

River Ramblings

Editor - Jeffrey Grimmer

"Riverblender's" - 2nd International Achievement

Gentlemen,

Congratulations! Earlier this year, you filled out our Chapter Achievement Program survey which tabulated a wide range of things the Society thinks are necessary to be a successful chapter. I am tremendously pleased to tell you that your Chapter Achievement score for the year 2010 was 177 points. This score is #2 out of the 336 chapters that participated throughout the entire Barbershop Harmony Society. This achievement should bring great credit upon yourself as leaders of a very successful chapter. Thanks guys, and again CONGRATULATIONS!

Harmoniously,
Paul Wietlisbach
Director Of Education
Barbershop Harmony Society

WOW!

Congratulations on a job well

The reason that we received this great honor is due to the diligence of many of our members. The one that comes immediately to my mind, is Tim Schubbe, our Chapter Secretary. He is the person that is responsible for obtaining and passing on all of the pertinent information to the "Barbershop Harmony Society", a time consuming task - THANK YOU TIM! The Society then gleans through all of the information and awards the total points.

This is obviously is a great honor and it shows all of us that we are a vibrant and active chapter. This achievement is due to the support of each and every member of the chorus.

The question now is "How do we improve from here?" The answer is -Youth In Harmony Programs and others of this type. You already know that we have taken the first steps in increasing this part of the award, as we have produced on our first Youth In Harmony Festival with the help of the Minnesota Valley Chapter of Sweet Adelines.

The following is a list of the top 10 Chapter Achievement Chapters: Asheville 180, Mankato 177, Bloomington 170, Northwest Ohio 168, Lexington 166, Sebring 162, Waterbury/Derby 157, Salem 156, Atlanta Metro 152, and Alexandria 150.

- Editor

Barbershop Harmony Society

The Barbershop Harmony Society will be putting together a section in a later edition of the "Harmonizer" that will include a short letter and several pictures of the top 10 achieving chapters.

Our chapter put together a team of Tim & Tom Schubbe (the dynamic duo), and Jeff Grimmer, to work together on our part of this section.

The main writer was Tom Schubbe with input from Tim and Jeff. Pictures were chosen from several different people and they depict the various aspects

of the "Riverblender" experience of "Sing Well, Have Fun".

I know that we all are looking forward to seeing the Mankato chapter highlighted in the Harmonizer Magazine once again!

A big thank you to the chorus and the team for making this all possible. Plans are in the works for us to try and place higher next year. We will need your support and dedication to make this possible!

-Editor

“Riverblender’s” Annual Auction

The Annual “Riverblenders” Auction / Picnic / Hay ride will be held on August 27, 2011 at the home of Carol and Jeff Grimmer. There will also be a Quartet Contest as part of the celebration. The quartet can only have 2 members in it from a currently organized quartet. Start organizing now and remember you only need to sing one song.

Remember to bring: 2011 Blender Bucks, Items to auction off, Dish to pass, Plates and flatware, Beverages of your choice, and chairs to sit on. There is no set cost for this event but a free will offering will be taken.

More information will be dispersed as it is deemed necessary.



Quartets and our very own Auctioneer - Byron Josephson - 2010

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Harmony Foundation

The Harmony Foundation has designed its fundraising programs to support the Society at every level. This principle has led us to create the Donor Choice feature in July of 2005. The program has grown steadily over the last five years. Some have said that this is the tide that raises all boats.

Here’s how it works: Individuals give a gift to the foundation as members of the President’s Council, Ambassadors of Song or as a general gift. They can request Harmony Foundation give up to 30% of their contribution to the Chapter or District of their choice. “From humble beginnings of \$12,000 in 2005 we have raised more that \$216,000 to go to Chapters and Districts this year. This is like found money received as a result of the fundraising done by Harmony Foundation and the generosity of your friends who donate to the Foundation.

We are pleased to send the enclosed Donor check for gifts given between 07/ - 12/10. The following contributed to Mankato’s \$318.75 check:

Charles H. Schubbe

Arvid C. Zenk

Thanks for your support and partnership and we expect great accomplishments together in the days ahead.

All the best,

Clarke Caldwell

President and CEO

More information about this program can be found at www.harmonyfoundation.org.

or call 866-706-8021

Thanks to Chuck and Arv for their generosity!

-editor



Mankato Attendees

Back - Chuck Schubbe, Byron Josephson, Arvid Zenk
Front - Ron Meyer, Jeff Grimmer, Wayne Hughes



Dr. Camilla Horne



Ron's trying to explain - she's not buying



Lakelanders own "Vocal Express" Quartet



Combined Chorus - Faribault & Mankato

Lakelanders Inter-chapter Meeting

On Monday, June 13th, the Lakelanders Chorus from Faribault invited Dr. Camilla Horne, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, to an inter-chapter meeting with the Riverblender's to be held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. The purpose of this get together was for fun and to educate us on principles of singing. This included emphasis on tone color, diction, breath support, vowel production, consonant production, style and technique, range, dynamics, and intonation principles. She gave us a six week course in just 2 hours! (Very smart group of people)

Six adventurous members left Gander Mountain at 5:45 p.m. and had a good trip over to Faribault. We were greeted by the Lakelanders members, warmed up by

Director Dale Danielson, and introduced to Dr. Horne. We were whisked through a plethora of techniques and concepts that made everyone in attendance a better singer. Dr. Horne also worked with several volunteers, including our own Ron Meyer, on proper singing techniques.

The mixed chapter chorus then performed several numbers for Dr. Horne and the other guests that were in attendance.

They were followed by "Vocal Express" a local chapter quartet. We were treated to root beer floats and great conversation at the close of the evening. Our thanks go out to the Lakelanders Chorus and we hope that we can do more inter-chapter events with them in the future!

Lakes Chord College - Cancelled

The **Lakes Chord College** scheduled for June 17-18 at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls was cancelled for lack of registrations. The plans were to revive the District's mini-HEP.

We would like to thank the LO'L for trying and hope that they try again in the future.

We know that many hours of preparation were put into this and the list of people that were involved is

really impressive. The "Riverblenders" would like to thank you for your efforts.

So, we as a chapter must now look forward to the **Leadership Training Academy (LTA) on January 6-7, 2012 at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls**. The good news is that plans are to expand the schedule and include many of the classes planned for the Chord College.

Our 2012 Annual Show

Greetings! I recently sent out an e-mail to all members referring it to members that were on last years show committee. I asked them if they would commit to continue to work on the 2012 show committee. I have received only a small number of responses. Please let me know your thoughts.

Of the replies I did receive, we are in the need of a 2012 Assistant Show Chairman (2013 - show chairman), a new Ads person to take over for Joe Kunkel, and a Publicity person to take over for Bailey Blethen. Remember, this is our big money maker for the year! If everyone volunteers for one item, the amount of work each person has to do is minimal.

The show theme is “Disney”. But this concept can take many different forms. Our talented T & T Schubbe team will be dealing with this item. If you have any suggestion about the concept of the show, please let me or the T & T team know.

The music for the show has been in your hands for a long time now and a learning CD is available from Doug Peterson. We even sang one of the songs on last years show.

The date for the show is April 21, 2012 and will be held at Crossview Covenant Church. So mark your calendars and plan on singing on both shows and at the afterglow.

There has been suggestions about how to best sell the ads and tickets. If you have any insight on new and different ways to conquer this mountain we would like to have your ideas.

Thanks and welcome to the planning of the 2012 show!

2012 Show Chairman
Jeff Grimmer



If we work
together
we can
accomplish
anything we
want to!

Calendar

June 28, 2011 - Tuesday

Franklin Rogers Field
Moon Dogs Performance - 6:15 PM

June 28, 2011 - Tuesday

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Regular Rehearsal - 7 PM

June 30, 2011 - Thursday

St. Peter Episcopal Church
Performance - 6:30 PM

July 5, 2011 - Tuesday

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Regular Rehearsal - 7 PM

July 12, 2011 - Tuesday

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Board Meeting - 6 PM
Regular Rehearsal - 7 PM

July 17, 2011 - Sunday

Lake Crystal / N. Mankato Churches

July 19, 2011 - Tuesday

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Regular Rehearsal - 7 PM

July 24, 2011 - Sunday

Churches

July 26, 2011 - Tuesday

Christ The King Lutheran Church
Regular Rehearsal - 7 PM

September 17, 2011 - Saturday

Wells High School - Wells

Items of Interest

April 21, 2012 - Annual Show

“Disney” is the theme & music has been chosen and is available for you on CD

Contact - Doug Peterson

NOTE:

If you know of items that the chapter should be aware of please e-mail me the information - Editor

Special Guest - Paul Wietlisbach

Director of Education - Barbershop Harmony Society

On May 24th, Paul Wietlisbach, made a chapter visit to the Mankato Riverblender's. The societies goal is to visit every chapter in the year 2011 to better support their efforts. The letter below was emailed to us for our information. We had a great time with Paul and wish him well as he visits other chapters. - Editor

Hi guys,

It was great visiting you men last week. I had a ball and made many new friends. Before I submit your visitation report I wanted to show it to you before I entered my impressions. Please let me know if there's anything I got wrong or I might be misrepresenting, otherwise this will be pretty much what it says:

H047 Mankato, Mn. "Riverblenders"

How many guys come on average – 30. Current membership trend is flat at 50 men over the last 4 years.

Recruitment = Attrition. Chapter is Sustaining. Recent temporary spike of 54 last year has tailed back to 50.

Membership Recruitment program? Nothing of significance reported. Leadership feels that musical excellence will attract new members if it is held at a high enough standard.

AIM 2 data: Community outreach programs in past year – did 30. Many free sing outs. Extremely active in community support. This tremendous amount of exposure coupled with high quality singing must be why their membership numbers are sustaining.

Chapter decision making - Director, MLT, BOD, Mbrshp vote – Mix of all 4. Seems to be a good relationship between BOD, Director and Music Team.

Contests – (scale 1-5) Do you like contest? = 3. Mixed bag of opinions from severe dislike to absolute love of contest. Interesting discussion but the bottom line is - they DO compete. Dual membership was a contentious issue. They have improved as a chorus but the judges have not been able to give worthwhile evals since they have begun scoring in the 70's. The spite for contests voiced by some was good natured.

Society & District programs (scale of 1 – 5): Leadership Academy = 4, HEP Schools = 4, Harmony U = 5, Music Specialist visits = 4.

27 men attended on my night of visit. There are 50 officially registered men in the chapter.

Chapter Comments: Been a long time since they have had a Music Educator visit. Stressed that they are convinced their pursuit of musical excellence will bring in new guys.

My Comments:

Chapter offers a nice balance of strong fellowship and good singing to members. Currently they are sustaining their membership numbers but not growing. They do not seem to be worried about this. They are focused on improving their musical excellence and not necessarily membership increase for numbers sake. Quality before quantity with this group. They sing well enough that they could probably attract and hold younger members if they made a decided effort to do so. I believe this chapter could really benefit from some concentrated attempts at membership growth without lowering their singing standards. They work hard but they also have a great time and fun and fellowship does not take a back seat to musical excellence. Best afterglow I've seen so far. About 2/3 of the chorus came out. Solid B level singers who are singing in the low 70's and are reaching ever higher. Director is an excellent young, talented man who will be leaving the area soon. Finding a new director does not seem to worry the Riverblenders. They are on a mission and have faith they will find another great guy to wave his arms for them. If I lived here I would bend over backwards to enjoy singing with this chapter. This is the kind of chapter that I would not only like to sing with but one which I would like to help lead.

Harmoniously,

Paul

Paul Wietlisbach

Director Of Education

Barbershop Harmony Society

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Bernadotte Lutheran Church

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Bernadotte, Minnesota

Saturday, June 18, 2011, on this sometimes sunny sometimes rainy day, 23 “Riverblenders” ventured north to the wonderful town of Bernadotte, Minnesota. We were to be part of the 17th annual “SwedeFest” put on by the Bernadotte Lutheran Church (if you have never seen this church it is well worth the trip). We arrived early and went to the church basement where we warmed up (while it was raining outside). Plans were, to have the celebration in the church if we had inclement weather. There must have been a lot of praying going on because it turn out to be a pretty good day.

The event went from 3 to 8 PM and was emceed by Jim and Adam Bartels. They did a fantastic job!

Adams picture is above donning the Twins cap.

The other entertainment was wonderful - “Prairie Drifters Band”, “Smiley Wiltscheck & Friends”,

“Kacey (White) Gregorson” all did a great job. Horse drawn wagon and buggy rides were also in the offing.

Many of the “Riverblenders” partook in the meal after we sang, and if you went away hungry it was you own fault. Thanks to all of the people that prepared the food it was bountiful and tasty.

A silent auction was held and appeared to have many great items.

Our hats are off to the congregation and supporters of this fine event. When you look at the pictures above, please notice the brand new buildings that the church erected and they just finished laying over 600 rolls of sod just days before the festival.

The “Riverblenders” had a great time with a bunch of wonderful people. Thanks so much for all of your hospitality.

QUARTET NEWS

RFD had the wonderful experience, and were able to sing at the wedding of former member Mike Maes (a very good Bass). Mike is the current owner of “The Loose Moose”.

The wedding was informal and held at the Maes Residence on Lake Washington and took place outdoors in spite of the on and off rain situation. RFD sang “Lida Rose” with bride Kris Kittleson, of Mankato, during the ceremony, along with “Wonderful World”. They later sang “Irish Blessing” as a toast to the couple. RFD wants to wish them a wonderful life together and the best of luck!

Benefits of Membership, Continued

Directors College – Develop as a musician, leader, and passionate advocate for barbershop harmony. Participate in the acclaimed “On To The Rehearsal” course. Curriculum varies from year to year but often includes classes like: Directing Techniques; Sound Management; Theory, How To Teach What You Know; Performance / Leadership, On To The Rehearsal; Effective Choral Warm-ups; Teaching Pedagogy; Habits Of Successful Chorus Directors; Music Team Development; Class Voice For Directors; and Care & Feeding of the Small Chorus.

District-Level

Chapter Leadership Conferences – Now known as Leadership Academy, these regional weekend schools and workshops offer leadership development training and education for members and chapter leaders

District Music Schools – Known as Mini-Harmony Education Programs, these weekend schools are held to provide education and coaching for quartets and choruses.

Top Gun Schools – Schools are geared towards the top quartets in each district (handled on a “by invitation” only basis).

Pop Gun Schools – Schools are geared towards the top senior quartets in each district.

Programs

Standing Ovation Program – designed to utilize Standing Ovation Reviewers in each district trained to find the elements of a performance that leads to standing ovations and provides constructive and confidential feedback to the chapter to help make their next show better, making that product more attractive to prospective members.

Music Mentor Program – designed as an “internal vehicle” to provide Chapter Choruses with strong, skilled guidance to dramatically improve their performance level, thereby enhancing individual members’ experiences and prompting increased member retention.

Quartet Development & Services Program – designed to provide better tools and increased skill to quartet singers thereby encouraging both member satisfaction and attraction of new members through high-quality public performance levels.

Chorus Director Workshop Intensive Programs – CDWI-1 – a day long program designed for two full sessions with five invited directors and the two CDWI trainers meeting privately to discuss the challenges and successes of their chorus programs. These discussions include identifying the motivations and challenges of the director and the members and reviewing options available to overcome those challenges, including methods to create more successful rehearsals and performances. Directors then have the opportunity to direct a live chorus implementing the solutions chosen by the director during the morning session. Video and live feedback is provided to help directors gain command of their skills. CDWI-2 is also a day long program, but gets even more in-depth and allows directors to develop newer skills and solutions. CDWI-Next Level program is an even more focused, in-depth look at the director and his/her chorus, and takes place during a regular chorus rehearsal.

Outstanding in Front Program – a one day workshop designed for section leaders, warm-up leaders, chorus vocal coaches, assistant directors interested in the prospect of directing some day, or any group of directors wishing useful basic information about the challenging job of directing a chorus, leading singers and the development of a music team.

Music Publication Program – designed to provide members (and, therefore, prospective members who hear the product) with the highest-quality songs, arrangements and learning media possible for execution by members of quartets and choruses, thus enhancing member retention.

Chapter Counselor/CSR Program – uses volunteer leaders to help chapters deal with director issues; to help chapter leaders develop ideas to keep them on task; to help chapters grow and retain members; enhance enjoyment and fun at chapter meetings; develop strategies to create more community awareness.

Merchandising

Members can receive member pricing at *The Harmony Marketplace*, which stocks over 1,700 different music-related items, including a wide variety of audio and video recordings, apparel, gift items, and music education materials. *The Harmony Marketplace* also distributes over 5,000 vocal arrangements for men and over 400 vocal arrangements for women. Part-predominant learning media is available for over 500 of these vocal arrangements. Members can shop via the catalog, online at www.harmonymarketplace.com, at the Society’s Midwinter and International Conventions, at Harmony University, and at the new retail store at the Society’s headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee.