



The

Undertone



What's Happening in the Burlington, Vermont, Chapter
Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.
Member of the great Northeastern District since 1947.

We meet Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier School, Winooski, Vermont -- Call 802 985-8714

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66 Bacon Drive, Shelburne, VT 05482

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HoD passes Division Regionals 23-15!

by Jerry Walter, Editor

FITCHBERG, Mass. -- The decision at the House of Delegates meeting for the Northeastern District has been met with disappointment by many chapters of the "former" Mountain Division. At the special meeting held on Friday August 8, proceeding the Harmony College North East weekend, the House of Delegates, consisting of the District Board of Directors, available Past District Presidents and a representative from each of the 61 "duly-chartered" District Chapters for a total of just about 80 votes, voted 23 to 15 to change the division contest scenario from five division contests (one for each division) to three regional contests. The regions would be as experimented with the last two years -- the Sunshine region, including the chapters of that division in Nova scotia, the Eastern Region, consisting of the Granite and Pine and the Patriot Divisions, and the Western Region, consisting of the Mountain and Yankee Divisions.

It is known that the Burlington and Greater Montréal Chapter delegates voted against the new arrangement and that Norm Mendenhall, voting member by virtue of being the Mountain Divi-

sion Manager, was not present at the meeting.

As represented by the study committee, the regional plan presented the "only possible course of action" after studying "everything." The main "advantage" of the regional plan is a cost saving for the district coffers. Apparently, no data was presented as to the net increase in cost for the individual chapters and members to attend contests in venues outside of their divisions.

As reported in Montréal's *MINI PITCH*, Rob Mance, director of the Mountain City Chorus and chapter delegate, observed the "It seems that many choruses had instructed their delegates to vote a certain way before hand, as several [delegates] did not seem comfortable with how they were voting. ..." If true, this process is in direct contradiction to District Bylaws.

If this "distance related" issue wasn't enough, the district promoted the fact that the 2005 District Convention and Contest will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia! As they say, "It's an easy drive from Bangor!"

More on these topics later.

Vergennes Show Saturday

by Don Pierce, Chorus Mgr.

This Saturday, 8/23/03, as a part of Vergennes Days, we have a Package Show at the Vergennes Opera House. The Techie load-in will start at 12:00 noon (helpers are needed). Car poolers should plan on leaving the KMart Plaza in So. Burlington at 11:45 a.m.; it would be wise to make car pool arrangements by the end of tonight's rehearsal.

To get to the Opera House, take Route 7 South from Burlington and turn right onto 22A at Vergennes. The Opera House will be on your right after 1.2 miles (it is upstairs over the Police Station/City Hall and directly across the street from The United Methodist Church where we have previously sung). Park on the street or continue onto the next traffic signal, turn left onto Green Street and park in the former Hannah's Market (just before the Vergennes Fire Dept). Enter the Opera House through the front door as the driveway to the

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The Undertone

2001 Northeastern District Bulletin of the Year
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Chapter Barbershopper of the year 2002

Al Carpenter

Division Barbershopper of the year 2000

Charlie Church

Music team update: August

The Music Team last met on 8/6/03 in Waterbury. Here are salient points from that meeting:

1. Greg was absent last night as he was taking his wife to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.
2. Fall Retreat (Sept. 19/20) are well underway. Gary Bolles' travel is booked at \$331.50. He will arrive 9/18, 4:29 p.m.; leave 9/21, 12:46 p.m., G. Huetz will host & arrange local transportation. Quartet coaching time will be available on 9/18 p.m. and 9/19 during the day - QVPC. Cerutti will coordinate quartets/times. Jerry and Judy Huetz will host Gary for dinner on Thursday evening. Jerry will find someone to host a dinner on Friday evening at 5:00 p.m.-ish. Lone Pine has been booked by Reid. We're looking for a snack / coffee coordinator as well as a lunch or social/dinner event on 9/20. The Music Team felt that we'd get maximum participation if we held the event at Lone Pine. Food/beverage could be provided by the chapter, or Pot Luck, or ? P. Heise to review Gary's four steps with the chapter before he arrives. At coaching sessions, Section Leaders should plan on taking notes pertaining to their sections, Greg and Pat will take notes pertinent to the chorus as a whole.
3. 2004 Show - Introductions and "out of spot" dates have been established for all the songs. Quartet song selection is about 50% complete. The Music Team decided to take the lead in forming a VLQ to sing on the show (and probably other events). D. Stonecliffe to coordinate for the Music Team until the VLQ becomes self-sufficient. We received no report from D. Pierce regarding the status of booking a Jazz Band & the show venue.
4. Vergennes Package Show on 8/23 at the Vergennes Opera House - We went over scripting, emcee, sound/lights, quartets and chorus music. Warm-up will be at 12:30 p.m. We will use the Tunbridge script - adding a few chorus numbers and rearranging the quartet spots. CVQ and Charisma will also be appearing on the town green from noon to 12:45 p.m.
5. Sing-out on 8/24 at the United Methodist Church in Essex Junction. We selected the songs and set the warm-up time at 8:45 a.m. The songs will be "So Hi, So Low, So Wide," "It Is Well With My Soul," "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," "God Bless America" and possibly "The Lord's Prayer."
6. The GMC is scheduled to sing 12th in the Fall Contest - there are 3 Maritime chapters in front of us thus we expect to be on-stage at about 12:40. No extra rehearsals are planned. Participation requirements were discussed. A kickoff letter will be sent to all potential contest singers outlining goals, participation expectations, etc. Greg will also talk personally to members with habitual attendance problems and to individuals who need not sing certain notes. Performance plans will be reviewed and upgraded. We're looking for a "hoopla" coordinator. The Music Team supports a Chorus breakfast; it should start at 8:30 a.m. (assuming it is in the downtown Saratoga area). G. Huetz suggested we have a new look with perhaps a new vest set up through a rent/purchase deal. C. Church and J. Huetz to bring this idea to the Board. We discussed Lead Section staffing and the idea of converting some Basses and Baritones to Lead. It was felt that the Basses would be hard pressed to keep up with a refurbished Lead section and decided to ask R. Allen to move to the Lead section for the contest.
7. The Team discussed Karen's comments that she ended up working on the same material with us each time she coaches. We are looking for ways to accelerate vocal production learning. We determined that the Sections are the key. Greg will be issuing monthly communications to Section Leaders. We will also schedule more Section practices.
8. D. Stonecliffe brought up the subject of a second annual show in the Barre-Montpelier area. Dave received pertinent information via Sue Cerutti who had contacted Carol Dawes, Executive Director of the Barre Opera House. The anticipated cost for hall rental would be \$700 to \$800. The date could be the same weekend as our show (e.g. on Friday evening) or a close-by weekend. Based on this discussion and the fact that 25%-30% of the chapter's active membership now resides in central Vermont, the Music Team decided to recommend to the Board that a second Annual Show be planned at the Barre Opera House for 2004. C. Church to bring to the Board.
9. Date and Time of next meeting: Tuesday, September 9th at St. Francis at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

Respectfully submitted by: C. Church, Music & Perf VP, 8/13/03

Two Society giants pass on

Bob Johnson

On Friday August 15, the Society lost one of its most influential members with the death of Bob Johnson of Tucson, Arizona. Bob was Director of Musical Education and Services for nearly 21 years from 1961 to 1982. For those who have had contact with Bob, no more need be said. For the rest of us, it is important to know the influence Bob had on your barbershop life.

A native of Irwin, Pennsylvania (about 20 miles east of Pittsburgh), He enrolled in Allegheny College as a medical missionary student. As the only freshman to make the college choir, his director persuaded him to follow music as a career. The rest is history.

After graduating from Indiana (Pa.) State Teachers College with a B.S. in Public School Music, Bob shortly thereafter found himself as a weatherman for the U.S. Navy. Following his naval career, he returned to Allegheny College to seek his master's degree and to work on a doctorate.

Singing in a Society quartet was enough to get "hooked" on barbershop. He was instrumental in starting the Saertown, Pa. chapter and was their first Musical Director.

In 1951 he took a job as head of the music department of Patterson Park High School in Baltimore. Not being able to resist his impulse to direct, Bob began directing local choirs and choruses. Then came the "Dundalk" opportunity in which Bob, as a founding member, became the director of the Dundalk Chapter in 1956.

It took five years to build the chapter to a membership of 212 and to field a chorus of 157 which won a gold medal its first time at International in Philadelphia. The next largest chorus was the West Towns Chorus from Lombard, Illinois with 59 singers. Society leaders were quick to recognize Bob's talent and by the end of 1961 he was in Kenosha as the first Director of Musical Activities.

Thus, began the Bob Johnson era. Bob took liberty in his job description to include aspects as: supervising society musical publications, developing courses and materials in barbershop craft, coaching techniques and chorus development. He initiated and developed materials for schools, seminars, and much more including the YMIH program.

Burlington's exposure to Bob came in the early 1970s when we and our neighboring chapters were to sing at the opening ceremonies of the World Winter University Games being held at Lake Placid. One of the songs we sang on the frigid outdoor ice rink in below zero weather was "Gaudeamus Igitur" which Bob taught us in only one or two sessions. He also taught us the Poke Cat "Sweet and Lovely" before the name had to be changed to "Sweet and Lovely - That's What You Are To Me" following ASCAP pressure because there already was a song entitled "Sweet and Lovely."

His HEP (Harmony Education Program) weekend school was extended to for a week and became Harmony College, held at St. Joseph, Missouri since 1975.

Following the loss of Decca Records covering Society contests in the late 1960s, he personally managed the production of Society recordings including those for the Barberpole Cat Program.

The concept of district mini-HEP schools (e.g. Great Northern Harmony Workshop here in NED) was initiated by Bob.

His visits to England and Sweden were instrumental in establishing barbershop singing in those countries.

Bob was probably the original KIBBer (Keep It Barbershop), as he was most vigilant in preserving singing in the "barbershop style." He was against the over emphasis of competition to measure the "preservation" of our style of singing.

He was credited with securing favorable relationship between the Society and ASCAP.

[Thanks to Joe Lyles, Bob's successor as Director of Music Education and Services, for the article "Bob Johnson's Leaving -- a legacy of accomplishment" in the August 1982 issue of *The Harmonizer*, for source material for this article.. Ed.]

Bob Netherton

On Sunday August 10 another barbershop icon has passed on to that great chorus in the sky. Bob Netherton, better known as "Nutsy" to many, tenor of perennial international quartet competitors "The Citations" in the 1960's through the early 80's and an associate director of the Thoroughbreds. The

Citations have had a huge impact on the society, even though a lot of you may not realize that.

Kipp buchner, tenor of The Gas House Gang, who knew Bob as "Uncle Nutsy" posted the following on the Harmonet:

"The members of The Citations are Bob Netherton (tenor), Jim Miller (lead), Bill Meyers (bass) and Ken Buckner (baritone). The four men were all directors of the Louisville Thoroughbreds chorus. They helped the TBreds become the only chorus to win seven International Championships. That record stood for years and still to this day, only the Vocal Majority holds more championships than the TBreds.

Being two years old, I remember listening to dad, "Uncle Jimmy", "Uncle Bill" and "Uncle Nutsy" singing in the basement as I would fall asleep. To this day, I still call them by those names.

I will not run the bios of each individual member of The Citations but I will say that the following quartets would have either not existed or would not have been as successful without their roots in this barbershop hobby -

The Bluegrass Student Union (1978 Champs)
The Interstate Rivals (1987 Champs)
The Harrington Brothers (2 time Int'l medalists)
The Second Edition (1989 Champs)
Keepsake (1992 Champs)
The Gas House Gang (1993 Champs)
Marquis (1995 Champs)
Revival (1997 Champs)
Platinum (2000 Champs)
The Barons (current Senior Champions)

Either directly or indirectly, The Citations had a hand in some way in making those quartets what they were and are. There are lots of other people and quartets that they inspired but as you can see, there is quite a legacy.

On a personal note, Bob Netherton was the man that taught me how to sing tenor. I was 14 years old, I joined the TBreds and stood right next to him. My dad (Ken Buckner) said, "Kipper, just do what he does." I have been trying to do what he does for over 20 years and while I have had success, I am still trying but falling short of Bob Netherton. And I am damn proud to say that one day, I hope to be as good a tenor and man as my 'Uncle Nutsy!'"

Top HI quartet gets new Bass

BOSTON - Burlington Chapter coach, Karen Rourke, has become the new Bass of **Boston Accent**, the second highest ranked quartet in Harmony, Incorporated. Other members of the quartet are Wendy Mercier, Cheryl Brusket and Tricia LaBel.

Boston Accent is currently HI's 2003 champion of Area 2 and Sweet Adelines Inc.'s 2003 Region One fourth-place medalist!

We know Karen's credentials include: Director of Concord, Mass.'s Patriot Division champion, fourth place 2002 NED medalists, Sounds of Concord chorus, and past director of SAI's Merrimack Valley Chorus, as well as coach and vocal production teacher. Wendy Mercier, a barbershop brat, barbershop ex-wife and two-time gold medalist in HI, as well as quartet coach at the Great Northern Harmony Workshop, brings lots of potential to

HI's International Quartet Contest in Halifax, Nova Scotia this November 12-16. BA is not scheduled to sing at SAI's International in Phoenix, in September.

Congratulations to Boston Accent and Karen!

Pirates wanted!

The Middlebury Community Singers are looking for male singers to play pirates in the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* to be presented in Middlebury September 24 - 28. Rehearsals in Cornwall, just south of Middlebury, are Mondays from 7 to 10 and Saturdays from 9 to noon. Contact Michael Hermann at 802 475-3425 (W), 802 475-2223 (H) or mhermann@wcvt.com for information.

New Champs also Angels!

As you all must know, Rob Henry, baritone of The Gas House Gang, has been fighting esophageal cancer for several months. He is currently bed ridden but is at home. Our new quartet champs, Power Play, planned to visit Rob on August 16 and chartered a plane to make the trip to St. Louis.

Here's how brother Jim Henry, bass of GHG, described the visit on the Harmonet:

We all knew what kind of champions they would be, and they wasted no time in proving it. On Saturday, Power Play -- looking great in their new gold medals -- used one of their few free weekends to charter a plane, and fly into St. Louis for a surprise visit to Rob. "You weren't able to come to Montreal," they explained, "so we thought we'd bring our sets to you." They then proceeded to overwhelm us all with the most incredible

See **Champs** page 4

Help Wanted -

Temporary Director for Seniors Chorus. Peter Bridge has alerted us that a temporary opening exists for a person to assume directorship of the Champlain Senior Chorus. Peter is their regular director but has had to suspend his directorial duties for a year as he recovers from a debilitating illness. The chorus of 15-25 folks rehearses on Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. at the Multigenerational Center on North Winooski Avenue in Burlington. Anyone interested can get further info from Peter at 658-1941 or Syndi Zook at 658-3585. Syndi is the director of the Multigenerational Center.

Vergennes from page 1

right continues to be blocked due to a land dispute. Warm-up will start 12:30 p.m. in the Opera House. Show time will be at 2:00 p.m. and will last for about an hour.

The chorus/quartet song list is listed elsewhere in this Undertone.

Uniform will be white tux shirt, black tux trousers, paisley vest & bow tie, black socks/shoes. Quartets should plan on wearing the chorus attire.

The sign-up list is list on light on Leads. Singers in all sections will be welcome!

Both CVQ and Charisma will be singing on the town green in the noon to 12:50 time period.

Vergennes Show Playbill

"Happy Days"

"Muskrat Ramble"

"Alexander's Rag Time Band"

CVQ - two songs

Charisma - two or three songs

"Goodbye Dixie, Goodbye"

"Roses of Picardy"

"Sam, You Made The Pants Too Long"

"So High, So Low, So Wide"

Grade A Fancy - one song

"That Lucky Old Sun"

"Hello, Mary Lou"

"The Lion Sleeps Tonight"

Charisma - one song

CVQ - two songs

"Bye, Bye, Love"

"God Bless America"

Church Singout this Sunday

This Sunday, August 24, we will be singing at the Grace United Methodist Church in Essex Junction. The church is located at 130 Maple Street (aka River Road - Vermont Route 117). Warm-up will be at 8:45 a.m. with the church service starting at 9:30 a.m. The chorus song list is listed below. Uniform will be white short sleeved regular shirt, grey trousers, blue GMC blazer, and red/paisley straight tie. If the church is real hot, we'll remove the blue blazers. The sign up list is light on Leads.

Directions:

For the Locals:

Go to the five Corners in Essex Junction and take Maple St (Rt 117) about 3/4 mile. The Church is on your left just past the AD Lawton School and just before the IBM entrance.

From the North:

Take exit I 89 exit 17 (Milton-Colchester). Turn left on VT 2 then right at light toward Colchester. At Creek Farm Plaza bear left on VT 2A through Colchester Village. Continue through several lights and the I 289 Interchange. The light in Essex Junction village is the 5 Corners. Maple Street is the left turn lane between the two gas stations. Then proceed as above.

From the South:

Take I-89 Exit 13 - Richmond. Take Vt 2 north then immediately turn right to 128 towards Essex. The Church will be on the right just after the light at the IBM entrance.

Songs:

"So High, So Low, So Wide"

"It Is well With My Soul"

"Just A Closer Walk With Thee"

"The Lord's Prayer"

"God Bless America"

"That Lucky Old Sun" (possibility)

Champs from page 3

display of chord ringing we've heard in a long time. And they really **performed** those songs. They stood at the foot of Rob's bed and sang only for him, but they brought every ounce of the heart, soul and energy that they displayed when they made 10,000 barbershoppers fall in love with them in Montreal. It really was as if they were lifted right off the international stage and dropped into Rob's room. If anybody wonders what it takes to be a champion, that's it. ..."



- August 23 (Saturday) -- Package show Vergennes Opera House Warm-up 12:30, show 2:00 p.m. See articles page 1 and 3
- August 24 (Sunday) -- Church Singout Essex Junction 8:30 a.m. See article this page
- August 27 (Wednesday) -- Nashua End Of Summer Party. For more info email gsparty@acapella.com
- September 16 (Tuesday) -- Early Singout Wake Robin Shelburne 6:30
- September 19-20 (Fri. - Sat.) -- Fall Retreat Lone Pine Lone Pine Campground Coach - Gary Bolles
- September 20 (Saturday) -- Champlain Echoes Show Flynn Space, Burlington
- September 27 (Saturday) -- Barre-Tones Show Barre Opera House
- October 24-25 (Fri. - Sat.) -- NED Convention and Contest -- Saratoga Springs, NY
- December 7 (Sunday) -- Elks Memorial Service Warm up 12:30
- December 2 (Tuesday) -- First 20 Week Club Drawing (Tentative)
- December ? -- Annual Holiday Show 2004
- January ? -- Installation Banquet
- January 31 (Saturday) -- Great Northern Harmony Workshop, Montréal with Uptown Sound
- February 14 (Saturday) -- Singing Valentines
- March 19-20 (Fri. - Sat.) -- NED Prelims, VLQ and Western Division Contests, Albany area
- April 16 (Friday) -- 20 Week Club Banquet (Tentative)
- May 29 (Saturday) -- Annual Show featuring Chordiac Arrest