



The Mansfield, Ohio Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society

The Fun Center Chordsmen in the Johnny Appleseed District (JAD)



The Chordsmen Chronicle



www.funcenterchordsmen.com

1-877-754-SING

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Volume 36 Issue 2

Fun Center Chordsmen benefit from lessons learned at Top Gun



Steve Kovach

For those of you who might not be aware, Top Gun is a program in the Barbershop Society that teaches the top quartets in a given district. A number of quartets, in this case, six, are invited to attend a weekend of coaching from some of the finest coaches in the society.

It is a two day intensive coaching session that involves all three judging categories. These categories include; Singing, Presentation, and Music.

This month, **Cadillac Jack** along with five other JAD quartets attended the weekend-long coaching experience. Let me tell you, it was exhausting, but invaluable as far as the information and techniques we learned and honed. You will be getting this information over the course of the next few weeks/months but I wanted to concentrate on one aspect of the weekend that seemed to permeate all of the sessions.

We've talked about this concept a few times before, but I'd like to revisit the idea of having a scenario in your mind as you sing a song. I'll use an example as we review, *I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen*.

First, it's important that we know the lyrics. Before continuing with this article, please read these lyrics a few times. The first time reading through them, get a general sense of what they're saying. The second time, is about who the character is. The third time, think about why he's singing this song—what prompted him to say these words, how he feels emotionally as he's singing, and finally, what the outcome is when he's completed these thoughts.

Read the lyrics three times as requested. Then and only then, read the rest of the article.

I'll take you home again, Kathleen
Across the ocean wild and wide
To where your heart has ever been
Since you were first my bonnie bride.
The roses all have left your cheek.
I've watched them fade away and die
Your voice is sad when e'er you speak
And tears bedim your loving eyes.
Oh! I will take you back, Kathleen
To where your heart will feel no pain
And when the fields are fresh and green
I'll take you to your home again!

As you read the lyrics, what did you see? Did the scenario appear in your mind's eye? Did it change as you re-read it? What emotions do you think this character is feeling? These are important questions but they only give us the 30,000 foot view of the song. There aren't many intimate details for us to consider.

So, let's drop the altitude a little—down to a 1,000 foot view. A view that gives us more detail. I'm going to give you a full scenario of this verse. I'm going to write it in second person. This will immediately put you into the story. Immediately after you read this scenario, re-read the verse and put yourself in the story of the song.

It's 1950. You are 75 years old and have been married to Kathleen for 52 years. You met in Ireland in 1885. You were school mates. You and Kathleen were friends who fell in love. As soon as you were of marrying age, you and your love committed your lives to

See Kathleen on page 2

Epitome of the barbershop experience

By: R.F. Miller ~ Bari ~ Bravada



Bravada

You've read articles in this publication before about how much time and effort it takes to be a good chorus singer by learning, remembering and implementing everything that Steve teaches us. Things like memorizing music, singing up and back, matching vowels...you get the idea. Yes, it takes work. But when all of that comes together, and you lock a chord, doesn't it sound great?

If you want to take your barbershop experience to the next level, give quarteting a try. When four guys do the things we learn in chorus, and you lock a chord, the feeling is magnified ten times over.

In a quartet, you can't hide. You can't wait for someone else to sing the first word and then join in. You can't lean on anyone else. It's just you singing your part. And that, my friends, takes much more work. But the payoff is great as well.

The Fun Center Chordsmen chorus is blessed with five quartets. They're listed on page seven. That's 20 guys who have experienced the thrill of quarteting. Ask any one of them how they first felt about singing in a quartet and you'll probably get the answer, "scared to death at first." But now....they love it. Yep, that's an extra rehearsal each week.

But guess what? The more quartets we have, the better chorus we'll be. Why? Because each quartet member must be able to carry his own part all by himself. That in itself makes him a stronger singer. Fourteen of the 20 quartet guys regularly attend the chorus rehearsal. They are able to take what Steve teaches back to the quartet and the quartet benefits.

If you haven't yet experienced the thrill of singing in a quartet, one of the five quartets in the chorus will help you with that. At the end of a chorus rehearsal, find three of the quartet guys and ask if you can sing your part with them. I'm sure they'll be eager to sing with you.

Once you do that, you'll begin to know why so many of us think that singing in a quartet is the epitome of the barbershop, four part, a cappella harmony experience. 🎵



Kathleen from page 1

one another in a beautiful, outdoor ceremony. The whole town was there. It was a gorgeous spring day.

A few years later, the opportunity arose for you to take a job in the United States. You really wanted to go and while Kathleen wanted to support you, she was afraid to leave home.

You both decided to go. You had a successful career and you both were very happy. Kathleen always talked about how much she missed Ireland. Years went by, though not enough. Kathleen became ill. Your bride became worse and your time with her was now short.

She tells you that she has one last wish. You know what it is...you've always known. As she begins to tell you her wish, you interrupt her. You put your finger softly on her lips. You smile lovingly, and through tearing eyes...you sing...

(re-read the verse)

Now...I hope you could not get through that verse. I hope that the emotion and the specificity of that scenario caused you to *become* that character. This process is essential in becoming a part of the song. If we sing words and notes, we are short changing the audience, the composer, the song and most especially yourself.

There is something really amazing and rewarding about becoming the character and singing a song as if *you* lived it. It's cathartic I suppose.

Here's the big take away. Become a part of the song. This goes for everything we sing! Up tunes, ballads, novelty numbers, whatever it is. **This is important!** Contest-wise, it's important because this gains us points in every category but that's not why we sing. We sing because it brings out emotion in people. It makes people *feel*. That's what we're about!

Next month... it will be the same but different. We're going to discuss the same song, but I'll talk about the movie version. 🎵

Desire is the key to motivation, but it's the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek.

Mario Andretti



Make your singing more musical



By Kevin Keller, Music Judge/Coach. Taken from "Notes 4 U" Winnipeg, Gordon Billows, Editor
Reprinted from the "Voice of Rushmore" bulletin ~ Editor: John Elving

There are a number of things that make a group musical." One of the primary tools is the delivery of the breath. Yes, the delivery of the breath. The breath is the most important part of each and every phrase; more important than any note that you sing.

Furthermore, the breath concludes the musical phrase rather than starting it. When the breath is the most important part of the phrase and it concludes the phrase, you must energize the end of the phrase to raise the musical value of the breath.

You will also sustain the energy through the phrase and build it, as opposed to plodding along and falling into

chord worshipping (whether you intended to or not!). This reinforces the lyrical message of the song.

Musically, you can sing louder, softer, faster, slower, more/less color, more/less texture. Just about anything you believe will work actually will work. You manage your breath better, because less air is expended needlessly at the beginning of the phrase.

You improve your synchronization on attacks and releases. When the breath is "ordinary" (re: a place to get air), all that you can do is exactly what you were doing with dynamics, texture, color, tempo, etc. This is not musically appealing!



Tag of the month

6. Flower From An Old Bouquet

There in our sweet-heart bow-er, you're just my flow-er, from an
old, bou-quet.

old, bou-quet.
old, bou-quet.

Nancy Bergman
Sung by the After Five Four, 1968

Membership is more than just new members



By: Chris Rumas ~ VP Membership



Chris Rumas

Time is fleeting as we move into month two of this new year. From a chorus and personal stand point, I know everyone has a lot on their plates right now . We all don't know each other's personal side of life, but we can do our best to encourage one another and keep each other in prayer. And let's not forget our barbershop brothers, and their

families, that we haven't seen or heard from for some time. I'm as guilty as anyone else of being caught up in all the *stuff* and stress of life.

Regarding encouragement, after sharing some statistics with you, I'd like to propose a couple of things. I've received a third of the Member Survey sheets back with some good comments. All of them checked *love of music* as a primary reason for joining our chorus.

Many said we should be proactive in contacting high schools, colleges, churches and inviting men for a visit, with the focus on younger men. Youth is the life blood of any chorus, helping to keep the chapter going and growing through their recruiting efforts. Various advertising efforts were also mentioned, i.e., flyers, newspapers, radio, TV, etc.

Another good suggestion was performing at our local college campuses, high schools, and churches. Thanks guys, great feedback.

We can have a multitude of ideas, but implementing them is the key. Here are my propositions: I'd like to have guys step forward and let me know that they're willing to help with one of the categories listed below. Teamwork is necessary and valuable, and we feel and see the effects when it's absent.



You may have read or heard the adage of one horse being able to pull six tons. But put two together and they can pull 36 tons.

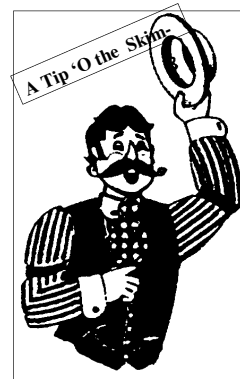
Another saying is "Many hands make light work."

Your help is needed and would be greatly appreciated, in the following areas:

1. Contacting in person or by phone, the members that have been missing for awhile.
2. Help create and write a monthly article highlighting one or more of our current members.
3. Contact guests and thank them for coming, and invite them back;
4. Help in the design and development of a promotional flyer.
5. Help develop an informative new member orientation and development booklet and program for new members.

These are just a few of the areas that a team of guys can help in promoting the growth of our chorus. If I can have a handful of guys each willing to just pull six tons, then as a team we can pull...?

What potential this chorus could have. Gentlemen, I know a lot is going on, learning new music, selling Singing Valentines, selling show ads and, selling show tickets. Let's help each other. As your VP of Membership & Chapter Development, I want to do the best job I can for the betterment of our chorus. One more adage: "How do you eat an elephant?...one bite at a time."



A very special Tip 'O the Skimmer thanks to :

- **Steve Kovach**, our director, for making the hour long trip every Monday to continue to teach us and keep our chorus on the road to vocal improvement.
- **Bob Sauder** and the crew that sets and takes down the risers each Monday.
- To those who have stepped up to provide the break time refreshments.
- To the chorus members who show up each Monday.

Individual voices do make a difference

By: Bob Crowl ~ VP Music and Performance



Bob Crowl

I know that there are times that we all want to chill out and back off from the hectic flurry of both annual show prep and the necessary task of contest preparation.

Both of these events take a lot of dedication which usually translates into a great deal of time spent practicing new music and the critical fine tuning of contest numbers.

When asked about my favorite chorus time, I've said that's it's either annual show prep and learning new music, or the amount of rehearsal time spent getting the two contest songs ready. I have also said that these two time intensive activities are the best barbershop learning experiences we as chorus members can participate in. They are both focused and intensive, and therefore must be approached the same way.

Make it a personal goal for improvement by using the learning points; you know, vowel targets, breath control, posture, words with the appropriate "Singlish," and all the other elements that make good vocal production.

I hope you can see that the same things apply to both the preparation for the show as well as the contest. Both of these venues give us the opportunities to become better barbershop singers.

Remember, the better each of us becomes as individual singers, our contribution to the whole chorus becomes value added. That's the goal for both a great annual show and a good contest presentation.

So let's get back to the point of this article. Does your personal contribution to the chorus make a difference?

The answer to that is Always, Always, and Always! 🎵



*Sell 'em
and
Sing 'em
February
12, 13, 14*

We've been propped up and buttered up now the nitty-gritty is next

By: Dane Noe ~ SV Ad Chairman



Well gentlemen, it's that time of year again. Our 2010 Spring Show, California Dreamin', promises to be yet another fine addition to the already memorable list of shows we've done in years past.

We have much work to do in preparation, though, and not as many weeks as we've had in the past to accomplish the goal of presenting North Central Ohio with another stellar barbershop chorus extravaganza.

In recent years, we have had several fine barbershoppers leave our ranks, and several of those fine men were our top ad salesmen. But many of the newcomers to our organization have stepped up to help fill those shoes, and have done so brilliantly.

I want to encourage each and every man who has sold ads in the past to once again take up that mantle and make those business contacts this year. I want to also encourage those who have not sold ads in the past to consider giving it a try this year.

Well, now that I've propped ya up, buttered ya up, and blew some sunshine up your skirts, let's get down to the nitty-gritty. **Monday, March 15th** is the final date that ad sales can be submitted.

This year, unlike years gone by, this will have to be an absolute hard date. Ads turned in after this date will most likely have to be turned down. The reason for this is the layout for the ad book will commence that week and will need to be finalized so that the template can be sent to the printer.

Any advertisement that is turned in and is NOT camera ready, MUST BE accompanied with the additional \$5 surcharge. Most businesses will have some sort of camera ready art prepared for advertisement, however, we simply must charge the additional \$5 for those who do not. This is to defray the cost to the chorus that is levied by the printer.

As always, we will attempt to work with a business or an individual advertiser as much as we can, as every situation is different. Thanks in advance for your continued efforts. 🎵

A Georgia Peach and an Ohio Buckeye submit applications and pass bass voice tests



Holbrook 'Doc' Riles

You may not think of 'Doc' Riles as a Georgia peach but he was born in Savannah on a January fifth. It's up to you to guess what year.

In 1983 Doc graduated from Ferris State University College of Optometry. A short time later he married his lovely wife **Dr.**

Rhonda B. Riles, OD. They reside on St. Rt. 314 South in Mansfield.

They have three children; daughter **Maranatha** of St. Petersburg, Fl., daughter **Morgan** of New York City and a son **Holbrook III** who is a 3rd year student at Akron University.

Holbrook's optometry office is located in the Wal-Mart Vision Center / Eye Care For You in the Wal-Mart plaza on Possum Run Rd.

Doc's musical background began in junior high school when he began to sing bass in quartets singing both sacred and secular music. His quartet experience continued and he also sang in several choirs. He is currently the Musical Worship Minister and Praise Team Leader in the Mansfield SDA Church where he plays electric bass.

He holds a general aviation pilot's license and his hobbies include boater, motorcyclist, bowler, table tennis player, basketball and exercise.

He loves music of all genres. When asked what first attracted him to the Fun Center Chordsmen, he replied,

"I heard about the group when I first arrived in Mansfield in 1983 from a co-worker named **Al Dollish**. However my patient schedule would not allow me much free time to commit to rehearsals."

"Recently, I participated in a Christmas Cantata with fellow bass **Bill Herdman** and baritone **Chris Rumas** at First Alliance Church. Chris noticed I was having a good time singing and invited me to come hear the group at Malabar Farm and attend rehearsal the following Monday. I took my wife to Malabar Farm; she toured the house while I stood off to the side singing with the guys. " 🎵

Sell 'em and sing 'em



Jon Henry

Jon Henry may or may not be a "Steel Drive'n Man," but he is a Buckeye. He was born in Mansfield and still lives here.

He attended Crestview schools where he sang in choir and an ensemble. That's where his love of music first started.

Jon served 12 years in the Army National Guard and was Honorably discharged. Jon and his wife **Shelli** have been married for 16 years and have six daughters and are blessed with one grandson. He enjoys fishing, small engine repair, and relaxing on his pontoon boat. And of course singing with the Chordsmen.

When asked about his singing career he replied, "I haven't done any singing since high school other than singing along with the radio."

He was then asked about how he became interested in joining the Fun Center Chordsmen.

He learned of the chorus when **Trevor Garrabrant** got his daughter, **Caitlynn**, interested in harmony camp. When she got back from camp, she was asked to come to a practice night to talk about her experience. Jon came with her and decided then, that at some point he wanted to be a barber-shopper.

That was two years ago. The more he listened to the music from Caitlynn's camp DVD and listened to the CD they bought there, his desire to sing with us grew stronger.

Then he was invited to come to the practices and be a Christmas singer for the show at Malabar Farm. He really enjoyed singing with the Chordsmen and especially the friendliness he experienced during the practices.

After that he was convinced that he wanted to join a very great group. He looks forward to chorus each Monday night. What really caught his interest was that four part, a cappella barbershop harmony sound. 🎵

**Membership
begins with Me**

Points to ponder

An editorial

Why, oh why



Why in the world did we ever join the Fun Center Chordsmen? Why, oh why do we have to force ourselves to work so hard to polish our craft?

The answer to those questions require each of us to look inward and asses how we feel today about singing in the chorus.

On my first visit, my mentor **Dave Kracker**, put me in a circle and sang a tag. That barbershop sound is what got me to come back. Since I first joined the chorus in April of 2000, I've noticed a definite improvement in the quality of our vocal product. This is especially true since **Steve Kovach** became our director in January of 2001.

At the JAD Leadership Academy this year, I was given several video tapes of previous Chordsmen performances in 1996 and 1997. I can tell you for sure that this chorus has improved. But how did this improvement happen?

It wasn't just because of the director. It wasn't just because of strong chapter leadership. No. Hopefully it was because each and every member bought into what Steve brought to the chorus and worked at implementing those ideas.

But why, oh why do we still work so hard to improve? It's a well known fact that in any endeavor, if you're not moving forward, you're falling backward. There is no standing still or status quo. Steve, Trevor and Dave keep encouraging us every week that's why. We respond to positive reinforcement don't we?

Why does Steve continue to have high expectations of our chorus? Because possibly he sees something in us that we may not see in ourselves.

So the same reason you probably joined the chorus is still true today. But why, oh why do we have to force ourselves to work so hard to polish our craft?

We don't have to! But hopefully we want to! No one every joins an organization in which they can not take pride. Are you proud to be a Fun Center Chordsman?

Then commit to work as hard as you know you must to make the chorus even better.

Why, oh why? ~ Only you can answer that.



Man of Note honor roll 2010

New Member	Sponsor	Man of Note #
Christian Evans	R.F. Miller	9

Happy February Birthdays

- February 2 ~ Dan Strader
- February 10 ~ Bob Gibson
- February 19 ~ Frank DeWitt
Marty Metzger
- February 27 ~ Jim Brundage



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 2010



- ◆ Date: Friday, February 12
Time: 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Event: Singing Valentines
Location: Meet at 8:15 at Southside Christian Church
Uniform: Formal attire for SV
- ◆ Date: Saturday, February 13
Time: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Event: Singing Valentines
Location: If needed, meeting location will be announced.
Uniform: Formal attire for SV
- ◆ Date: Sunday, February 14
Time: 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Event: Singing Valentines
Location: To be announced
Uniform: Formal attire for SV
- ◆ Date: Saturday, February 20
Time: Meet 6:00 Sing 7:00 PM
Event: Rehab Telethon
Location: Richland Mall Center Court
Uniform: TBA
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Date: Friday/Saturday April 15 & 16
Time: All Day
Event: JAD Spring Convention and contest
Location: Independence, Ohio

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 February 2010 Issue

