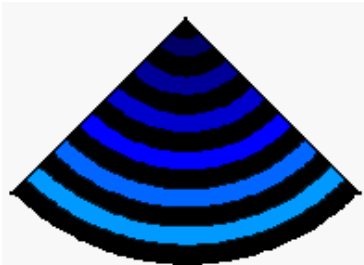


The monthly chapter newsletter of the Alexandria Harmonizers



The Echo

June 2003

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Family Business

When Presentation Judge Dwayne Probst coached the chorus recently, he asked, what is it that really keeps your coming back, that keeps you part of the chapter? The challenge of competition? The thrill of performing? The pure joy of singing?

The answer was, the sense of family.

Family. They are annoying, time-consuming, always remember your most embarrassing moments, call at the worst time, borrow your clothes, make dumb jokes and act goofy in front of your friends.

Family. They are always there for you. They accept you for who you are. They pull through when the chips are down. They focus on what you share in common not what keeps you apart. They care only about who you are, not about what you've done.

They don't call it the "Harmonizer Family" for nothing, huh?

A Father, a Son, and Two Brothers...



And so we dedicate this issue of the Echo to the families that make the Harmonizers possible and family that the Harmonizers have become.

Look for:

Mom singing tenor;
Lads-N-Dads **and** *Dads and Lads*;
Dad wearing a dress;
a lead getting leied;
a Word Search for BBS legacies;
Sis singing lead;
the Harmonizer Family's newest quartet;
the Harmonizer Family's newest baby;
a frightening number of Tepes, most of whom sound the same;
some directors-in-law;
a HUGE scoop on the Harmonettes,
potato salad, fruit salad, and an unrelated family picnic;
and the Baby Album you thought you'd never see!

Miss Shapen's Legacy

by Bill Arhus

How good are you at Harmonizer trivia? Name the Harmonizer 1) whose early 1960s wedding was attended by a handful of guests, one of whom was Maxine Millard; 2) whose early 1970s ride to Harmonizer practice was Wilbur Sparks; 3) who, in the mid-1970s, was honored as a "friend of the Friendship Fire Company;" and 4) who, in the mid-1980s, traveled to International Competition as quartet aide to Vaudeville?

Give up? The answer is my father, Bob Aarhus. And to understand the effect of his barbershopping on me is to first understand the extraordinary impact of barbershop on his everyday life.

His best friend hailed from the barbershop world where they met, as did one of his most cherished life experiences: In 1974, Reader's Digest sponsored a State Department-approved cultural exchange between the U.S. and Romania ("behind the iron curtain"), and Mom and Dad toured the communist country for three weeks as he sang barbershop with a State College, PA-based chorus.

To this day, his eyes well up when he talks about the country, its beautiful people, and how their Romanian tour guide – like him, a Catholic – regularly escaped to a secret church in the mountains to worship; an illegal act at that time. He'll tell



Dear Old Dad...

you about the frisbee they left behind because of the joy it brought to a people who had never seen one. And, though audiences could not understand the language, he'll describe how barbershop bridged the communication gap, and of the overwhelming impact on the audiences and performers alike.

From my earliest musical memories, Dad filled our home with the sounds of the Buffalo Bills, the Schmidt Brothers and the Oriole Four. We were always proud to see Dad's barbershop performances, with the possible exception of the time he dressed as "Miss Shapen" in the Carlindian Chorus' show.

As a result of his influence, I joined SPEBSQSA and sang in a high school comedy quartet, entertaining at a variety of functions including a show for the Washington Redskins. Twenty years later, I sing the same part in the same chorus where Dad began his barbershop journey in 1959.

It's difficult to quantify Dad's barbershop experience. He's never won a barbershop medal. He's never taken the international stage. Yet, through barbershop friends and experiences, he's one of

the richest men I have ever known. Indeed, it is an honor to follow in his footsteps. Yes, even in those created by Miss Shapen's high heels.



Barbershop Nutts

by Rob Nutt

Carol and I became groupies of the Alexandria Harmonizers in the late seventies. We lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, and used to drive up to Alexandria for Harmonizer concerts. I had had the chance to sing with the Pony Expressmen of St. Joseph, Missouri, at the 200th birthday of our nation in 1976 with 32 Army Officers stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, Missouri, and got hooked on the sound. We moved to Charlottesville in 1976 and attended the Charlottesville Chapter show and learned about Alexandria! Well, we came to a show up here, and soon, we were making the drive twice a year.

We moved to Alexandria in 1980 and got hooked on at least two big shows a year, one Fort Ward Park show and one Market Square show, and at least one rain out show sung in a parking garage at the Waterfront Festival in Olde Towne. We were so taken with the sound and the stage presence, that on the spur of the moment, we flew to New Orleans, drove to Pittsburgh and Atlanta and Nashville to see International Competitions. We were wowed! Then, two years ago, we decided to attend District in Wildwood and Ross Johnson invited us to go on a barbershop cruise to Bermuda, with Scott Werner directing.

Well, I discovered as I sang Baritone with that crowd of cruise groupies, that Scott was indeed human and with his and Linda's encouragement (along with the encouragement of others in the group), I tried out and now "I am" a Harmonizer. And while we sometimes wonder about the concept, "it's just a hobby", we both think that the commitment to singing and supporting barbershop chorus and quartet singing with such a class act as these Harmonizers is truly worth it. And today, the challenge of taking on Gold in Montreal with Rich Lewellen leading has turned this into the most exciting "moment" in harmonizer history for us.

Family Affair

by Scott Werner

I believe most of the Harmonizers know how much of a "family affair" it was with the Werners. Linda was an early President of the Harmonettes and Pam followed her footsteps many years later. Traveling with the Harmonizers was much nicer when the family was along. (Pam's first International was in 1970 when she was almost 2. She attended many after that.) It wasn't easy for Linda when I had to be away for shows, but she was always supportive. She knew how much barbershopping meant to me and was willing to sacrifice. Of course she got to make many trips because of barbershopping that otherwise might not have happened. And the family atmosphere of the Harmonizers made it that much nicer. It is something I will never forget.

Mama Sang Tenor

by Burt Stueve

My mother and father loved music and often sang together, with Dad on the melody and Mom the harmony, usually a mix of tenor and baritone. When I was in my early teens, Dad bought a book of barbershop arrangements and we formed a family quartet, with Mom on Tenor, sister Peg on Lead, me on Bari, and Dad on Bass. We sang often at gatherings of family and friends. Around 1950 or 51, Dad became one of the founding members and first president of the Kankakee, Illinois Society chapter. I joined in 1951, the year I turned 15. One of my early thrills was hanging around the Schmitt Brothers, when they were featured on our chapter's first Parade of Quartets. When I introduced myself to Jim Schmitt, the only surviving brother, in Nashville (2001), he said he remembered that show, since it was one of their first after becoming the 1951 quartet champion. Mom and Dad passed away years ago, but my sister and I are still active in barbershopping. She now sings Bass in a small Sweet Adelines chapter in Florida, and she designs and sews many of their costumes.



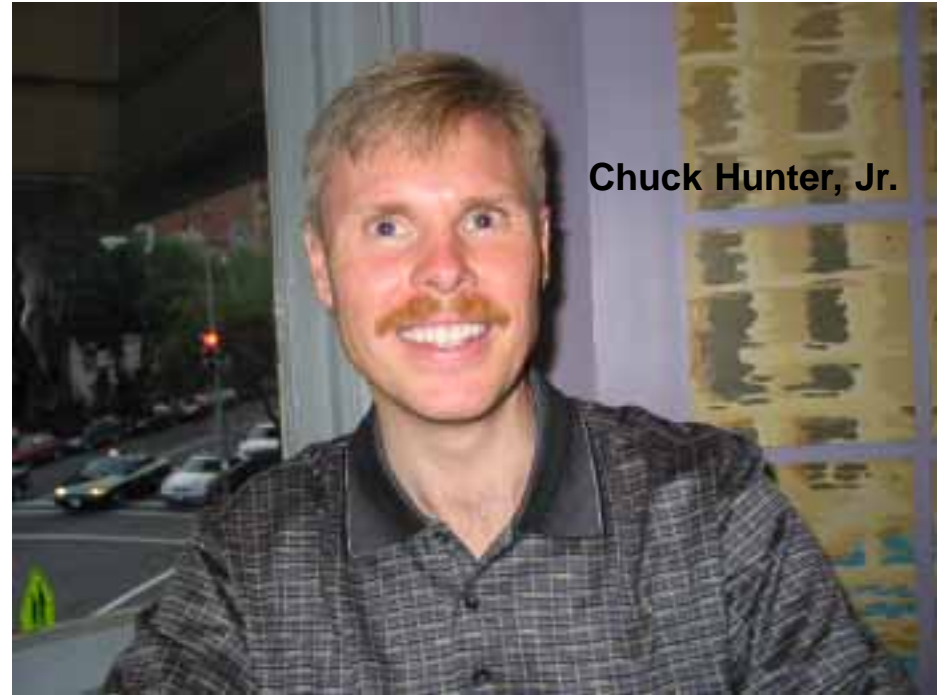
The Gift of Music

by Chuck Hunter, Jr.

My dad gave me the best Christmas present I ever got: a Society membership. That was in 1973, when I was twelve and he had been a barbershopper for a little over four years. But though he got me into this hobby, it's really to my mom that both he and I owe a debt of gratitude. You see, Dad grew up in Milwaukee and Racine, Wisconsin, just a few miles from Kenosha. He never heard of SPEBSQSA, however, until he moved the family to San Jose, California. There, in 1969, Mom saw an ad in the *Mercury-News* for the Garden City Chorus' annual show. She and Dad attended, and Dad was hooked. He went on to become chapter secretary, president, and a longtime board member of the chapter, the Far Western District and, after holding several District-wide offices, the Society. (It's a thrill to me that he'll be singing with San Jose in Montreal, their first-ever appearance at International.)

Barbershopping has always given me something in common with Dad, which has been important not just during those angst-filled teenage years but later when careers put physical distance between us. In junior high and high school I was devoted to his popular show quartet, Our Gang. Dad frequently was the chapter's show chairman too, often writing the scripts himself. In one particular show, called "This Old House," he constructed the opening so that the quartet I was then in would enter as four characters of the town and open the show with a song. He and Mom usually hosted a Gin Fizz Breakfast on Sunday morning after the show. I have happy memories of serving food to quartets of the likes of the Salt Flats, the Four Bits of Harmony, the Most Happy Fellows, the Classic Collection, the Interstate Rivals, the Bluegrass Student Union and others before getting to hear them up close and personal in our living room.

Turns out it was once again Mom who was responsible for a major devel-



Chuck Hunter, Jr.

opment in my barbershop career. When Dad and I were driving home together from the 1983 International convention in Seattle, he mentioned that the Santa Cruz chapter was looking for a director and that I might consider helping them out. Having never led a rehearsal in my life at that point, I declined. Dad kept quiet, but told Mom once we got home. She came to me and basically shamed me into taking the job, saying that she'd never known me to say "I can't" before. Since that time there's been scarcely a year when I haven't directed a group of some kind, either barbershop or SATB.

Dad got to know prominent Harmonizers such as Wilbur Sparks and Dean Snyder through his involvement in Society committees. When Dean had Kenosha commission a study of barbershop legacies (multiple generations of a family involved in the hobby), Dad and I talked with him at length about the project. We both had special admiration for Dean, whose quiet

continued on next page...



The Gift of Music

...continued from previous page

wisdom stood both the Harmonizers and the Society in very good stead.

So it was that when I moved to DC in 1990, I already had a barbershop family to rely upon. And to my utter amazement, I also found that the Harmonizers had a connection to my (non-singing) grandfather. Wilbur Schmidt, one of the chapter's early members, turned out to have attended the same small liberal arts college as my grandfather, father and I (Lawrence University in Appleton, WI). Wilbur and my grandfather, who were about six years apart, both belonged to a local fraternity, Psi Chi Omega, whose house I later bought (and have subsequently sold). Grandpa died when I'd been a barbershopper only a few years, but I know he'd have been proud to see what an outstanding organization both his fraternity brother and his grandson wound up belonging to.



There are lots of other stories I could tell about Dad – his many Men of Note awards, his superb bulletin editing, his wish that he could have announced the Harmonizers higher than third place these last two years when serving as contest administrator at International – but probably my fondest memory is performing “Singing Here with Dad” with him both at Harmony College and at International. He, my two brothers and I never have formed a family quartet, yet thanks in one way or another to this great hobby the “circle will be unbroken.” After all, we can truthfully say that Daddy sang bass...

Mixing it Up

by Steve White

I met my wife, Jerri, through barbershopping. She is a Sweet Adeline and was the Associate Musical Director and Co-Choreographer of the Vienna-Falls Sweet Adeline Chapter in Fairfax when they won their International Chorus Championship in 1988.



She has sung in top Regional-level quartets with her sister, Debbie, and for several years sang with Deb, Barry Galloway, and me in a mixed-quartet called Champaign Affair (aka Parts-Is-Parts) — we won a quartet contest once and were feature performers at Wolf Trap at the Barns in a winter concert series several years ago.

Jerri has also been a Sweet Adeline Chorus Musical Director with the Monticello Chapter in Charlottesville, VA. She has been singing barbershop for about 30 years. Her mother, Betty, and sister are Sweet Adelines and sang with Vienna-Falls Chorus.

Also, Jerri's dad (my father-in-law) Ben Smith, is a Harmonizer, though not active since he lives down south in Lynchburg, Virginia. Ben has probably been singing barbershop for 40+ years, has been the Musical Director of men's and women's barbershop choruses in the Lynchburg area, and has sung in numerous quartets.



You must have been a beautiful baby...

Oh, the horror! Guess whose baby pictures THESE are....



Same crooked smile!



Same smiling eyes!



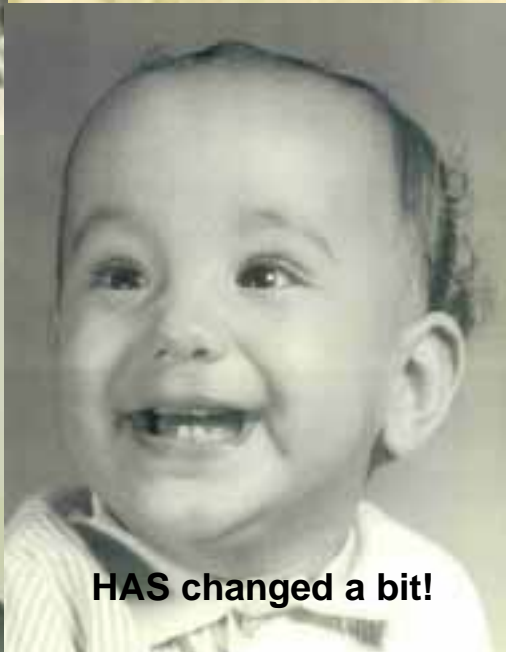
Same wide-eyed innocence!



Same big browns!



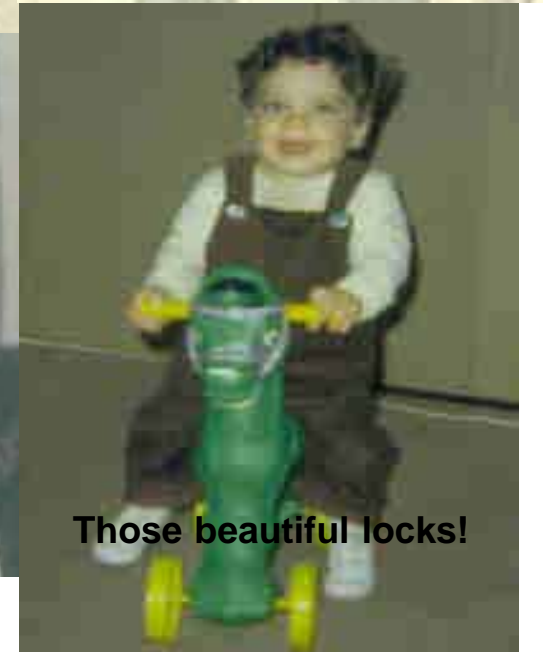
Hasn't changed a bit!



HAS changed a bit!



What a toehead!



Those beautiful locks!



Say Uncle

by Chad Hoseth

My uncle, Jim Hoseth, was a member of the Minneapolis Commodores back in the mid-1980s. I distinctly remember hearing Uncle Jim and the Commodores sing at the Minnesota State Fair when I was a young little lad. The next year, I began my six year run with the Metropolitan Boys Choir. With the boys choir, one of my favorite concerts was the annual outdoor Music in the Park concert series where our group and the Commodores opened for the Minnesota Orchestra to thousands of picnicing families from the outskirts of Lake Wobegon. There's something uniquely Midwestern about a barbershop chorus in brightly colored bowties and a boys choir in red sportcoats singing to throngs of folks eating variations on potato and fruit salads.



In future years, the Commodores experienced a chapter schism where a small portion of the group wanted to push harder on their musical program. That new chapter from Hilltop, MN, will be among our competitors at the Montreal competition this year.

My uncle Jim left the Commodores when they moved to Chicago. However, when I joined the Harmonizers, he faxed me a program from the Commodores only International Competition in St. Lake City, Utah, in the mid-1980s. As it turns out, the Harmonizers did pretty darn well that year, and Jim continues to be jealous of my membership with Alexandria.

Barbershop Legacies

W V H L H N Y R V Q F H X E Q	ARHUS
H H M Z V U O Z T I X G I H Q	AZZAM
E I I G C Y N S S S E F V P U	BIBBENS
A F N R U O B T N U T T K P J	BOWMAN
E W B E N L U B E H T E S O H	FESS
O A Z N M E N R B R O M R G R	HINEMAN
Q R U R V A V Y B A H J P N Q	HOSETH
O B L E M I N N I C K O O R L	HUNTER
E L I W A P S T B C I N M K X	JOHNSON
U Y O H Z A P E S M M D Z E D	MINNICK
D B Q I Z K I J T B W N W W Y	NUTT
C I K T A Z H W O H F U X J C	RHOME
A V X E T R L T K P I H Q P P	STERN
A T H P N L F W Y Z M Q G M Y	STUEVE
Y P Q E D O E X N Y W R Y Z G	TEPE
	WERNER
	WHITE
	WILE

Can you find the barbershop family names from the list at right in the puzzle at left?



Speaking of families, we have a new addition to one of ours. George Azzam had a new son, Nathan, just days before he competed with his quartet at the Southern Division contest. Congratulations to the Azzams!



The Echo



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The Harmonettes Announce... The Harmonizer Family Picnic!

WHO should come:

All Harmonizers, friends, family, and significant others are welcome!

WHEN it is:

Saturday, July 19th, 11a.m. – 5 p.m.
Rain or Shine (Covered Shelter)

WHERE it will be:

Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road,
Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

SHELTER B (parking right across the street from Shelter; non-Fairfax county residents will be charged \$6.00 per car to enter the park)

Check out the website for all the park has to offer at this address:

<http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/picnics/fairnics.htm>

HOW it will happen:

The Harmonettes will supply soft drinks, condiments, paper products, charcoal for grilling, and organized activities for children of all ages.



Picnic

WHAT to bring:

Main course (hot dogs, hamburgers, rolls, etc.)
A covered dish to share

If your last name starts with
A-G: Desserts
H-M: Salads
N-S: Side Dish
T-Z: Appetizers

Beach chairs (there are picnic tables too)
Frisbees
Other outdoor equipment

WHY to come:

To have wonderful summertime fun with the extended Harmonizer family!

WHEREFORE:

Please contact us and let us know if you plan on attending and the number of your guests and ages of your children. Additional comments, questions and suggestions can be forwarded to

cwmankin@hotmail.com



The Fess Family Legacy

by Ken Fess

Barbershop singing for me began when I could barely stand up. While growing up, it was traditional in our family to spend some time after dinner (always a family affair) around the piano, where my Dad – and later my older sister – would play songs off sheet music or out of fake books of music from the “Gay 90s,” show tunes, folk songs and the like. Much of the music was written in four-part harmony, and when it wasn’t we faked it. I would mostly be singing a fifth over, or a third under, the lead, sung by my Dad. These “family hours” continued into my adult life, and are still some of my fondest memories.

Later in life, when I was a teenager I spent my summers working at my Uncle’s “ranch” in Southern California, where I first was exposed to SPEBSQSA by way of my cousin, Pete Neushul (best known as the baritone in the 139th Street Quartet). At the time he was singing in a quartet called the Coastliners out of the South Bay Chapter. I would go to his chapter meetings and occasionally with the quartet on their jobs up and down the west coast. I also got a chance to go to a show and see the Sidewinders, reigning International Quartet Champs, buying up all their records at the show! During that time, Pete exposed me to the true gem of barbershop – the baritone part.

For the next 10 years my service in the Army – Vietnam, Korea, Europe and a couple of stateside assignments – did not offer me opportunities to belong to a barbershop chapter. I was, however, involved with community singing groups in most of my assignments, with repertoires that always included one or two barbershop arrangements. And while in the Army, and home on leave, I would visit with my Dad at his chapter in Sacramento and with my sister with her Harmony, Inc. chapter in San Jose, thus keeping my ear tuned to those wonderful four-part melodies.

In 1980, after spending 8 ½ years of my first 12 years in the Army overseas, I was assigned to Montgomery, Alabama. Late that year, the 139th Street Quartet was performing in Atlanta (about a 2 ½ drive away), and I went to see them (and my cousin, Pete). At the afterglow, Pete introduced me to some guys from the Montgomery chapter, and shortly thereafter I attended their meeting and was hooked – I was a member of SPEBSQSA. Following that tour I was in two other chapters in Alabama and Texas, and, in between, the Frank Thorne chapter.

When returning to the states in 1990 after a five year tour in Europe, I attended the International convention in San Francisco. There I hooked up with my cousin and the 139th Street Quartet, and had a great time at the convention (my last as a pure visitor!). When I told Pete that my ultimate assignment was Washington D.C., he told me that I **had** to join the Harmonizers, “the best performing chorus in the society.” Later that evening I had a chance to see the Harmonizers in their farewell performance and was totally enthralled.

During my time with the Harmonizers it has continued to be a family affair, with my parents, aunt and uncle, cousins, and sisters getting together with me when the Harmonizers were participating in International contests. Many of the Harmonizers will know my sister, Marbeth, having sung tags with her into the wee small hours. And, of course, various members of my family have been with us several times at chapter meetings and shows.

So, you see, for most of my life, barbershop singing has been a true family affair, from those early days around the piano to the last decade with the Harmonizers – my “other” family.



Barbershop in the Blood

by Greg Tepe

Often barbershoppers talk about how listening to and ringing those four part chords gets in their blood. Well I wonder if I didn't start with the barbershop bug already in my blood. After all, I'm a third generation barbershopper. Yep, that's right. Some of you knew my Dad, Jim Tepe, when he sang with the Arlingtones chorus, and was the baritone in the Winning Hand quartet from the Mid-Atlantic District. Check out the Southern Division Trophy and you'll see The Winning Hand as the Southern Division Champion from 1976.

Prior to his time in the MAD, he used to sing in the Johnny Appleseed District. Dad sang in the Pittsburgh chorus and was the baritone in the Westinghouse quartet, also known as the Circle W quartet, from 1960 – 1966. The Westinghouse quartet went to the International Contest in Boston, and came in 26th. That was in July of 1965, in fact the week my brother Vince was born. In those days, fathers didn't go into the delivery room with their wives. They went to Barbershop Conventions.

But even prior to Dad being a barbershopper, my Mom's Dad, Jim Laganan was the director of the Pittsburgh chorus during the '40s. He and Dad knew the Pittsburghers, the 1948 International Quartet Champions. In 1999, in Anaheim, I got to meet Tom Palamone of the Pittsburghers. We reminisced about my grandparents and parents and fun times around the piano.



I mentioned that Dad went to an International Convention the week Vince was born. Maybe that's what influenced Vince to sing in barbershop quartets. As kids, 4, 5, 6, or all 7 kids would stand around the piano singing with Dad while Mom played the piano and sang. Some nights, Dad would plunk out notes and teach us tags. It took the sons a number of years to finally officially join the society, but now there are four Tepe brothers singing in the Mid-Atlantic District.

Vince and I sang in two different quartets in the '80s and '90s, Unfourgettables and King's Ransom. Now my brothers Vince, Dan and Patrick sing in Capital Chord Factory with Bill Colosimo; more legacy. In fact, over 25 years ago, in 1977, Mom, Dad and some of the brothers went to see a Georgetown Chimes performance. Bill Colosimo was a member of the Chimes then. Mom told Bill that night that he would be singing barbershop with some of her sons. No one expected it would take 26 years though.

This Tepe legacy goes beyond my immediate family. In the Seneca Land District, I've got a **fourth** cousin, Andrew Tepe, who has competed in the International Quartet contest numerous times.

I expect we'll have a fourth generation of Barbershop Tepees a few years in the future. Several of my nephews have musical talent and they all enjoy Harmonizer performances. I look forward to the day when I'll see them performing and competing on the District stage.



Quartet Profile: Riptide!

by Brad Jones

It certainly has been a challenging year for Riptide! We understand they have been single-handedly trying to revive the airline industry by arranging as many distant performances, rehearsals, and contests as time and rules allow! As we all know, our intelligent, exciting new director, Richard Lewellen, (never hurts to get on the good side of the new guy) sings baritone with the international caliber quartet that started in the Dixie District. Having finished in 4th place in Portland, the quartet was looking forward to an even better result in Montreal.

When Richard decided to move north to take us into the next stage of our singing “hobby”, it also was decided that the quartet’s original tenor, Eric King, who is a member of Stone Mountain Chapter, would be departing the quartet. After a number of auditions, our own Rick Taylor was selected resulting in that wonderful barbershop blend we were fortunate to hear at this year’s Spring Tonic. The other Members of the quartet include Tim Reynolds singing lead and Jeff Selano singing Bass.

Both Jeff and Tim are proud members of the Big Chicken Chorus. Considering MAD’s experience with Rick Taylor we might want to ask if this is a standup comedy team or a quartet. However, after being unable to attend either the Dixie or MAD prelims do to the Spring Tonic and other commitments, the quartet firmly established the singing credentials of its new configuration. Traveling to JAD for the prelims, Riptide overcame any chal-

Riptide, funning around backstage at our Spring Tonic.



lenges from having a “long distance” quartet and had the highest score at the prelims coming in with a very impressive 88.4%! Although there are a few District prelims left to be completed, it is almost certain the quartet will enter Montreal as one of the top 5 qualifiers!

We all look forward to cheering on the quartet as they make a run for the gold in Montreal! The quartet has a web site with lots of pictures etc. at www.riptidequartet.com. For those who want to contact the quartet, other than by cornering Richard at rehearsal, the contact information is manager@riptidequartet.com.



Growing Up Barbershop

by Ken White

The sights, sounds and smells of Sunday morning not only included sizzling bacon and eggs, it also included recordings of the Four Rascals, the Four Statesmen and the Boston Common. (Dad has always been loyal to the NED). My older brother would complain about the barbershop one minute and be heard humming along to “If You Knew Susie” while studying the football stats in the Sunday paper.

My dad learned to sing from his own father who sang with his brothers on the streets and outside the paper mills in western Massachusetts in the 1920’s. Although my grandfather was never a member of the Society, my dad recalls his father’s stories of barbershop singing and ringing chords. My dad made his own singing debut at 12 years old singing “Walking My Baby Back Home” at a town function.

It was 1962, seven years before I was born, when my dad’s cousin invited him to come to a chapter meeting of the Berkshire Hillsmen, a newly chartered barbershop chorus in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. It didn’t take long for him to fall in love with the four-part harmony and share his hobby with his wife and children (some appreciated it more than others). Soon Mom joined a local Sweet Adelines chorus and barbershop became a part of our lives.

By 1980, my dad had been singing barbershop for eighteen years and had been unsuccessful in getting any of his six older children to sing. But the



seventh child had displayed a bit of interest and, figuring it was his last chance to bring one of his children into the hobby, my dad took me to a Monday night chapter meeting. I could now report home to my grandmother that Dad was in fact singing on Monday nights and not carousing in bars with his friends.

At eleven years old, I became a member of the Berkshire Hillsmen and the Society. I began singing lead in my first few attempts, but I simply couldn’t hit the low notes. I switched parts to tenor and, until my voice changed, that was my part. I became a member of the front row, but not because of any special talent; I wouldn’t have been seen otherwise. Because of my age and size (and a uniform that never quite matched everybody else’s), I certainly attracted attention. Maybe because

I am one of seven children in my family, I seemed to like this aspect of my new extra-curricular activity.

My dad’s friend and lead of his quartet, the *Coming Edition* also had a son who showed interest in barbershop. At 13 years old, Kevin’s voice had changed, so he didn’t have the problems with the low notes of lead. He became my friend and, at times, co-conspirator in some of the more mundane moments of Monday night rehearsals. When the *Coming Edition* decided to take a break, I began singing in my first quartet with Kevin on lead, his father singing baritone and my dad on bass. *Dads-N-Lads* never competed and made only a few public appearances, but we had fun getting to-



Growing Up Barbershop, or, Dads-N-Lads

...continued from previous page

gether and ringing chords. As Kevin and I got a little older, other school related activities made it difficult for *Dad-N-Lads* to carry on. So, after singing together for about one year, that old quartet of mine split up.

Seven years after I first joined the Society, I went away to college in northern Vermont and found three other guys who wanted to sing. We formed, *Knightshift* and sang at coffeehouses, basketball games and other campus events. My dad was happy that I kept up with singing barbershop wherever I ended up. Although I hadn't re-joined the Society, I found and visited chapters in the various places I've lived over the years. It seems that because of my formation, I needed to satisfy that portion of my spirit that requires barbershop 7th chords on occasion. In addition to the Berkshire Hillsman of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, I've also sung with the Green Mountain Chorus of Burlington, Vermont, the Narragansett Bay Chorus of Providence, Rhode Island and the Mardi Gras Chorus of New Orleans, Louisiana.

In my dad's fortieth year of barbershopping, he was proud to tell our friends in the Berkshire Hillsmen that his son would be singing on the international



stage in Portland with the Alexandria Harmonizers. "And he's back on the front row."

Barbershop has played an important role in my life. It has kept me close to my father as I've lived in various places away from my family. We share the common language and experiences of the barbershop culture. When we speak on the telephone or visit one another, we always swap stories of what's new in our districts, choruses, and quartets. We share the results from our recent contests and speculate on future ones. And my dad always keeps me informed of the Hillsmen who are sick and those who have sung the final note of their last tag.

A few weeks ago, my parents celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and with over one hundred of their friends and family surrounding them, my dad's newest quartet sang to my mom, "When Your Old Wedding Ring Was New." In my family, barbershop continues to find its way into the special occasions, as well as the more common episodes of Sunday mornings with bacon and eggs.



Generations of Barbershop

by Bill Colosimo

In early 1966, my brother, Frank, was approached by a colleague at General Motors and asked if he enjoyed singing. Frank was nearly 30, with a young family and many obligations. But the invitation was so sincere and personal—and he DID enjoy singing—that he couldn't resist. He joined the Dearborn chapter of the Society, under the direction of his friend from GM. Frank practiced as a new lead singer with his chorus each week and, as the fall approached, announced to the family that his chorus was performing jointly with the Detroit No. 1 Chapter on their annual show in Ford Auditorium in Detroit, along with a fine quartet which included his work friend and some of his buddies. I remember how proud he was of his new outlet, his new hobby. I don't remember many details of life nearly 37 years ago, but I do remember that.

Frank, you see, was like my dad, who (I'm told) also liked to sing, but died when I was only 7. And, if Frank was excited enough about something to include Mom and me in the audience, I knew it had to be pretty special. I even remember how nervous he was the evening of the show. I was 11 years old.

Truth is, I remember very little of Frank's chorus singing on the show...except I know they did. Detroit, too, which was a larger chorus. I remember that. There may have been a few Chapter quartets, too, I suspect; I'm just not sure. But then came something I would never, ever forget, as long as I live.

Four men in gold dusters, goggles and caps stepped forward on the apron of the Ford Auditorium stage. The curtain closed behind them. My brother's wife whispered, "there's Frank's work friend, Glenn." Not "there's the Society's gold medal lead, the best in the world, Glenn." My brother's friend and his other new friends. And then it happened. They began to sing.

Brothers and sisters, what happened next was magic. It was as if I were the only one in that vast hall, that they were singing just for me. They shone, literally. And their voices, their expression, their magic took my 11-year-old breath away! I sat in awe as these four giants sang "In My Brand New Automobile," complete with a 4-part "beep-beep" at the end that brought everyone around me out of their seats...while I sat mesmerized. The crowd calmed, the lights went down, Frank's friend stepped forward a bit, and they began, "Sweethearts no more, just friends evermore..."

My eyes well up now as they did at that very moment. I'd had no sweetheart at 11, not known that kind of love or pain, but **nothing** had ever affected me like that before. I discovered a way of musical expression that I knew—**knew** right then!—I would treasure all my life. I would **have** to do that someday, I thought. How wonderful, powerful, beautiful. I had become, at that very moment, a barbershopper...for life.

It was only afterward that I would learn, without much understanding, that that particular ballad was very special to the quartet, and Glenn in particular, as he had experienced lost love in the recent past. Their singing was masterful, their message heartfelt. They merged me into their world, and vividly welcomed me in.

After the show, I recall Frank introducing me to these fine men. I remember particularly Glenn and Al, whose voices, I perceived, were most closely matched with Frank's and mine. I remember the care and attention Glenn and the men paid to acknowledge Frank's first appearance on stage, how they took the time to meet all our family as if we were royalty or something. These gentle, kind "friends of my brother" had just given me one of the greatest gifts I could ever imagine.

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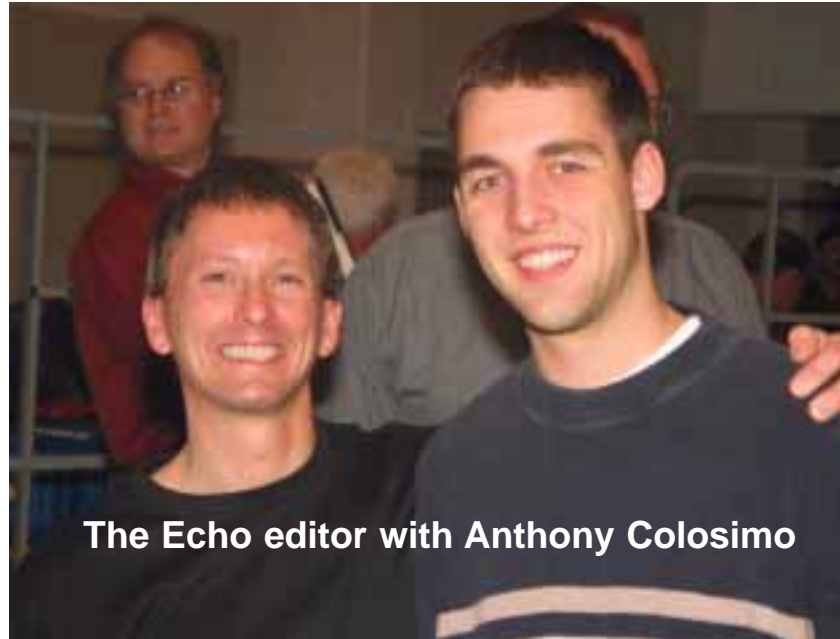


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Sadly, my brother and I both reflect now when we visit from time to time, that was his first and only annual show as a barbershopper. With young children and other priorities, he barbershopped “officially” for only a year, and just never returned to Society membership...but the story doesn’t end there. Barbershop Generation 1 was shortlived.

Barbershop Generation 2. As for me, well, I kept my end of the bargain with barbershop. A few years later, I began a high school barbershop quartet. I went on to study and sing all sorts of vocal music in high school and college. I kept ties to barbershop through membership in my college group, the Georgetown Chimes. On graduation, in 1977, I joined the Arlington, Virginia, Chapter and have barbershopped in Mid-Atlantic ever since. For a while, I tried to balance attention to classical, liturgical and barbershop singing in various groups and solo gigs, but, one-by-one, they all fell away...except barbershop, for the longest time. One of my former directors, the late Paul Hill (in whose professional Chorale I had been a soloist), once remarked to someone with a sigh, “I lost him to that barbershop stuff!” Stuff, indeed. Meanwhile, I wore **grooves** into the grooves of the 66 Quartet Champs album and those of Glenn and Al’s later quartet, Gentlemen’s Agreement, and Glenn’s last medalist, Center Stage.



The Echo editor with Anthony Colosimo

In 1986, I directed our Arlingtonges to a divisional “most improved chorus” (at the same age as my brother had been a barbershopper) with the Auto Towners’ “Sweethearts,” which Al Rehkop had been kind enough to mail to me. Ten years later, I directed the Bull Run Troubadours’ rendition of “Automobile,” which Al again had been kind enough to fax. In fact, Glenn Van Tassell **judged** the contest in 1986 in which the chorus sang his championship song. And, again, during that weekend, he managed to find me at the convention, and ask how my brother, his wife and the kids were doing. Remarkable.

I would be judged by Glenn at least one more time as a quartet competitor, at International with M-AD champs “Copyright ’86” in the late ‘80’s. I will never forget him, them, that magic.

The spirit of that artform, that fraternity, that music, has been, at the darkest times of my life, one of the few remaining threads of brightness as I and those I love grappled with demons of my own. It’s carried us through as a family, for which I am eternally grateful...and those who know my story know I mean that with all my heart.

Meanwhile, Barbershop Generation 3 emerged in 1991 when, at age 8, my son Anthony performed in his first competition and annual show with DC’s

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Singing Capital Chorus, of which he was a member (along with Prince William County's Troubadours) for the next eight years. As a senior in high school, he joined the Alexandria Harmonizers, competed for bronze at International, and medalled as a lead in our District Competition with "Intrepid." Last summer, his quartet, Iguanas in Flight, was privileged to be silver medalists at the College Quartet Contest in Portland. He's preparing for prelims now, with the hope of competing as a 19-year-old lead in Iguanas in Montreal. At one point or another in his young career, I recall introducing him to Glenn at a convention, and again marveled at the interest Glenn took in this young singer's enthusiasm.

Over the years, my son's heard the "Auto Towners stories" told until he's blue in the face, but he's never made a peep to stop me mid-story, because he knows the Truth. In fact, he even wrote his music college application essay, entitled "Lessons of Harmony," about the important life lessons he has learned from being associated with Barbershop since his boyhood, lessons of leadership, music and love. He is now studying Choral Music Education at Christopher Newport University. What a shocker, eh?

The Truth is this: As I still direct, coach or sing with a new quartet, I do my best to convey that which was given to me. I tell this story, and many other true life adventures, with the passion of an old folk tale spinner. I seek to bring young people and old alike the same joy of expression and passion our artform is capable of giving. And Anthony does the same. And we do it, to the best of our ability, according to the model set for me in 1966...by 4 "friends of my brother, Frank," who sang just to me in those shiny, ankle-length gold coats, those goggles, those caps, with those hearts, voices, songs and medals of pure gold.

Will YOU Rename the Harmonettes?

by Scip Garling

The Harmonettes, the independent auxilliary group of Harmonizer family and friends, wants to broaden its appeal and expands its membership. The group was founded by wives of the Harmonizers, hence its current name. But nowadays, with so many different people in the Harmonizers' extended family of friend, partners, relatives and fans, the Harmonettes have decided to change their name to something more universal!

What's the new name? Well, that's where you, the readers of the Echo, come in!

The Harmonettes will be holding a contest **THIS MONTH ONLY** to pick their new name. All friends of the Harmonizers are welcome to submit a suggested name to Harmonettes President Carole Mankin at cwmankin@hotmail.com. The name should be creative, gender-neutral, and catchy; you may submit as many entries as you wish.

The Harmonettes will then judge the entries and vote on the winner! The newly named group will hold a mixer to welcome all manner of new members and fellow friends, fans, and family of the Harmonizers, and be the host of the Harmonizer Family Picnic in July.

Put your thinking caps on and get out your thesaurus; you could be the nominator of the new and improved group formerly-known-as-the-Harmonettes!





Song-in-Law

by Ray Johnson

While my father is not a barbershopper, my father-in-law is! I started singing barbershop back in 1981 in Palm Springs, California. I was taken to my first rehearsal by another member of the church choir who had sung barbershop back in New Jersey. Well, not wanting to be a stick in the mud I agreed to go to the afterglow that night. One of the guys that sang Bass in the chorus also came to the 'glow. It was at Bob and Josie's "Date Room" (referring to the ever populated date groves surrounding the bar). Well, as we were singing a very nice young lady came in and was greeted by the Bass, who introduced her to the new guys.



So, it kept me coming back to chorus and the afterglow to see this young lady, Kim. Our first date was to the Elks lodge for a fund raising dinner. Kim was to sell tickets for a \$100 Hawaiian lei. Well, as you can guess we won the lei and split the money. That was in October and she said yes to my proposal in February (after I asked her dad), and we were married in May. We have been married for 21 years and have two great kids, Cory, 20, and Ashley, 17. Cory was our first anniversary present since we were in the hospital on our anniversary but he held out for his own day on the second. Ashley was born three years later in September.

Lads and Dads

by Bob Bowman

I have a son, Scott, who has been a SPEBSQSA member for 19 years. We sang together in a quartet in the early '80s called the "Lads and Dads" two fathers and two sons. We qualified for district competition each year and were doing good until the other son developed throat trouble and the quartet broke up. Scott and I then sang in another quartet "Now and Again" with Jim Shoenhard and Dick Whitehouse and later John Reisinger when Dick went to sing with Reminisce. That one did good too, qualifying for district several times but eventually the quartet broke up. Scott and Shoenhard then formed "New Tricks.com" with Denny Malone and Tom Griffith. New Tricks won the Southern Division Championship and qualified for District but when Denny moved to Denver that quartet broke up

too. So now neither myself nor Scott is singing in a quartet. Scott has been active in the Centreville Chapter and will probably return to quartet singing in the future. As for me, I'm still on the risers!

Baby Faces, from page 6:

**Dean Rust Jack Pitzer John Thompson Ken White
Lew Klinge Richard Lewellen Roger Day Sam Brothers**



Saying Hello; Saying Good-Bye!



Last month, the Harmonizers said Hello to four new members (Chuck Powell, Dave Geunther, Bill Arhus, Casey Henry) pictured above Chapter Development Vice-President Ken White and Good-Bye to bass Steve Pomeroy (at right in yellow), whom the Air Force is re-stationing elsewhere for three years.

