of singing barbershop harmony. 🎵

Bravada from page 1

On Tuesday night, October 20, Bravada was asked to come to the Singing Buckeyes guest night and sing. And so we did. We sang twice that night. The first time out, we sang our contest set. After that set, **Dave Kracker** said "that's the best I've ever heard Bravada sing and you looked better then ever." And **Mike Craze** said much the same thing and commented on how well we sang our last song, "Who Will Buy." We appreciate the comments and encouragement from all the chorus and quartet members.

Would you believe that Bravada agreed to set aside our contest songs for a while? We have sung them or parts of them, so many, many times in the last few months that we want to move on to something new. We have lots of new songs to work on. But you can count on the fact that the contest set is now part of our repertoire.

And the quest for improvement continues. 🎵



**It's been said that an optimist is
someone who starts a diet on
Thanksgiving day.**

Here's a poem for those optimists.

**May your stuffing be tasty
May your turkey be plump,
May your potatoes and gravy
have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious
and your pies take the prize,
and may your Thanksgiving dinner
stay off of your thighs!**

-Unknown

A tag to remember

87. Where Is Love

Where is where is love, oh where is love.

Good Company finds that hard work pays off in one heck of a ride

By: Tom Webb ~ Tenor ~ Good Company



Good Company

You might call the experience the members of **Good Company** had at district contest somewhat of a roller coaster ride. And you'd be right. Because that is pretty much what it was from start to finish. From the time we actually started preparing for contest to

the moment we walked off stage, and eventually found out where we finished, it was one heck of a ride.

Actually, the ride didn't end until we left Lima on Saturday during the day. Because, while the roller coaster reached its zenith when we were on stage performing, the ride didn't end until after we talked with the judges and let their comments and critiques sink in.

Our first year together as a quartet has been a unique and challenging experience. Take four guys who barely know each other, put them together for three to four hours a week rehearsing, throw in a few performances here and there, and add the decision to go to contest barely six months into the life of the quartet and you've got the makings for some really interesting times. There are some who actually might say, "You guys are nuts. Do you even know what you're getting into?"

The answer would be, "obviously not." But now, barely over a year after we first got together we can honestly say, "We might have been nuts, but it was great time."

First of all, when we initially got together we decided collectively that we wanted to be a good quartet, not settling for just being mediocre, but to aim higher. Much of the time together was spent on working on the "basics" of good singing, things that we have learned from **Steve Kovach**, **Dave Kracker** and **Mark Stock**. Dave even spent some of his precious time coaching us early on in our singing, for which we are forever grateful. His input and experience were a tremendous boon to our efforts to improve each week.

Mark helped us prepare for contest when we made the decision to give it a try and his help has been invaluable. Looking back at our first rehearsals from where we are now, it's gratifying to know that all of our hard work and

time learning our craft has paid off to the extent that we were able to compete at a district contest and not embarrass ourselves.

That the judges complemented us on where we are after a year together, and where we could be with some not so major changes in our singing, is especially gratifying. It makes all the time and effort worthwhile.

There is perhaps no better way to describe this first year singing together as that of a roller coaster ride, with highs and lows, plateaus and sudden drops. It seems now that the ride lasted no longer than a minute or so. But along the way were some really amazing moments that I doubt any of us will ever forget. From the day we sang our first notes, to the first time we stepped on stage in front of an audience, to the spring show where we really got our feet wet in this quartet business, this has been quite an experience.

The ultimate high this year was the feeling that all of us had after we left the stage at contest. That was simply amazing. It was quickly followed by what I would guess most of us would describe as our lowest low, which was our score and placement. That was tough to take at first. We'd worked so hard to get to that moment, and we actually felt we had done better than our scores had shown. But, like the roller coaster, this ride was not done.

We started moving back up again with the words of advice and encouragement that we received from the judges. They let us know, with their positive feedback, that this ride was not over. We've come a long way in this brief year, and with some more hard work, along with some more learning, some tweaking and fine tuning of our singing, and performance we could be and should be a much better quartet.

Many thanks go out to all who have encouraged us. Your positive comments have been appreciated more than you know. To members of the other quartets in the chorus whose wise council on a number of occasions has helped us, we also give thanks. We are fortunate in this chorus to have a number of individuals who will help another member at a moments' notice. A special thanks goes to **Bob Miller** who "saved our bacon" for contest.

We were told at contest that everyone, including the judges, wants the quartets to succeed. In this day and age of self-serving and self-promoting that's especially noteworthy. Every quartet and every chorus was welcomed and applauded enthusiastically regardless of how well they performed. It just doesn't get any better than that.

Do yourself a favor. If you have never been to contest, make it a point to go at least once, even if you are not performing. And if you get the chance to go and perform, please do. It's one heck of a ride. ♪

The devil is in the details

By: Bob Crowl ~ VP Music and Performance



Bob Crowl


This month, I thought I would clear up some details that we all should be aware of so we can maximize our rehearsal time and raise our performance level. I also want you to know that I need to be more aware of these rehearsal elements to improve myself as well.

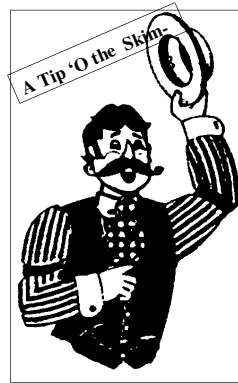
First, and very important, is riser discipline. This may not seem like something that affects the rehearsal, but to the person up front, the noise becomes a huge distraction. Besides talking, singing along with another section while the director is fixing something with them does nothing to help the other section. And it tends to draw the leader's attention to you. Besides, you can be a bigger help to the chorus in fixing problems by listening to what is happening. Chances are, your section will be next. I once heard a director say, "As a chorus member, you are always rehearsing, whether you are singing or whether you are listening."

Second, is maximizing rehearsal time. Please try to be in your seats and ready to go at 7:00 each Monday evening. A good warm up physically and vocally will really help you sing better. This will get practice off and running each Monday evening. Very soon, we will be letting you know the numbers to prepare for the next week's rehearsal. This will allow you to not only look the music over before the next week, but will make you aware of the sheet music you will need that following Monday.

Last, but not least, is utilizing the six days BETWEEN rehearsals to improve your individual contribution to our vocal production. If you have marked any areas on your music at the previous rehearsal, that need attention, and recorded the practice, you will have all the tools you need to fix any problems with notes, words, or commit to memory any changes to the performance numbers.


Look around at the next practice and see who is listening, marking fixes on the sheet music, and recording. Chances are, you will find that these are the same ones that are singing the right notes and words every time we review a piece of music. By not having to worry about notes and words, we each can have fun and energize our contribution to the chorus each and every rehearsal.

Let's all try to do a better job of observing and implementing these few things to make our chorus better. I can assure you it WILL be noticed. 



Special thanks to the Chordsmen Chorus From Bruce Van Hesteren

I wish to thank all of the chorus for the cards and well wishes from you for my wife, Della. She is home now and doing OK. She still has pain when she tries to walk and also in the shoulder area. But she's doing pretty good. We were able to go shopping Sunday for a few minutes.

She had a little trouble working the electric wheel chair but between us we "got 'er done". Again I say thank you . 

Craft Corner

Although it's not necessary to know how to read music to sing a cappella harmony, it will surely help you be a better singer.

The sooner you can recognize the notes on the page and their names, the quicker you can become a voice in the chorus that adds value.

You might wonder why there are two different clefs. The reason is that most instruments using the bass clef usually have a lower pitch (sound) and regularly sing low notes. If they were to use the treble clef the notes would appear so far below the staff it would be hard to read.

Here are the names of the notes for both clefs. Although you only really need to know 1 or the other, it is good practice to know both.

The treble clef:



The bass clef:



Mem'ries make memories on stage at the Fall Convention

By: Mike Craze ~ Bass ~ Mem'ries



Mike Craze

I had an idea when our quartet left for the District convention on Friday afternoon that it might be a long day. But getting to bed at three o'clock Saturday morning made it one heck of a day.

The experience of getting on the stage for the first time with a quartet is scary to say the least even if you do know the song and words really good. But as quick as you get on the stage, you're getting off and it's really hard to take it all in and really enjoy the moment.

I can't speak for anyone else but I was really worried about blowing the wrong pitch, not stumbling over my own feet when finishing the first song, taking a bow and getting to the mike without screwing up.

On the second song, I was a little more relaxed and according to Trevor, the bobbing of my head, to thank the audience, was starting to resemble a bobble head doll. That was funny.

While our quartet was in one of the warm up rooms waiting to be called, I must have gone over walking on stage bowing, taking a pitch, starting the song and doing the same thing over and over again for about an hour or what seemed like an hour until I was feeling more relaxed about my part.

Good Company and our quartet, **Mem'ries**, were like next to the last quartets to perform. By the time we got our pictures taken and attended the evaluations, it was really getting late. But I did get to hear Steve's quartet, **Cadillac Jack**, sing one song at the hotel JADAQC show. They were just awesome, as usual.

Mem'ries finished 28th and we were just a little let down because of the score but we got a lot of good advice from the judges and we plan on putting that to good use. What a great experience being in a quartet, It is really a different and memorable experience. 🎵

A Thanksgiving thought

Best of all it is to preserve everything in a pure, still heart, and let there be for every pulse a thanksgiving, and for every breath a song.

- Konrad von Gesner

JAD House of Delegates approve 2010 budget



The Johnny Appleseed District House of Delegates met in Columbus on Saturday, September 26 to conduct the business of the district.

During the meeting, the District Secretary, **Sam Watts** presented the board recommended budget for 2010. It was approved by the delegates in attendance.

As is the custom, time was spent recognizing those JAD barbershoppers who had joined the Chapter Eternal during the past year. **R.F. Miller** conducted the Memorial Service for those departed.

A discussion was held concerning the use of Social Networks in making others aware of barbershop in general and their own chapters in specific terms. The use of Facebook, Twitter, My Space, and Websites were highlighted during the meeting with success stories from several of those in attendance. These Social Networking sites will be on the agenda of the Society wide Marketing and Membership Leadership Forum in Dallas in November.

President, **David Calland**, broke the group in to four different break-out sessions to discuss the two biggest issues facing chapters today. This was followed by a session on the "Managing Change" presented by guest speaker **Chuck Denham** from Charleston, WV.

It was announced by the Events Team that the Spring Convention will be held in the Cleveland area on April 9 through 11 hosted by the Men of Independence (MOI) chapter. Of the four bids received for the Spring Convention, the team selected the one from the MOI.

The next Leadership Academy will be held January 15 and 16 at the Concourse Hotel in Columbus. The Concourse is the one close to the Columbus airport.

It was also recommended that each chapter prepare a plan for the new young member. They should do more than just recruit them and then forget them. What young people look for today, may or may not be what the chapters are prepared to offer.

The next HOD meeting will be held at the Spring Convention in April. 🎵

Points to Ponder

an editorial

What's it gonna take?

I was talking to one of the members who was sitting out front last week during rehearsal. He had some interesting comments about our singing quality.



He indicated that on one of the songs, when we locked an "Ahhh" vowel, it rang like crazy all through the song. However, when we switched to another song, we seemed to have forgotten everything we learned about an "Ahhh" vowel. And the chorus sounded lousy.

Why is it that we make fixes when Steve, Trevor, or Dave pound it into us, and yet the fixes never seem to become a permanent thing?

I contend it's a total lack of focus on our part. For some reason we just fall back to our old habits of just singing the song and not the story. We need to lock chords and sing the story. Are we thinking about what we're singing? Are we listening to make sure our notes blend? Why can't we consistently apply the 50% singing and 50% listening rule that Steve keeps harping on?

It's been proven that the mind functions so fast, that even in between words that we speak, our minds can take a side trip and come back. If we permit that to happen while we sing, that will cause lack of focus. While we're singing we need to have full focus on what we're doing. Even a momentary loss of focus can cause a chord to not lock or cause us to lose an important expression.

Of course all this assumes that each member knows the words, the notes and the story. But I was told by a couple of the observers last week that we still have people on the risers that don't know the words, much less the notes or the story.

If you're one of these folks, please do one of two things. First, ask your section leader for help in coming up to speed. Or secondly, *step off or stay off the risers*. It's not fair for just a few members to impede the progress and good sound of the chorus.

Most of the members of the chorus work between Monday night rehearsals to make sure they know the notes, words and story. If you do, congratulations. If you don't, why not? Every voice is important to the overall sound of the chorus. That is, every voice that is in tune with the rest of the voices.

Is your voice one that is in tune with the rest?

Man of Note honor roll 2009

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

Happy October~November Birthdays

October 5 ~ Lorin Weaver
 October 6 ~ Gayle Ray
 October 11 ~ Mike Craze
 Ed Sterle

November 6 ~ Walt Jewett
 November 10 ~ Tom Webb
 November 27 ~ Dave Kracker
 November 30 ~ Don Marcum



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)

2009 CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

President

Dan Strader

Music Director

Steve Kovach

Assistant Directors

Dave Kracker

Trevor Garrabrant

VP Music & Performance

Bob Cowl

VP Chapter Development

Joe Dove

VP Marketing & PR

R.F. 'Bob' Miller

VP YIH

Dave Kracker

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:** Sunday, November 8
Time: Meet 8:30 AM
Event: Veteran's Day Service
Location: St. John's United Church of Christ
Uniform: Summer
- ◆ **Date:** Monday, November 9
Time: 6:30
Event: FCC Officer Installation Dinner
Location: Troyer's Dutch Heritage
- ◆ **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

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.

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

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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 **October-November 2009 Issue**