



In Tune

with the

HUNTERDON Harmonizers

Barbershop Chorus



Mid-Atlantic District

Flemington, NJ

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Music:

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Rich Taylor
Rusty Williams
George Schwerdt

Choreographer

Vida Allworthy

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HUNTERDON HARMONIZER 2003 SCHEDULE

make sure to confirm your commitment to performances (sign-up sheets)

Regular scheduled Chapter Rehearsal/Meeting, Tuesdays, at theElks (165 Highway 31, Flemington)

7:30 p.m.

Other Important Dates:

| | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Thurs | June 26 | County Park Performance | Deer Path Park | |
| | | (Rain Location: County Complex on Rt. 12) | | 6 p.m. |
| Tues-Sat | July 1-5 | International Convention | Montreal, PQ, Canada | |
| Sun | July 20 | Bridgewater Methodist Church Summer Sing | | 9 a.m. |
| Sun | July 27 | Heath Village Performance | Hacketstown | 6 p.m. |
| | | (Uniform: Teal/Black & Geek Shirt etc.) | | |
| Sun | Aug 10 | 2nd Annual Barbershop Ball Game | Somerset | CANCELLED |
| Sun | Aug 17 | Flemington Presbyterian Church Summer Sing | | 9 a.m. |
| Sun | Aug 24 | Annual Harmonizer Picnic | Deer Path Park | |
| Tues | Sept 16 | Coaching Session | Elks | 7:30-10:30 p.m. |
| Sat-Sun | Sept 20-21 | Annual Craft Fair | Court House Steps | 1:30 p.m. |

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES ...

by Don Reckenbeil and Mike Fordice

What a spring it has been for the Hunterdon Harmonizers! After a very satisfying division contest, two very appreciated performances, and most recently, Harmony College East (HCE), we've been a busy bunch of guys!

The M-AD division contests are now completed and we find ourselves ranked **eighth** out of the 62 choruses that competed—a big jump from last year's rank of 17th following the 2002 contest (see previous issue of *In Tune* for an analysis of the scores or go to <http://www.njharmonizers.org>). In fact, when looking at all of the choruses from New Jersey, we're proud to be able to say that the Hunterdon Harmonizers are the top-scoring chorus this spring—something else to be very proud of! Here's the breakdown of the top five NJ choruses:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Hunterdon | 1286 (71.4) |
| Princeton | 1226 (68.1) |
| Cherry Hill | 1184 (65.8) |
| Rahway Valley | 1084 (60.2) |
| Greater Brunswick | 1076 (59.8) |

How did we get there? While there are many reasons, the main reason is the dedication, commitment, and work ethic of our members. For that, we give you a BIG THANKS!

A few comments on Harmony College East are in order. We were about the luckiest guys on earth at HCE. We had wonderfully knowledgeable coaches for our day-long chorus coaching session, including Alan Gasper, Richard Lewellen, and Ed Waesche. These top-notch, accomplished members of the society gave their all to help make us better. We truly were able to use our spring contest performance as a launching pad for further improvement. What an honor to be coached by such great guys!

So, what's next? Upcoming performances at Deer Path Park, Heath Village, and our fall Craft Fair are certainly part of our schedule. Plus, the folks in Lambertville enjoyed our May performance so much that they have asked us to return in December for a holiday show!

And, of course, we need to continue our preparation for the District Convention in October. We should expect a lot from ourselves at this contest. Starting on July 8, everyone will be asked to tape the two contest songs as part of the qualification to be part of the contest chorus. We'll provide details and scheduling for this qualification process in the near future.

Again, thanks to everyone for adding so much to the chorus this year!

HARMONY FOUNDATION

Sing...for life

INTEREST BEGINS TO GROW

by Ed Kunkel, VP Programming

In the earlier years of the Harmonizers contributions to charitable organizations were given considerable attention. This interest waned for a few years but is now on the rise. Recently, several members have expressed a desire to see the Harmonizers put Harmony Foundation on a higher priority plane. As a member of the Founders Club of the Foundation, I find this most encouraging for the health of both the Harmonizers and our society.

Hopefully, our board of directors will soon give commitment to the lifeblood of singing for a lifetime by pledging to contribute to Harmony Foundation. Ten percent of all singing engagement income has been suggested. This is not a large contribution considering the dimensions of our mission statements—both chapter and society. The music committee has recommended that the 20% contribution from quartet singouts be channeled into this worthy cause. Seeing so many teenagers—male and female—at Harmony East enjoying the benefits of singing provides all the inspiration one should need for supporting this program.

LET US BE INSPIRED!

SINGING FOR CANCER RESEARCH FUNDRAISER

by Rusty Williams, Assistant Director

The Hunterdon Harmonizers joined with thousands of caring people at this year's American Cancer Society *Relay for Life* at North Hunterdon High School. This event is not only an impressive fund raiser for cancer research, but it is a celebration of hope for those who have been touched by this disease. The



PHOTO BY LINDA WILLIAMS

RELAY FOR LIFE (VA vs PA): Pat, Brian, Rusty, and George trying to rehearse against highly amplified rock.

Harmonizers had the opportunity to sing in the survivor's tent and later performed on-stage in front of the grandstand. This was the third time that the Harmonizers were asked to participate in the Relay and our music provided a relaxing break in the entertainment from the louder rock groups preceding us (and while we were singing in the tent, competing with us). The sound system on the field was more attuned to amplifiers and instrumentals and made warming up a challenge, even for a quartet. But as always, barbershoppers adapt, and our upbeat lineup, including *Cohan Medley* and *Sunny Side*, came across well to the grandstand and to the crowds circling the track. We had about 18 guys at the event and it was a pleasure to have **Jim Knight** with us in his black and teals. As in years past, we closed our portion of the program while the sun went down with the stirring *I'll Walk With God* with **Rich Taylor** doing the *Footsteps* narration. Behind us, in the middle of the football field, hundreds of luminaries began to glow more brightly, spelling out the word HOPE. We're all thankful for the opportunity to take part in an important event like this. It's great to be a barbershopper, especially in Hunterdon County.

"YOU CAN'T MISS IT!"

by Rich Cornelison

We huddled at the end of Tuesday night's practice lining up travel plans to Salisbury, Maryland, for Harmony College East. "By the way," someone said. "How do we find the college?" "**You can't miss it!**" I heard **Rich Taylor** exclaim as I packed up my tape recorder and music, said my good-byes, and called it an evening.

Soon, it was Thursday afternoon and we were off to school. We packed into **Ted Maginnis's** van for the 3½ hour trek. Plenty of room, good company (**Ron Roth** and **Ed Kunkel**), some barbershop tapes, and we were on our way. A couple of hours down the road we had solved all of the world's problems, knew how to make the chorus international champions, and determined that the fall of the stock market the past few years was "the accountants' fault." "Time for some coffee," Ted said. "There must be a *Dunkin' Donuts* along here somewhere." "Straight ahead," Ed said. "**You can't miss it!**"

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PHOTO BY LINDA WILLIAMS

SURVIVORS' TENT PERFORMANCE with **Jim Knight**, whose wife Mary will always be one of our inspirations.

“YOU CAN’T MISS IT!” *(continued)*

After our coffee and another hour on the road, we completed our four-state journey and found the college campus. The sign the university had set out at the entrance, “Barbershop Quartet Registration,” directed us to the sign-in desk (and was further evidence to me that most people think barbershop singing is only about quartets). Registration went smoothly and I felt like I was a college freshman again as we proceeded to, and found, our dorm rooms in Chester Hall. There we found laid out for us, in our air-conditioned rooms, towels, wash cloths, bed linens, and a blanket. Each room was part of a five-room suite arrangement connected to bathrooms and showers. Bunkin’ down in each suite, two to a room, were other members of our chorus. We unpacked our bags, took a walking tour of the campus, and grabbed a sandwich at *Arby’s* at the edge of the campus. At 7:00 p.m. we headed off to attend our first course.



PHOTO BY LEE ROTH

L-R: Jack Gardner, Lou Barile, Dan Mirota, Charlie Mohr, Ed Kunkel, Art Cole, Carmen Olivo, Coach Rich Lewellen, Rich Kacvinski, Rich Cornelison, Ted Maginnis, Ron Newsom, and Ron Roth.

Thursday night’s class was on sight reading. Ron Knickerbocker’s brother, Jerry, was one of the instructors, assisted by Jack Pinto. The focus of the course was to increase the singer’s ability to recognize musical intervals between notes—the musical and pitch distance between notes. The instructors used a numbering system, where #1 was assigned to “Do” in the “Do, Re, Me” scale, based on the note on which the scale was built.

A number of different singing patterns were handed out and we were drilled in exercises singing by the numbers as we frequently do in our “1-2-3-4-5” warm-up exercises. The class was fun and actually made me more aware of the half-step intervals occurring between 4 and 5 and 7 and 8.

Friday morning we were up bright and early. The echoing noise of **Art Cole** singing in the shower got me moving. After jockeying for position at the two sinks in our wing and keeping the mirror wiped free of the heavy steam of fog Art was sending my way, I knew I needed some coffee and breakfast. As we left the dorm we looked at our campus maps and close-by buildings to get our bearings. I saw another attendee entering the dorm, key in one hand, and a banana in the other. I asked, “Where’s the dining hall?” as I was turning my pocket map every which way to break the code. “At the end of the parking lot, follow the sidewalk through the trees there. **You can’t miss it!**” came the reply. What we found was a dining hall as massive as an Ocean

Liner and food just as abundant and tasty. Each meal included a great variety to choose from and was open for as many returns for salads, entrée, or deserts as you wanted. Ron, after looking over his shoulder to see if anyone was looking, tucked his Weight Watchers tabulation card away in his wallet (never to be seen again). Also great were the vistas from the large glassed in dining area in the building they called The Commons.

Friday’s courses were spent with three instructors coaching the chorus on many fundamentals to improve our singing. The first, Allen Gasper, an experienced coach, judge, and performer with the *Saturday Evening Post* quartet, educated us about the workings of breathing air and the reaction of the larynx in making sound. He introduced the technique of taking a breath through an imaginary twenty-five-foot straw, releasing your breath in a smooth flow as you sing—not shoving the air out with force. His guarantee was that if we concentrate on controlling the air below the larynx and down through our back, the musicality will improve dramatically. A second coach, Richard Lewellen, director of the *Alexandria Harmonizers*, emphasized the positioning of the mouth and lips to get unity of sound from different voices. He likened the flow and shaping of air to the constant mouth shaping, steady and connected sound flow, of playing a trombone. The last coaching session of the day was by Ed Waesche, the prolific, well-known arranger of barbershop music. He made several suggestions to our contest package about word rhythm and chorus physical movements. Saturday’s courses included a variety of subjects to choose from, too many to describe further here—a large variety of learning opportunities whether your interests were singing, directing, or master of ceremonies, to name a few. Our youth quartet participated in a robust youth development program running throughout the weekend. The variety of classes and knowledge imparted are too numerous to relate, but, I’m sure our director and section leaders will be recapping and reemphasizing what we learned as we go forward.

Friday and Saturday night shows in the college auditorium included top-billing performances. Quartets of note performing were *Saturday Evening Post*, *Wheel House*, *Riptide*, *Good Times*, and *Trade Secret*, the winning college quartet from our district who are headed to the international contest in a few weeks. Our own performances were noteworthy as well. Friday performances by our attending Harmonizers, *Scarred for Life* youth quartet, and **Brian Lipe**’s quartet, *Vocaholics*, received enthusiastic responses from the audience. Saturday performances by *WOW*, **Mike Fordice** MC, and our youth quartet in the youth chorus entertained cheering audiences as well. All showed improvement in sound and presentation skills, showcasing what they learned that day. After the show, the guys said “Come on, let’s sing some tags.” “Where?” I said. “By St. Martin’s Hall, **you can’t miss it!**” Tom informed me.

What fun we had. As Ted dropped me off back in Flemington and I retrieved my suitcase, I vowed mentally to put some of my new found skills to work. Reflecting on the weekend experience I thought to myself, breathing and voice technique may make the music, but it’s the brotherhood that makes the harmony! The next time someone asks me about Harmony College East—you guessed it. My response will be, “**You can’t miss it!!**”



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hel-loo,

What a great weekend we had at Harmony College East! I would like to thank all who attended and ask those who didn't

to consider attending next year. Check out the comments included elsewhere in this bulletin about what we got out of our attendance.

The month of June has been quite a busy one for the Harmonizers with various performances along with the trip to Salisbury, Maryland, for the HCE. The American Cancer Society Relay for Life was attended by many of our barbershoppers who sang in the survivors' tent and on the field. We need the full chorus to participate in the upcoming June 26th "Singing Under the Stars" at Deer Path Park for the County Park Commission concert program. Please note that if it rains the concert will be held in the County Complex located on Rt. 12.

July and August will bring no time off for good behavior as our schedule indicates. Please check our website (<http://www.njharmonizers.org>) for up-to-date scheduling. Our webmaster, **Mike Fordice**, is doing a great job and we thank him. New and improved things are happening at this site. He has posted pictures from our picture taking man, Mr. **Lee Roth** and a few others. Coming soon will be the "Gift Shop."

The Board is busy in the long-range planning for the next 5 years. Our nominating committee is hard at work seeking the best talent for the new board for 2004 and 2005. If you are approached, please help us keep this one of the best chapters in the Mid-Atlantic District. Your involvement will help strengthen our board. There are a number of committees that need help, so just ask an officer what you can do to help. They will appreciate it.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for August 24, the Annual Harmonizers Family Picnic. The cost to you is FREE. Sign-up sheets will be out soon, and feel free to bring a guest or prospective member. We have hired the great, well-known, and talented Master Chef "**Emeril**" **Williams**. He will be serving his specialty beef dishes as well as random volleyballs. Come on out for a special treat!

That's all for now.

Rich Kacvinski
President

TOM BASHTARZ— A BARBERSHOP BRAVO!!

by Ed Kunkel, VP Programming

Looking for a model for consistent barbershopper enthusiasm? Look toward **Tom Bashtarz**.



Since coming to the Harmonizers as a guest two years ago, Tom has always been one of the early arrivals for meetings. He has been consistent in helping to provide muscle power in setting up the risers. Twice he set up the risers by himself before the veterans had arrived. On the risers, Tom is a model for attentiveness, discipline, and readiness to follow direction. Thus, he has been able to show steady growth as a singer in his new found hobby. His performance skills were remarkably demonstrated at Harmony East on Saturday, June 13, when volunteers were asked to form quartets for singing in front of an audience of 200+ veteran barbershoppers. Tom volunteered to sing with three complete strangers. His performance drew a commendation by his advisor, richly deserved applause, and big proud grins from every Hunterdon Harmonizer in the room! Not bad for a 16-year-old, high school sophomore.

"THE WILL TO BE BETTER": A YOUTH QUARTET AT HCE

by Jensen Gelfond

Hi, my name is **Jensen Gelfond**, and along with my friends, **Murray Natkie**, **Michael Mazzariello**, and **Jesse Mazzariello** (baritone, tenor, bass, and lead, respectively), we make up the youth quartet, *Scarred For Life* (S4L). Our quartet name may not make sense until you find yourself groaning at our awful sense of humor. We're a youth quartet who've been together for three years since being introduced to barbershopping by attending a Young Men In Harmony (YMIH) weekend at a local high



SCARRED FOR LIFE: Murray, Jesse, Michael, and Jensen.

PHOTO BY MIKE FORDICE

school. We've come a long way since we started, from our first night of trying to build a chord to our first real performance, a rendition of our signature song, "Bad Bunch Of Boys," in front of hundreds of spectators at Harmony College East (HCE) two years ago. We weren't *Saturday Evening Post*, but the

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A SONG FOR SPRING:
Rain, Rain, Go Away,
Come Again Another Day!



“THE WILL TO BE BETTER” (continued)

exceptional response we received from almost every barbershopper we talked with after that show encouraged us to keep working hard in our quartet.

Fast forward two years: we’ve built up our repertoire to include many songs, including tougher charts like “All Dressed Up With A Broken Heart,” and put some choreography into our easier songs. Earlier this year we participated in two YMIH Youth Adjudications and scored well enough to win a complimentary pass for our quartet and our coach, **Rich Taylor**, to attend Harmony College East 2003. We jumped at the opportunity, remembering what a launching-point our last foray into HCE was for us. What follows is our experience at this year’s Harmony College East at Salisbury University, deep in the heart of Maryland.

We started the trip from Stewartsville, New Jersey, accompanied by our friend and fellow Hunterdon Harmonizers’ member, **Tom Bashtarz**. We arrived at the college at around 7 p.m. on Thursday, energized and ready to start the weekend. First on the agenda was a quick youth orientation, led by the ever-lovable vice-president of Young Men In Harmony, Mike Fasano. Here we learned that *S4L* would be nearly leading off the singing in the next night’s show—and we hadn’t even chosen which song to sing yet! Already we could see that our responsibility this year would be larger as we were being seen as a more experienced quartet than two years before. But our agitation was soon eased as the orientation broke up and we headed to an impromptu pizza party in our newly-assigned dorms (although the inside of our dorms would soon look anything but new). We soon descended to a large central patio to sing a few songs and tags before heading in for the night. Though there were plenty of people out singing that night, we still got our fair share of listeners when we sang. We were surprised to see some of the coaches listen to our quartet as well. With respectful words and nods of the head, it was rewarding to hear them acknowledge our quartet’s progress since our last visit to HCE.



PHOTO BY LEE ROTH

Coach Allen Gaspar with Don Reckenbeil.

On Friday morning we walked across campus to start our coaching. During the morning we worked with the YMIH program, which consisted of 24 male and female youth quartets. Led by some great directors and choreographers, we broke into male and female choruses, and then combined into an 8-part coed chorus. It was great working with the other youth quartets. Especially since we’re the only youth quartet in our area, it was wonderful seeing and hearing the other teens and being able to walk up and start a conversation with someone on the common ground of barbershop music. Everyone’s commitment to the program really impressed me. We learned our songs (for the men, Ja-da; the women, My Guy; combined chorus, Play A Simple Melody), got them off-paper, and added choreography in only two mornings’ worth of work—that by itself says something about the YMIH team and its quartets.

During the afternoon we were coached for 3 hours by professional coaches, some familiar and some new faces; but every one of them gave *S4L* new ideas to walk away with. During our coaching, we were paired with another quartet. The idea was that by watching the other quartet work with the coach for half the time, we could get a better big-picture view of the coach’s

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS (cont’d)

Music:

Assistant Directors

- Rich Taylor
- Rusty Williams
- George Schwerdt

Choreographer

- Vida Allworthy

Section Leader, Tenor

- George Schwerdt

Section Leader, Lead

- Rich Taylor

Section Leader, Baritone

- Brian Lipe

Section Leader, Bass

- Rusty Williams

Chorus Manager

- Vacant

Electronic Equipment &

Learning Tapes

- Charlie Mohr

Music Librarian

- Ed Kunkel

Vocal Coach

- Ron Knickerbocker

Shows and Performances:

Craft Show

- Richard Cornelison
- Tony Weber

District Convention

- Lee Roth

Holiday Show

- Ron Roth

Picnic

- Richard Kacvinski
- Rusty Williams

Singing Valentines

- Jim Knight
- Charlie Mohr

Church Choir Relief (summer)

- Jack Gardner

Chorus Welfare:

- Badges
- Nick Rigas

Health & Welfare

- Nick Rigas

Uniforms

- Lou Bowers

Housing (Elks)

- Art Cole

Chorus Merchandise:

T-shirts

- Vacant

CD’s

- Richard Kacvinski
- Ron Roth

Cups, etc.

- Dennis McKeivitt

Programs:

Meetings

- Ed Kunkel

Refreshments

- Clarke Applegate
- Robert Herbstzuber

Membership:

Public Relations

- Jack Gardner

Young Men in Harmony

- Ron Roth
- Rich Taylor

LADIES AUXILIARY

Co-Chairpersons

- Sharon Cole
- Carol McKeivitt

Treasurer

- Linda Kacvinski

Corresponding Secretary

- Alice Rigas

Recording Secretary

- Linda Williams

“THE WILL TO BE BETTER” (continued)

teaching methods. It worked. When coach Gary Plaag worked with our companion quartet, Just Right, he focused on the animation of faces and bodies in application of lively choreography. By the time it was our turn, we were so pumped that we immediately plunged into the fray and added some great choreography to “Coney Island Baby,” which we decided to perform that night. We had some great vocal instruction from Matt Troy, who adjusted Jesse’s neck posture and helped Michael shape his words more effectively. Tim Waurick (ever-popular lead from *Good Times*) and Tom Parker helped us on some of our tuning and note issues, though we were pleased to see that we spent much less time on in-tune singing than we had on our last visit to HCE. The coaches were excellent, and each gave us different stuff to work on. We definitely walked out of every session a better quartet than we were when we walked in. These guys are great!

The best thing about the evening show was its integration between the youth and regular quartets. It seemed that half of the quartets on stage were youth quartets—and their quality was awesome! The youth quartets sang as well or better than most of the other quartets. Worry not SPEBSQSA, over the next decade barbershop will be in capable hands. *S4L*’s first performance was not as a quartet but as part of our chorus, the Hunterdon Harmonizers (third-place division winners, moving on to international qualifiers). After a rousing performance *S4L* was quickly rushed to the ready room again as we prepped the quartet. After a quick tuneup, onto the stage we went. As we finished “Coney Island Baby” (with our new choreography added) to the roar of applause, it felt great knowing that the day’s coaching was one of the key reasons for our success. After the show which ended with some fabulous songs by the international-qualifying quartet, *Wheelhouse*, the feeling that washed over us was wonderful as peers, coaches, quartets, and a few cute girls came over to tell us how great we sounded and how much we had improved since last time. We know that we have a long way to go until we sing on the “big stage,” but we’ve shown that we’re here to stay.

Saturday was busy as we shined our YMIH show up for that night, got into more complex quartet coaching, and enjoyed the warm (if muggy) weather as we walked across the college campus between coaching sessions. At night, when the youth choruses sang, I experienced the most thunderous applause I’ve ever heard in a barbershop show. We had three standing ovations, and the feeling that poured from the crowd as they applauded our efforts had me and the rest of the youth grinning from ear to ear. It was amazing! The rest of the show would have gone by in a blur were it not for *Riptide*, the finale of the Saturday show and the “ringiest” quartet I have ever heard. Their performance would have been an excellent way to end the weekend, but little did we know that the night was just beginning. After the show we sang tags and songs for hours on end and were able to hook a private coaching session with TJ Barringer, director of the Somerset Somertones chorus. He gave us some of the best vocal tips we heard all weekend, helping Michael round out his bass part and giving me baritone sound-production and face-positioning tips that, when applied, made our quartet sound twice as resonant as

it had ever sounded before. We were finally starting to produce mature sound. Filled with great coaching, fabulous singing, and wonderful meetings with people of all ages, we finished our weekend with a true sense of accomplishment.

None of the wonders we experienced would have been possible without our coach, **Rich Taylor**. If we didn’t have his excellent coaching, outstanding moral support, and genuine interest and love for us, *Scarred For Life* wouldn’t be here at all. Rich has fostered our passion for this great past-time and shown us that if we have the will, we can go anywhere we want. Thanks, Rich, for being with us every step of the way.

Harmony College East is a magnificent experience. It shows the true vitality and camaraderie of barbershop and makes the strong statement that barbershop is open to people of all ages and genders regardless of experience - all you need is the will to be better. Book my ticket for next year now—I’ll be there!



**HH SUNDAY
SUMMER SINGS 2003**

by Jack Gardner

We have scheduled two HH “church choir relief” performances for this summer. The first will be at Bridgewater United Methodist Church (Country Club Road near Ethicon) on July 20. The second will be at the Flemington Presbyterian Church (Main Street near the monument) on August 17. Both will be 9 a.m. calls for the 9:30 a.m. service. Please mark your calendars. Thanks to **Don** and **Bruce** for setting them up.

We will perform two tunes (probably *Lords Prayer* and *I’ll Walk With God*). Uniform will be teal/black. It’s very important that we have a good representation for the chorus and balance in all four parts.

There will be sign-up sheets circulated. Even better, if you know you will be able to participate, please let me know by e-mail: gardsavas@aol.com.

This summer we have limited the number of “Sunday Summer Sings” to just two because of all the other events you are being asked to participate in. But we would like to sing at as many churches as would like to hear us. If you would like to have the HH sing at your church service, please let me know. We will try to get a small group together to perform.

I think music itself is healing. It is an explosive expression of humanity. It is something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music.

—Billy Joel

OUR CRAFT: THE “NEXT LEVEL” IS MY RESPONSIBILITY

by Rich Taylor, Assistant Director & Lead Section Leader

Let’s get the clichés out of the way right up front, because this is about a philosophy and state-of-mind that is necessary if the Hunterdon Harmonizers are going to achieve higher scores in the Mid-Atlantic District Championship this October. So here goes: “If it is to be, it’s up to me.” ... “The chain is only as strong as it’s weakest link.” ... “Whether you think you can achieve ‘A’ scores or not ... you are right.” ... “One person cannot win a contest, but one person can lose a contest.” ... “Perfection is not a goal, it is the standard.” ... “Personal improvement is a choice.” What does this mean to you?

Now that I am in my 36th year as a barbershopper, I have seen and experienced almost everything that is possible to experience in this wonderful hobby of ours. And I am never happier than when I am involved in something in this hobby at the absolute highest level. Sometimes that has been ringing a tag that is sung perfectly. Sometimes it’s the rush of singing in a chorus that is singing at an “A” level throughout an entire show. I have had the privilege of being in a quartet that brought so strong an emotional reaction from an audience that many of the people cried openly thinking of what the song meant to them personally. Sometimes it’s seeing the sparkle in the eyes of a young person when he or she finally “gets” doing the chord or phrase as well as they can. Recently it’s been having headphones on at the International Webcast booth and hearing the perfection of a medallist performance. And I have to say many times as a Hunterdon Harmonizer I have found myself contributing to a musical masterpiece during a performance. And, personally, I have sometimes been disappointed over the years with people who just don’t “get it” when it comes to performing at their absolute best EVERY time they sing or perform.

I have been the leading proponent of “perfection in our performances” in the chapter for more than two years. I am the guy who is always preaching that every man on the risers must know the music, words, and choreography to everything we sing, and that the individual singers must be able to demonstrate their proficiency through audio- or video-taping. I am the guy who has openly said that if a man cannot meet the standards we set, he should be given an opportunity to meet those standards through extra private/small group sessions and I’ve actively organized these sessions. If the singer does not take advantage of the extra help, I have been the guy who has supported the position that the singer should stand down from the risers until he meets the standards we have set.

In our division contest this year, we set standards of “note-perfect,” “word-perfect,” and “visually acceptable to Vida,” as the minimums for participation. We asked members to declare their intention of participating in the contest. And when the dust settled, we had scored 71 average—scores we hadn’t seen since 1998. Don has some comments on our improvement and it has to make you wonder where we can go from here. I submit that the fastest way—and maybe the only way—to get to “80” scores is for all of our singers—yes EVERY one of our singers—to take responsibility for their own performance. [Rich will have more to say on this critical responsibility in the next *In Tune*.]

CRAFT CORNER

by George Schwerdt, Assistant Director



I can’t recall any time in my barbershop career when I heard judges talk so much about breathing. It’s like the old saying—sometimes it’s not what you say, but what you DON’T say. This was definitely about what we **didn’t** sing!

Taking a breath through an open and correct mouth shape (a Rusty favorite) prepares us to get to the right vowel at the right instant.

Smiling through the breath (a Vida favorite) adds to our involvement in the song, interest from the audience and points from the judges. It’s also an opportunity for a reset—another important visual aspect of our performances.

The thing that struck me most though, was the importance of the breath as a rhythmic propellant—a setup for the next phrase. In the words of one of the judges, we’re telling the audience “You think THAT was good, wait until you get a load of this NEXT phrase!”.

Wow! (unrelated to a certain fine quartet) and we didn’t even sing a note!

Happy Birthday!



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| July 1 | Rich Kacvinski |
| July 21 | Carmen Olivo |
| July 24 | Jack Gardner |
| August 8 | Charlie Mohr |
| August 12 | Mike Fordice |
| August 16 | David Holzwarth |
| August 19 | Marty Vanderwall |
| September 1 | David Farber |
| September 11 | Clarke Applegate |

UNIFORM CHECK-UP: DEER PATH PARK PERFORMANCE

- Act 1: Teal Shirt/Black Pants, Shoes, Sox, Belt
- Act 2: Geek/nerd shirt & tie, suspenders, pocket protectors with black pants etc
- Act 2 (after quartets): White shirt with red tie, suspenders, cummberbund with black pants.