

# 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 67: Summer 2010 Issue

## Schenectady, NY Chapter



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### Directors

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](mailto:visit@electriccitychorus.org)

## Summer Is For Singing



by Ron Messersmith

**T**he Electric City Chorus was invited to sing at the annual Guilderland Elks Flag Day ceremony on June 13. Our own Ed Gifford, the younger, had both an integral role in the ceremony itself, and as a member of the burgeoning lead section. A local Boy Scout troop assisted in carrying in the flags representing the USA at various stages of development starting with the American Revolution. Each Elk organization nationwide is required to have an annual Flag Day ceremony, and it was the first opportunity many of us had had to say the Pledge of Allegiance in many moons.



The chorus started the ceremony with "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Patriotic Medley." After the ceremony, the chorus sang several songs from the repertoire and then joined in the picnic in the Elk meeting hall. The photo of the chorus was generously provided by Frank Palmeri.

A quick look at the "What's Up" will confirm that we have scheduled an unusual large number of sing-outs and concerts. We have six more to go before the district contest. Based upon the turn out at the gigs of June, we can be assured of good participation.



Comments of the  
Electric City Chorus  
President,  
Roger Murphy

## You Can Make the Chorus Sound Right

**Congratulations!** This year's schedule of Chorus performances is larger than any since I've been a member (21 years). Starting in April and going through October, the Chorus will have performed one dozen (12) concerts. And my count does not include the Mountain Division Contest in Danbury on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Northeastern District Convention in Portland, ME on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, or our Annual Show on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Joe Betz has been instrumental in contacting venues and arranging most of the paid performances. Thank you, Joe! Your officers and directors have made increased paid performances a significant objective this year due to the financial loss incurred by last year's annual show.

I wish to thank all members who thus far have given of their time and talent to be there for these concerts and will continue to do so for the remainder of this year. We need each and every voice, each and every concert. Although the performance fees are important, each concert helps us expose more men to the great hobby of barbershop harmony and increases our chances of gaining new members.

Remember! "Only You" can make the Chorus sound right. "Only You" can make the harmony bright. "Only You" and you alone can thrill an audience like you do and fill their hearts with love for barbershop! Only You! Sound familiar? The Chorus is now working on the 5<sup>th</sup> new song for the year. Please continue to work on these songs during the week, checking to make sure that you have the notes and words correct. Our Director Chuck and Assistant Directors Steve and Joe, work hard in preparing for Tuesday night rehearsal. Let us work hard to eliminate incorrect notes or words so they do not hinder the director's efforts in getting a song ready for public performance.

Until next issue, keep singing with all your heart!

Roger



Schenectady, New York

Member of The Barbershop Harmony Society

## Hanging around the Pole

with Jim Bowen, Editor



**W**hile walking though

**Crossgates**, we passed two young ladies in conversation. Something caused me to linger and listen for a moment. During those few moments one of the girls used the pronoun "I" seven times. Come on, seven times between breaths. Over the years the pronoun of choice seems to have wondered from "we" to "I." This certainly reflects a change in the nature of society from group to individual identity.

In the group, "we" acts as one and takes precedence over the "I". Success is measured not by individual accomplishment, but as the group succeeds. It occurs to me that an important part of belonging is listening to others. Something these girls had not learned yet. Something that a chorus cannot overlook if it is to succeed.

Chuck, as he tried to motivate the chorus, said men lack in emotion. With years of experience with men and women in stressful situations, I would add, men feel powerful emotions that they do not know how to express. (Society's gift to men.)

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER

**E-Mail :**  
[eccnews@nycap.rr.com](mailto:eccnews@nycap.rr.com)

## Very Memorable Memorial Day Weekend

by Wally Adelman

**W**e used to meet after lunch, in one of our rooms in the barracks at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City. It was the year 1976, and the year of the Bicentennial of the United States... We'd shoot the breeze, and then end up singing a song from back in the day. One day we were singing, and Michael walked in, and we became fast friends. After being stationed there for a year, I received new orders, bound for Wiesbaden Air Base, Germany. Boy! Was I happy to leave Oklahoma in the rear view mirror!

Years later, I am employed by the Federal Aviation Administration, and the only FAA school is in.....you got it! Oklahoma City! In the beginning years, I found that Oklahoma City still wasn't one of my favorite places to be. Nevertheless, I warmed up to it, making it my "home-away-from-home," and watched as Oklahoma changed, and became a very modern city, with lots to offer. There used to be a warehouse district, full of empty warehouses; an empty derelict place where you just didn't want to end up. Some fella had a vision, and today, that place is known as Bricktown. The warehouses are still there, but they go by different names now. The Bricktown Brewery, Tap Werks, The Spaghetti Warehouse, Earl's Rib Place, the Bourbon Street Café, and more. It is THE entertainment district! A very safe and very fun place to be! Always lots going on! I remember the Bricktown BBQ Festival and Jazz Fest just a few years ago...

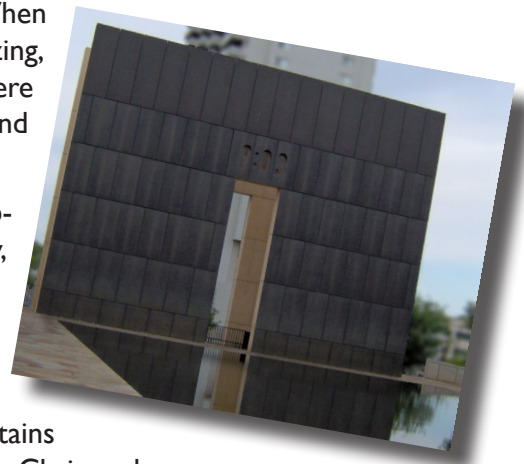
A terrible tragedy, the Murrah Building bombing. I wasn't there at the time but was in school when they imploded the building. As far away as the FAA Academy, just on the other side of Will Rogers World Airport, we heard and felt the loud boom. I can't imagine what it was like during the initial blast. Just horrible. Years later, they built the Oklahoma National Memorial & Museum. Touching, heartbreaking but filled with hope for the future.

So over all these years Michael and I have kept in touch. When I've gone there to school, we always meet for dinner and socializing, sometimes at the prestigious Oklahoma City Petroleum Club where he is a member. Debbie has met him before, and our son Chris and Michael have been emailing each other back and forth.

After all this talk about Bricktown, and everything else, Debbie suggested Chris and I take a weekend and visit Oklahoma City, and that way Chris and Michael could meet. And so we did, over the Memorial Day weekend. We visited my stomping grounds at Tinker Air Force Base. We ate at Cattlemen's Steakhouse, where President George Bush Sr ate; we ate Mexican until we couldn't eat anymore! We hiked around Turner Falls in the Arbuckle Mountains to the south; and spent too much time having fun in Bricktown! Chris and Michael finally met and had a great time getting to know each other. We all had an incredible dinner and social time at the Oklahoma City Petroleum

Club. You had to be there - Michael, the staunch Republican on one side, and Chris, working for the New York State Assembly on the other! During our visit, Michael, who is a survivor of the Murrah bombing, took us on an emotional tour of the National Memorial & Museum. Chris said, "...it was a life-changing visit."

It was a very memorable Memorial Day weekend..... A weekend to remember.



# You Just Had to Be There

## Part II

By Don Flom

Part one of this article was in the January Shampoo. As editor I decided to divide it into two parts. The second part begins with "I'n the early. . ." So the adventure continues.

**R**emiscing about the old days is an act of self—indulgence, of interest to the story-teller but of marginal interest, if any at all, to the reader or listener. You see, **you just had to be there. . . .**

In the early days of barbershopping we concentrated on ringing chords. Message? What do you mean, message? This song is supposed to convey a message? What's that? Just shut up and let's ring this chord again, it felt so good! Our idea of Voice Expression was to see how fast we could go from real loud to real soft. I think the first time I heard a barbershop song with a message was one sung by the Smoothies (?) in an NED Prelim Contest. The name of the quartet may be wrong and I don't remember the name of the song, but I do remember that Ev Wood sang in the quartet. And the song really moved me, almost as much as "Brahms' Lullaby" sung by the Schmitt Brothers. But that day, too, has passed and only the memory lingers on. **You just had to be there.**

Contests in those days were different too. The "clinics" following the contests were nothing like the "evaluation" sessions of today. The clinics were often held at afterglows where the whole audience could hear about every little mistake and foible your quartet made. The judges would be seated up front at a long table, on a dais - just like the Supreme Court - and they would pontificate in all their grandeur. Even the kindest of judges, such as Jim Ewin from Washington, DC, could make you cringe for singing a three-note chord when you should have used a barbershop 7th. And scoring summaries!! Talk about scoring summaries!! I still remember working with Vinnie Zito at 3 o'clock in the morning on an old mimeograph machine trying to print out scoring summaries. Our hands, faces, and clothes were covered with that damn purple ink which sometimes shows up today if I don't use Lava soap in the shower. Computers? H——I, the abacus was just coming into its prime. Of course, that was \$%&" years ago. **You just had to be there.**

Thinking about duplicating machines, I remember back #\$\$@! years ago when the Schenectady Chapter decided to purchase an old duplicating machine for printing the chapter newsletter -- and also copying arrangements occasionally (Copyright? What's that? What do you mean, I'm not copying this right? It's the best I can do with this old clunker!). Since I was a bachelor at the time and had my own apartment, it was only natural that the chapter decided the machine should be in my apartment. As I recall, it was either an Addressograph or Multilith, or something like that -- the duplicating machine, that is -- not the apartment. At any rate, I had a steady flow of people through the apartment.



Don Flom

### Renewals Available Online

If you are due to renew, you can log into Ebiz now and renew your membership any time. Some members have had first-time login trouble; and if that is the case, they can:

- Log into [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org)
- Click on Member Login "GO"
- Consult the login instructions on the [eBiz homepage](#).

Why should you renew online?

- Fast Payment
- Fast Turnaround on your Membership Card
- Potentially 2 weeks faster than other data processing
- Keyword? FAST!

Can you wait for your paper invoice in a few weeks? Absolutely. We simply want to provide a quick, easy way for our members to renew online, hassle free.

Thank you for renewing in the best hobby in the world!

Flom: continued on page 6



- July 24 - Chorus Picnic @ Ed Gifford's (Lead) place
- August 12 - Towasentha Park, Guilderland @ 7:30 PM
- August 17 - Cook Park, Colonie @ 6:30 PM
- August 18 - Freedom Park, Scotia @ 7:00 PM
- September 16 - Coburg Village @ 7:00 PM
- October 14 - Kingsway Manor @ 7:00 PM
- October 22 - 24 - District Convention, Portland, ME
- Dec 4 - Annual Show @ SCC auditorium

Here's to the  **Birthday Boys**

**JUNE:**

Chris Jensen;	6/1
Chuck Eaker;	6/12
Chuck Farone;	6/13
Leo Mailhotte;	6/14
Jim Bowen;	6/17
John Bowen;	6/17
Bart Zeh;	6/17

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**JULY:**

Steve Van Allen	7/6
Hal Stephens;	7/8
KC White;	7/9
Duane Cunningham;	7/21

## A Healthy Voice <sup>\*</sup>

by Mark Hodges

**M**ost of us strive for good health on by a daily basis...watching what we eat, exercise, etc. We need to do the same for our voices if we are to attain the best possible quality in our voices. My intention is to submit for your use or not a series of articles of how to maintain and improve your voice, while there may be some information you may know or not, and some information you may not like to hear, it is all vital to getting the best voice you can get. With that in mind I submit to you my first article, all of which will be more in a "Tips for Vocal Health"

### For a Healthy voice:

Drink water to keep your body well hydrated, avoid alcohol and caffeine. Vocal cords vibrate very fast, and having a proper water balance helps keep them well lubricated. Foods containing large amounts of water are excellent hydration – conscious snacks including apples, pears, watermelon, peaches, melons, grapes, plums, bell peppers and applesauce

If you get a "dry" voice during or after singing you should avoid the following before singing:

Orange or Citrus Juice and caffeinated drinks – these can affect your throats lubrication and cause it to dry quickly.

Water is good for a singer...period! Regardless of the form it comes in (except mixed with alcohol or anything else that negatively affects the vocal cords). As long as you stay hydrated, it is wise to take water in whatever form it comes in. Room temperature water is better if you are having water just before or during singing, but if cold water is all that is available, it's not the end of the world.

While this next item is not necessarily a Vocal health suggestion, it's just plain good manners... When singing either at practice or out at a sing-out, just because a song is done is not a cue for us to start talking and laughing amongst each other totally disregarding the directors' job. Exercise discipline and self control so that we get done that much earlier which will also lead to a more professional appearance if we are out singing. Discipline and self control is important and SHOWS when we sing in public.

Keep healthy and sing better!

*\*The part of my tips for A Healthy Voice come from an article published April 17, 2006 entitled 10 Tips for a Healthy Voice from the LiveScience Staff. If you need the link I can provide it. The part on Dry voice comes from an article entitled "Things Singers Should Avoid" from Vocalist.org.*



Tom Russell would remember it well as he was our Chapter VP at the time. I felt like Ben Franklin publishing Poor Richard's Almanac! Thankfully, the machine broke down after a short time and we got rid of it. But that was another era of barbershopping. **You just had to be there.**

My apartment was also the place where quartets organized, downsized, de—organized, auditioned potential members, and generally caused havoc trying to come up with that “winning” combination. Many of those combinations sounded pretty good, too. It was from that sort of process that our Clip Chords quartet got started. Joe Daniels and I debated about which of us should sing tenor and which should sing lead (he could sing both better than me) and we finally decided that he should sing lead and I should sing tenor, except for high tags where I might be out of breath -- in which case I would poke Joe in the back and we would switch parts. This worked pretty well but it also caused some embarrassing moments; at a “clinic” following a contest (which we fortunately won), the Balance and Blend Judge, Carroll Adams (now there's a name the youngsters don't recognize), came up to me and said, very quietly: “Don, I didn't want to say it in the clinic but on the last chord of your second song, Joe was a trifle flat in the lead part”. I had to reply: “Carroll, I hate to disappoint you but Joe and I switched at that point and I was the one who sang flat!” Carroll's jaw dropped but he took it well and we remained friends to the end. **You just had to be there.**

The songs we sang in those days were wonderful and some of them are even coming back, such as “Bye, Bye Blues” and “I'd Love to Live in Loveland”. But “Yonah From Arizona”, “Tell Me You'll Forgive Me”, “Curse of an Aching Heart”, and many others just don't ring a bell with the youngsters and it's difficult to get them to even try those songs. I remember standing at the back of the hall at the 1954 International Contest, talking to Gareth Evans of the Toronto Rythmaires. They had just qualified for the Saturday night Finals. Gareth said: “Wait till you hear what we're going to sing tonight. It's a new arrangement by John Hill called “Son Of The Sea”. And sing it they did, even with their lead, Norm Sawyer, suffering from a kidney ailment at the time -- they almost had to carry him on the stage. The song was so great that we all sang it for several years until we drove it into the ground. These days it's almost impossible to find someone who can still sing “Son of the Sea”. **You just had to be there.**

There may be hope yet though. The other night at chapter meeting I was woodshedding with three youngsters A&S years my junior, who had never sung in a quartet before. It could have been “Wild Irish Rose” or “Heart of My Heart”; in any event, it was fun to see their eyes light up when we locked on to a few of the chords. I hope that some day in the future one or more of them will reminisce about the old days and remember the night they sang with an old, bald geezer and really rang some chords. Maybe they will say: **“You really should have been there!”**



## Sidebar Humor

**As a tenor was driving** down the freeway, his cell phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him,

“Sweetheart, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on I-787. Please be careful!”

“Heck,” said the tenor, “It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!”



**When a bass arrived** at a very popular restaurant, he was dismayed to find it very crowded. Going up to the hostess he asked, “Will it be long?” Ignoring him, the hostess continued writing in her reservations book.

Thinking she had possibly not heard me the first time, I decided to ask again. “How much time is the wait for a table?”

Looking up from her book, the hostess smiled and said “About ten minutes. We will inform you when your table is ready.”

A short time later, he heard an announcement over the intercom system, “Willette B. Long.. Willette B. Long, your table is ready.”

## This Was the 6th Annual Baseball Barbershop BBQ.

by Chuck Eaker, Chorus Director

**S**aturday, June 12, 2010 was my 70th birthday. That morning Janice told me to get into the car. She had packed a bag which was already in the car. I sat in the passenger's seat while she drove.

She first went to Schenectady and picked up our faux granddaughter, Jasmine, who is 13. So much for a romantic weekend, I thought

She headed toward Boston on I-90 then turned south on I-495. Ah ha, I thought, we're going to Cape Cod, but then she turned south on I-95, and took an exit into Pawtucket, Rhode Island, a town I had never heard of. It did not look like the kind of town you would drive several hours to get to.

She pulled into the parking lot of McCoy Stadium which is the home of the Pawtucket Red Sox, a triple-A farm team of the Boston Red Sox. I was really puzzled since Janice has watched me for over 35 years not going to baseball games or even reading the sports pages.

Happily, as it turned out, she really does know me, because this was the site of the 6th Annual Baseball Barbershop BBQ. This is an event where barbershoppers from all over our district get together for a giant tailgate party in the parking lot, then open the game by singing the national anthem from the infield. Wow.

Not only is it an opportunity to get together with fellow barbershoppers and enjoy their company as well as sing a song for more than five thousand people, it's also a fund-raiser to support our chorus representative to the upcoming international contests. This year our chorus representative is the Portland, Maine Downeasters, and many of them came down for the event. Wow.

The day got even better because Janice's son, Greg, and his two sons, Jeremy and Logan, magically appeared to help celebrate papa's birthday. Wow, again.

Sadly for my grandsons, the start of the game was delayed almost an hour by rain. But that was great for me because the ninety barbershoppers who were waiting to go out onto the field and sing had lots of time to sing a bunch of other songs. Wow.

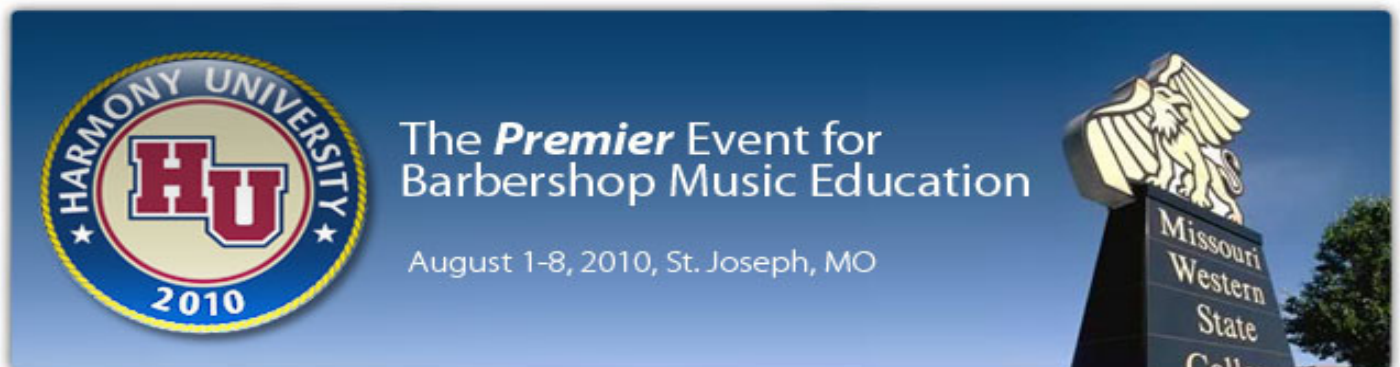
The rain finally let up and we went out onto the infield and sang. It was an incredible experience because the sound we heard on the field as we were singing was absolutely wonderful. Even better, Janice, Jasmine, Greg, and the boys all said that what they heard was fantastic. Another wow.

But, it gets even better. Surprisingly, I thoroughly enjoyed watching the game. McCoy Stadium is a great place but it's not large so the baseball experience is much more intimate than what I experienced the last time I went to a major league park (Costco Field in Seattle). The beer and hot dogs probably helped. Still another wow.

But, wait, there's more. During the fifth inning I heard the stadium announcer mispronounce my name. Not only that but my name (spelled correctly) was on the scoreboard. The whole world (well, at least Pawtucket, Rhode Island) knew it was my birthday. Wow yet again.

And there was lots of icing on this birthday cake. I got to spend time with barbershoppers from all over the district that I've gotten to know over the years. I even made some new barbershop friends. And there's even more: Leo and Ann Mailhotte were there. They were in Rhode Island visiting Leo's brother who was also at the game. At the risk of being redundant and repetitive, wow.

Needless to say, I plan to bring my voice, my appetite and my new found love of minor league baseball to the 7th Annual Baseball Barbershop BBQ next year whether it's my birthday or not. Want to go with me? I promise you'll have a bunch of wows.



# off the Cuff

by Ed Gifford



**See by the paper that Ron Platt** died this week (June 14, 2010). I first met him when he sang in the Gloversville “Empire Statesmen” Chorus. Ron was one of those singers who would woodshed any time, mostly Bari, but any other part if necessary.

That chorus went to International twice; once coming in sixth (should have been 5<sup>th</sup> but 6<sup>th</sup> held on some technicality...ask Don Flom). Bill Dubrey had sung with them on their first trip to International and Bob Weinhold and I were recruited to join them on the second try. We commuted to Gloversville weekly and stood on risers to rehearse just the two contest songs all Spring. In spite of the pain of rehearsals, the thrill of competing on the stage at International was worth it. We sang “When I Leave The World Behind” (a real T.J.) and “Alexander’s Rag Time Band Is Back In Town” for which we wore red suits, top hats, tails and canes with spangles and glitter. The move at the end of “Alexander” was snapping to attention with the hat on the cane for which Dubrey was famous (and proud) because at the end of the song, he dropped the hat and cane (he was front row center) and didn’t flinch, which earned them plus points.

When Gloversville folded, Ron joined Saratoga and kept right on singing. Very recently at an Interchapter (within the last year or two) when I asked him to join me in a pole cat, he had to admit that his voice wasn’t up to it.



**If You Can Breathe You Can Sing!**

## The Shampoo

Newsletter of the  
Electric City Chorus  
Schenectady, NY

