

The Shampoo

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NEWSLETTER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ELECTRIC CITY CHORUS · SINGING BARBERSHOP HARMONY SINCE 1944

Chapter K44 of Barbershop Harmony Society

Volume 64: the October/November 2009 Issue

Schenectady, NY Chapter



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Director: Chuck Eaker
Director Emeritus: Leo Mailhotte
Assistant Directors: Joe Millett, Steve Lawrence, & Chris Jensen

Shampoo

Editor: Jim Bowen
Circulation: Ed Gifford

Visitors Welcome

Rehearsals are every Tuesday (except Holidays) at 7:30 PM at the Faith United Methodist Church at the corner of Brandywine and Eastern Parkway, Schenectady. Park at the side of the Church and enter from Brandywine. If no one is at door, ring bell and wait.

visit@electriccitychorus.org



The Electric City Chorus Photograph at the NED 2009 Conference

We Had A Fantastic Weekend In Burlington

Jim Stearns, VP Music & Performance

All of us who were able to make the trip up to Burlington have stated it already, but it's worth repeating. The division competition was a very successful and enjoyable effort. As the chapter's VP for Music and Performance I want to thank all of you again for your hard work and fantastic performance that resulted in a third place finish and the "Most Improved Chorus" award. If there's a down side to this it is that now it's apparent we can make some significant improvements to our performance and the directors know it! The heat is on guys (on the risers) to move on, and up from here.

In addition to some real accomplishments by the chorus in Burlington, one other thing sticks out to me. We had the opportunity to take part in some fantastic evaluations following the competition. To have the chance to meet with, and sing for, such accomplished and knowledgeable judges—not for just a verbal review of what we did well and not-so-well, but to have a chance to take a song apart and get top-notch coaching—was a real treat!! I'm glad so many of us were able to stay to experience this. I think we all learned a lot, and I'm sure our directors will be putting what they learned to work as we continue to develop as a chorus. Again thanks to all.... It's now on to Division in the Spring.



Monthly Comments
of the Electric City
Chorus President,
Walt Lane.



Walt sent me the following with this note attached, and I agree with his thoughts.-Editor
“Just found this in a file. I wrote it several years ago, but it may bear repeating
and the final questions seems appropriate as we get ready to start a new year.”

“Where to, Bud?”

Sounds like one of those old movies you see on Turner TV. Guy in a taxi to the traveler at the curb. Then you get the flash-backs to define the reason he is hailing the cab— all the details leading up to the next move.

Two years previously, he didn't earn the annual trip to Saratoga. So he hired some coaches, made some changes. The next year he made the trip, to Lowell, but finished out of the top ten. More coaching, more hard work. Then a very long trip to Halifax and a Number 7 finish.

Snap back to the present... “Where to , Bud?” You look up and say: “So, where DO you want to go? What is it that YOU want this chorus to do in the next year? In the next five years? There are many choices. Right now we are on a high.

41 guys on a rehearsal riser, unheard of until last Tuesday, at least since he came on board. We definitely have the big MO working for us right now.

Can we carry that enthusiasm over to the everyday activities in the Chapter? Should we revitalize the FUN activities we used to do— quartetting, gang singing, social stuff, charity events, new members? Should we continue with more coaching to step up another plateau at contests?

This is a great time for you to discuss these ideas with the men on your Board of Directors. They need to hear from you, know what you want.

Now.....”Where to, Bud?”

Have you seen this on your computer? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmDGntpZC3I> The Ambassadors of Harmony, 2009 International Champions, performing at the International Contest. We may never be this good or this big. If we were to put our minds to it, we could take the first step toward that goal.

Hanging around the Pole

with Jim Bowen



WE ARE IN THE TOP 10
AT INTERNATIONAL

Out of all the Chapter Newsletters of all the members of the Barbershop Harmony Society, your “The Shampoo” was selected in the 2008 PROBE Contest to be number....



How do you like that? Following our selection as the top newsletter in the Northeastern District, copies of two months of the Shampoo were entered into the PROBE contest as the representative of our district. A set of three judges examined two newsletters from each district and made their selection. (They were tougher than my ninth grade English teacher.)

Forgive me if I brag just a little.

Looking for someone to take over the web site, www.electric-citychorus.org. For family reasons, I am very busy and have not had the time to work on the website. If anybody is willing, please let me know.

E-Mail :
eccnews@nycap.rr.com

My First Quartet

By Don Flom

This is a true story. It may not sound like it but it is. It's also a very personal story and there is no reason why it should be of interest to anyone but me -- SO, if you have something more important to do, stop reading now and go do whatever you have to do. You won't miss anything. If you do continue reading, I hope you'll forgive my rambling off into tangents now and then. Memories never seem to occur singly or come to mind in straight paths.

Also, don't hold me too closely to dates and facts; after 50+ years some memories sharpen and others get a bit fuzzy. You'll probably be able to guess which memories are the sharpest as I go along.

My first quartet was made up of boys aged 10 to 13 -- plus or minus a year or so. We were very average as boys go. We thought profound thoughts but more often dirty thoughts, as boys of that age do. I don't remember how our quartet started; all I remember is that suddenly we were singing and loved every bit of it. The names aren't important but to make the roles a bit clearer it may help to know that Eugene, the oldest, sang second bass, Harold, the next oldest, sang first bass, Lloyd, the next oldest, sang second tenor, and I, the youngest, sang first tenor. You must realize that this was a couple of years before O. C. Cash had invented SPEBSQSA so we didn't use the terms lead and bari in those days. Also, we didn't use any barbershop seventh chords, unless by mistake, so the sound wasn't quite what it might have been. But no one rang major triads better than we did -- at least as I remember it now.

A little background may help to set the scene. We all lived on farms in southern Minnesota. And we all went to the same one-room schoolhouse; actually, it was a three-room schoolhouse: a small cloakroom, a small library, and a large 15 x 30 foot classroom -- plenty of room to learn whatever had to be learned between grades 1 and 8. And all four of us had the same interests: baseball, cowboys, horseback riding, and pretending we were the Jesse James gang or someone equally famous. We had all smoked and chewed tobacco but actually I had given up smoking at the age of nine because it was

injurious to my health, due to my mother catching me in the act and giving me a stern lecture which saved me from even worse things if my dad had found out. Thus, by the time my quartetting started, breath control was not a problem.

A bit more perspective: I was born the youngest of six boys and an older sister and I always thought that a person could sing as soon as he could talk, maybe even a little before talking, as a matter of fact. And harmonizing was just as natural an act as breathing and eating -- and just as important. There was always a quartet going in my family but being the youngest, I wasn't able to shove anyone else out of the way until much older. Even in those days, fifth men in a quartet were frowned upon. So you can see how good I felt when I had my own quartet -- at the age of 10.

Most of our singing was done at church ice cream socials and at similar doings. Someone would plunk a note on the piano to give us the pitch and off we'd go. Pretty soon we were good enough to warrant matching white shirts and light colored pants which didn't quite match but came pretty close. The exact attire wasn't so important as the attempt. And the people who heard us knew the obvious fact that the attempt was more important than the end result.

Some more background now leads me to the most important part of my story. In the farming community where we lived almost everyone was of the protestant religion. However, at the end of the regular school year -- in May or June -- it was customary to hold a one-month parochial school in the same one-room schoolhouse and almost everyone who had attended regular school also attended parochial school. Maybe the objective was to keep us out of trouble for another month, sort of like summer camp in later years. At any rate we were stuck but we didn't really mind it because we didn't know that the rest of the world didn't have to live by the same rules.

It so happened that the same year our



quartet started singing, our parochial school teacher was a St. Olaf College student trying to earn some extra money during the summer by teaching and directing a local church choir. His first name was Waldemar (pronounced Valdemar) and let me tell you, he was something else! He had the most beautiful baritone voice I had ever heard, he could do several cartwheels in a row on the lawn, he was funny, handsome, and he drove a Ford Model A roadster. He was studying to be a minister but he could combine his deep faith with a sense of humor that impressed each of us boys - no mean task. Even more important, Waldemar took a real interest in our quartet and coached us to become better than we had any business being.



Let me give you an example of Waldemar's influence: one especially clear night, after rehearsal, he looked up at the sky and taught us how to recognize the big dipper, the little dipper, the constellation Orion, and how to locate the North Star. I thought that the figure of Orion was a bit farfetched: the seven little stars for the belt and only one star for each elbow, etc., but with a bit of imagination I soon caught on. The important thing was that even now, some 50+ years later, I never look up at the heavens and locate the dippers and the North Star, or even Orion, without thinking of Waldemar.

It wasn't long before Waldemar thought our quartet was ready for the big time. He arranged for us to sing on the radio station at St. Olaf. It was to be on a Sunday evening religious program at 7 PM led by a chemistry professor who happened to also have a religious bent. We were invited to

First Quartet Continued on pg 4

Photos from the Annual Show



Ron & Larry



Ed

Four Octogenarians



New Songs Are On the Way

by Chuck Eaker, Director

The Music Team has decided on six new songs for 2010. They will replace six songs currently in our repertoire but the Music Team hasn't decided which ones yet. We plan to introduce one new song every four or five weeks starting with the first rehearsal after our three holiday shows in December.

The new songs are:

I Told Them All About You / You Dear Medley -

This is a driving up tune which will be a welcome addition to our repertoire. We really don't have anything like this in our catalog at the moment. Despite the fact that we will perform it at a speedy tempo, it won't be difficult for us to sing. We should be able to add a lot of exciting choreography to it.

Hush -

This is a spiritual which will add another welcome dimension of variety to our programs. Gentlemen's Agreement made this famous in the 70's. It has some high notes that will be challenging for the leads, but they can do it.

It's A Good Day -

This is a great opener. It's a familiar song, it's upbeat, and it's short. These are all great qualities for an opener.

Only You (And You Alone) -

This is another classic doo-wop tune made famous by the Platters. Our audiences will love it. So will we.

There Goes My Heart - This is a fantastic ballad. It's not difficult, so we should have no trouble putting this into fabulous shape for the spring contest.

May I Never Love Again - This is a classic barbershop ballad that is also contestable. You will love singing it.

We will distribute sheet music and learning tracks for them as usual in plenty of time for you to thoroughly learn them. 2010 will be our best year yet.

First Quartet

Continued from pg 3

this professor's home for supper before the show. When we arrived, I was not impressed; the professor was grossly overweight and had a dour appearance, also, he was busy weeding his lawn and removing the little bits of clover that had crept in. I had never seen anyone so particular about a lawn before and his efforts certainly looked to me like a waste of stewardship. However, first impressions are sometimes wrong; mine changed when this professor insisted on going inside at 6 o'clock so he could listen to the Jack Benny show on the radio. From then on I thought he was OK.

The radio station where we were to sing was in a small room on the very top floor of the school's administration building. There was only one microphone and any kind of control for balancing the sound was unheard of. After a few trial runs the station manager decided that when our quartet sang, Eugene - the second bass - should stand closest to the mike, Harold should stand several feet behind him, Lloyd should stand in the doorway, and I should stand out in the hail. And that's the way we sang our numbers! It was a good thing we knew our parts or it never would have come off. Being so young and completely without fear, it never occurred to us that we had to stand close together to blend

or to stay on pitch.

This is about the end of the story but there are some sad aspects to it also. After eighth grade each of our quartet went different ways, either to high school, back to the farm or whatever, and we never sang together again. A few years later Eugene was to be killed in the BIG WAR (WW 2). And most tragic of all, Waldemar was killed in an automobile crash in his early 20's while attending seminary to become a preacher. But he had left his mark for good on four young boys who would never forget his influence - or which stars were which in the heavens. That's something which cannot be said about most people,


Watsup!
Coming Events



Dec. 13 - 4:00 PM. Christ the King R.C. in Westmere. (Near Rts. 20 & 155)
Dec. 15 - 7:00 PM. Reformed Church of Scotia
Dec. 17 - 7:00 PM. St. Edwards R.C. in Clifton Park

What is the difference between Bird Flu and Swine Flu? For bird flu you need tweetment and for swine flu you need oinkment.

Here's to the
Birthday Boys



NOV:
Joe Pallante: 11/14
Larry Clow: 11/16

DEC:
John Oppenheim: 12/1

Creating Lumps

by Chuck Eaker

On a spur of the moment whim, Janice and I just happened to attend the last event in the Schenectady First United Methodist Church's 2008-2009 concert series. As it turned out it was a performance by the Young People's Chorus of New York City. The chorus on that tour consisted of about 30 young people aged 12 to 18, and they sang a wide range of repertoire.

Their performances were so good and so moving that I got a lump in my throat innumerable times during the two hours they sang. I was moved by the songs. I was moved by their voices and their expert vocal technique. I was moved by the arrangements. I was moved by the emotion and commitment each one of them brought to every song.

What caused the audience to have an emotional response?

I thought quite a bit about just what it was in their performances that generated my strong, positive emotional responses that produced the lumps. Eventually, I realized that what caused the lumps was the commitment I heard in each and every note and saw in each and every face and in each and every gesture and movement.

And it was relentless.

They did not relax and turn off between songs. They moved to different standing arrangements between most songs, and they all moved from position to position with the same noble posture they exhibited while singing. Their physical presence was constantly saying, "What we are doing is incredibly important." I was thoroughly moved and touched by (and got the lumps from) this totally awesome and relentless level of commitment to themselves, the music, and to us.

These children showed me how we can develop our singing and performances to have this same deep and profound impact on our audiences. We have to show them that we are totally and relentlessly committed to singing and performing at our absolute best. And we have to believe, totally and relentlessly, that what we are doing in the audience's presence is astoundingly valuable.

Let's start working on that.

And let's all attend the First United Methodist Church's concert next year that features the American Boychoir. I bet we'll get lumps.



Chorus members singing at annual show

JOE BARBERSHOPPER Super Hero Created by Jim Stearns

Episode 12: A Fight for Resounding, Ringing Resonance

by Jim Stearns, VP Music and Performance

You could hear it as clearly as someone's yell in the remote ice-covered woods of northern Maine. The quartet was singing, but the resonance was gone. It sounded like four guys with big-time head colds. Donald Duck would be proud, but the sound was horrible. Way up north in the tiny Village of Millinoket, Maine, that's how the rehearsal of the Frozen Flats Four quartet sounded.

It was apparent to the horrified coach that the little fleshy part in the oral cavity, the "little hangy-down thing" (aka., the soft palate), had collapsed in each one of these guys. Those little "thingies" were in direct contact with the back of each singer's tongue, totally eliminating the ringing resonance from the singing equation. This singing group was severely "space challenged", and the sound was horrendous. Something was seriously impacting the singing quality of this quartet to the point that even the incredible richness of the baritone line was muffled and dead.

In exasperation, the coach opened the door and screamed "Joe Barbershopper, we need you". Before he was able to close the door, a multi-colored streak burst into the room and smashed into the far wall. "I must work on my ultra-sonic braking sub-system;. It has been acting up for the past two weeks," Joe mumbled as he brushed sheet rock dust from his tights.

Joe first looked around the room then scanned the space with his array of super villain identifying sensors. Then he listened to the group sing. "I know exactly what the problem is and where the problem can be found," Joe said with extra resonance and total self-assurance. "The problem is that massive purveyor of vocal vice, that doer of immoral vocal deeds, the one and only Sagging Soft Palate; who is known, the world over, as the Jabba-the-Hutt of vocal music. "The Hutt doesn't get around much, no legs ya know," Joe explained. "He is able to target his victims through telekinetic means and it appears this quartet is the end result of his current vicious attack. I know right where to find the big blob!"

Then, using his best Arnold Schwarzenegger impersonation, Joe sneered, "I'll be back!" With that, Joe took off, bursting through a closed window; sending pieces of glass everywhere. "I've heard about this", the coach said. "Joe seems to have a problem utilizing doorways!"

Joe flew with super-sonic speed half way around the world, to the southsea island of "U-du-the-vudo-like-eyedo" and headed straight to the Hutt's hut. "I see you're at it again Soft-Palate", Joe scolds. "I'm really getting tired of coming all the way out here to tell you to knock it off!" Old Softie just shifted a bit, which gave him the appearance of a mountain of Jell-O on the move. All told, he moved about an inch closer to our hero. That's about all he could muster in terms of



his "attack m o d e ." Joe buried a punch into the blob's face, with no apparent effect; just some slime on his arm — up to the elbow. "Palate, you know we can go around like this for days, and I've got nothing but time so if that's the way you want it....."

"Murrree, mumph rum noof veeber inkpa antspa" Soft Palate responded. Joe had no idea what it meant, but he could see that his enemy was transmitting energy, and he hoped that it was directed toward the Frozen Flats Four.

"I'll check it out blob-guy and if the quartet is not up and running, you'll see me again in a flash". With that, Joe shot out through the roof of the hut and back to Millinoket, Maine.

So our well dressed hero appears to have been successful again and apparently without "firing a shot," so to speak. The Frozen Flats Four were in full voice, with resonance to spare when Joe reappeared at the rehearsal hall. Once again all is right with the world and another battle against the wicked destroyers of vocal quality has been won — won by "THE MAN":



Highlights of the November Board Meeting

Wally Adlemann, Secretary

Checkbook balance: \$12,443.90.

Old Business:

- Guest quartet for 2010 show – Lunchbreak.
- Annual Show Report – Chris/Rich: Dianne (Standing Ovation) – positive report received. Financially we're down by about \$2,000.00. Ticket sales and ads were low. Other expenses were about the same as previous.
- Membership Task Force – Roger – upcoming project – discussion.
- Manchester, CT Annual Show in January (StormFront & LunchBreak):
- Singing for Life Blood Drive in May w/ Troy & Saratoga? – discussion.
- Future Performances – VA Hospital, other? Discussion.
- Inter-Chapter Meetings – Status?

Nothing new – pending.

New Business/for the good of the chapter:

- Contributions to Harmony Foundation - discussion.
- Budget for 2010 – Should prepare in December.
- NED Leadership Academy – Officers should attend. Chapter pays for five slots.



District Director's School a Success

by Chuck Eaker, Chorus Director

I'm stupendously proud of our chorus for the wonderful job we did this past Saturday. Thanks so much. And I'm very appreciative and thankful for the way many of you stepped up at the last minute. Thanks for everything, guys.



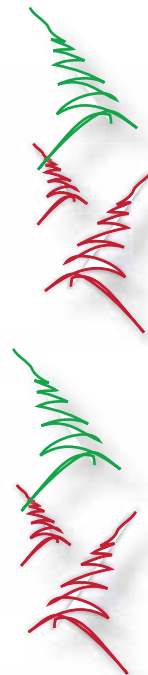
Electric City Chorus members give afternoon for director instruction

A Cappella Christmas Song List

by Chuck Eaker, Chorus Director

Here is the list of songs we will do on our holiday shows. The order will probably change, and we might drop a song or two depending on how many quartets are available.

- Jingle Bells
- (directly into humming with voice over)
- I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
- Deck The Halls (Joe)
- I'll Be Home For Christmas
- Coventry Carol (Steve)
- Let It Snow (Steve)
- Hey Look Me Over (Steve)
- After You've Gone
- Wink And A Smile
- Nevertheless
- That Railroad Rag
- For All We Know (Joe)
- Breaking Up Is Hard To Do (Steve)
- Crazy 'Bout Ya Baby (Chris)
- Sh-Boom
- Angels We Have Heard On High (Joe)
- Christmas Song
- Can You Feel The Love Tonight (Joe)
- You Raise Me Up (Joe)
- Lion Sleeps Tonight
- Silent Night
- We Wish You A Merry Christmas
- Auld Lang Syne



Sidebar Humor

At traffic court, the judge asked a lead: “Tell me, why did you park your car in the no parking zone?”

The bewildered lead looked and the judge as if he had two heads and said: “Well, there was a sign that said “Fine for Parking.”

The same lead was taking his new puppy for a walk when a policeman stopped him.

“Has your dog got a license?” The policeman asked.

“Oh, no,” answered the lead. “He’s not old enough to drive.”

A baritone was looking at the red ripe tomatoes growing in the grumpy bass’ garden.

“I’ll give you my two pennies for that tomato,” said the bari pointing to a beautiful, large, ripe fruit hanging on the vine.

“No,” said the bass, “I get a dime for a tomato like that one.”

The bari pointed to a smaller green one, “Will you take two pennies for that one?”

“Yes,” replied his friend, “I’ll give you that one for two cents.”

“OK,” said the bari, sealing the deal by putting the coins in the bass’ hand. “I’ll pick it up in about a week.”

I’m Going to Use That “F” Word

by Larry Clow, General Nuisance

It has been some time since Larry has submitted an article. We’re delighted to have his humor and opinion with us again.-Editor

Someone has been using the “F” word in barbershopping. Get your minds out of the gutter; I’m referring to “FUN”.

Walt Lane told me that the district has been talking about Spring prelims being a lot more flexible and using a three-man judge panel for the contestants who want to be qualified for fall.

WOW! What will we do without a line of very fine judges seated before us? Probably enjoy singing and “havin’ fun”.

At this point I am talking about possibilities. Any chorus that wants to sing can do so and choose to be evaluated or not for Fall contest. This would bring back a lot of choruses that are not trophy orientated, but fun orientated.

When I joined the chorus 18 years ago, (in the old days) choruses used to perform in costume and do funny skits. Now it seems that we are only out to get a good mark and the fun has been left behind, we are killing our hobby. We are just uptight; we stand on the risers for two and a half hours at rehearsal and go home too tired to sleep.

Again, in the old days, we used to sing part of the rehearsal sitting down in sections, and learning our music together. Now we sing “shotgun” with no support from each other and often singing the wrong notes. I believe we have to go backwards to go forward. We learned a lot of music sitting on our “duffs”. Could we try it for a year and see if there is any improvement. Our members are not getting any younger.

Oh, did I mention that the spring convention would be topped off with a spaghetti dinner? Just picture the afterglow.

2009 Blood Drive a Huge Success

by Walt Lane, President

This article was left over from last summer and we feel it is important to say here. -Editor

Our participation in the May 30th Blood Drive was great fun and very successful. ECC partnered with the Saratoga Springs Chapter and the Troy Chapter to sponsor a 3-site venture in the Capital District with the Albany Chapter of the American Red Cross.



Overall, 69 donors showed up, 13 of them first-time donors. 77 units of blood were given with the potential of 231 lives saved.

Each location had several singing groups to entertain the donors and staff. Over 20 men from ECC arrived at the Guilderland Elks Club that Saturday morning singing nearly every song in our repertoire. Several quartets were “created” on the spot to give the chorus members a breather, and a SEI quartet arrived to provide a welcome change of pitch.

A good time was had by all. Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time that day.

off the Cuff

by Ed Gifford



Len Fowler was a man of my father's generation, born about 1890. He had a small insurance agency on Broadway (Schenectady) near Smith Street. He was a very gentle man, of short to medium stature, but strong enough to lift the heavy indices in the County Clerk's Office (where I worked) with his one hand. He was always well dressed in a suit and tie, but wore his right coat sleeve tucked into his side pocket. They said that as a young man he had lost an arm in a railroading accident. He would come in to the office from time to time to check up on the record of a suspicious (?) client.

My father was a lifetime member of the local Lion's Club and he and Len were on the board of directors of the club, which met monthly upstairs in the Tavern Restaurant on State Street. After the business meeting, they would stay to play poker, but Len always excused himself. Then one night when they didn't have enough men to make a good game, Len consented to play. When it came his turn to deal, they offered to shuffle the cards for him, but he said he could do that, and he proceeded to shuffle and deal easily with his one hand. They were all amused at how adroitly he handled the cards, but at the end of the evening he had all the money. As he got up from the table, he pushed the money across and said; "There, men, I don't deserve your money. After I lost my wing, I had a lot of time on my hand, so I taught myself some tricks. You were so amazed that I could shuffle and deal with one hand that you couldn't see that I was cheating and dealing second cards and cards from the bottom of the deck". At that, he left to go home and never again consented to entertain the men after their meetings.

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A decorative graphic with a dark blue background and a white zig-zag border. It features three stylized, colorful figures (yellow, orange, green) in purple frames, arranged vertically. Below the figures, the text "EMAIL VISIT@ ELECTRICCITYCHORUS.ORG" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font.

If You Can Breathe You Can Sing!

The Shampoo
**Newsletter of the
Electric City Chorus
Schenectady, NY**



ELECTRIC CITY CHORUS



A CAPPELLA CHRISTMAS

Concerts by a Capital District

Barbershop Chorus

for the benefit
of those in need at
Christmas.

Public Invited

Admission Free-Contributions Accepted
(\$5.00 or equivalent nonperishable food suggested)

Sunday Dec. 13 - 4:00 PM
at Christ the King R.C. in Westmere
Tuesday Dec. 15 - 7:00 PM
at First Reformed in Scotia
Friday, Dec. 18 - 7:00 PM
at St. Edwards R.C. in Clifton Park