



In Tune

with the

HUNTERDON Harmonizers

Barbershop Chorus



Mid-Atlantic District

Flemington, NJ

VOLUME 5, Issue 6
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HUNTERDON HARMONIZER 2003 SCHEDULE

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

Editor

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Contributors

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OFFICERS

President

Richard Kacvinski

Past President

Richard Taylor

Exec VP Chapter Development

Art Cole

VP Marketing

Jack Gardner

VP Membership

Lee B. Roth

VP Music & Performances

Michael W. Fordice, PhD

VP Programming

Ed Kunkel

Secretary

Barry Liefer

Treasurer

Richard Cornelison

Board Members

Chris Fordice
Charlie Mohr
Tom Mariano
Murray Natkie
Ron Roth

Director

Don Reckenbeil

Administrative Assistant

Sharon Cole

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Music:

Assistant Directors

Rich Taylor
Rusty Williams
George Schwerdt

Choreographer

Vida Allworthy

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

7:30 p.m.

1st Monday of each month, Music Team meeting at Don Reckenbeil's house

8:00 p.m.

3rd Monday of each month, Board Meeting at Lee Roth's office (91 Main Street, Flemington)

Other Important Dates:

Sat-Sun	Sept 20-21	Annual Craft Fair	Court House Steps	1:30 p.m.
Sat	Sept 27	Special rehearsal	TBA	9 a.m.-12 noon
Fri-Sat	Oct 3-4	M-AD District Convention	Wildwood, NJ	
Tues	Oct 21	Coach session with Ron Knickerbocker	Elks	7:30-10:30 p.m.
Sat	Oct 25	CD recording session	Milford Church	9 a.m.

THE GOOD OLE' SUMMER OF 2003

by Rusty Williams and Jack Gardner

We started off the summer by opening the Hunterdon Parks Summer Concert Series on June 26 at Deer Path Park and surprisingly ... it didn't rain! It was a 2-hour concert of patriotic songs, funny tunes, and romantic ballads. Three of our quartets also performed: *Harmony Square*, *W-O-W*, and *Scarred for Life*. The concert was well attended and everyone tried to get a seat under the trees because the sun was H-O-T!



PHOTO BY LINDA WILLIAMS

DEER PATH PARK CONCERT — Hunterdon Harmonizers.

The *Hunterdon Harmonizers* have spent a few Sunday mornings every summer filling in for local church choirs by presenting barbershop harmony to the congregation. In July, we sang at Bridgewater United Methodist Church, where Pastor George Fischer of the Bridgewater United Methodist Church



PHOTO BY LEE ROTH

BARBERSHOP PICNIC with Rusty Williams and Rich Kacvinski as head chefs with matching hats and barbershop aprons.

encouraged his congregation to "TAKE HEART." From the choir loft we sang "I'll Walk With God," "God Bless America," "Let There Be Peace on Earth," and "The Lord's Prayer." The congregation of 300 responded with applause and shouts of Amen! The response was warm and enthusiastic and those who took part definitely gained as much from these performances as they gave.

Bruce Budde arranged for a second summer choir outing at the Flemington Presbyterian Church, and once again there was a good chorus turnout. It was a pleasure to sing parts of the service, and our hymns were well received by that congregation also.

In August we had our annual barbershop picnic

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“SWITCHED-ON BARBERSHOP”

by Mike Fordice

While reading the July/August 2003 issue of “*The Harmonizer*,” I noticed an ad on page 31 dealing with learning CDs and was intrigued. After making a few inquiries, I discussed what I learned with the music team and a decision was made to give it a try.

What is very different about this approach is that the learning tracks are computer generated. This affords extremely accurate notes and intervals, but tends to leave the words behind. Two holidays songs, “*Secret of Christmas*” and “*12 Days*,” have been prepared for us via this computer method. One reason these two songs were selected is that their notes have been a problem in the past.

It is very important when first listening to these CDs that you follow along with the music. This will “lock” the lyrics for you so that you can carefully study the notes.

One bonus of this electronic approach is that each part is presented twice on two separate tracks. There is a “Left” and an “Overbalanced” track for each part. Details of what this provides you are included with the CD distribution.

We certainly do not plan to use this technique for all future songs, but might now and then, depending on what we need to emphasize. Give this approach a serious try!



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Helloooooo!

By now most of us are finished with our vacation and back to our normal jobs of running here and there. Hope you all had a great summer and I want

to welcome you back to a what looks like a busy schedule for the *Harmonizers*. Please make sure that you check our web site for the most up-to-date schedule changes at www.njharmonizers.org.

Could you be the director of a chorus? We are blessed with having “Three Musketeers,” three gentlemen who, when called upon to direct, step up to the plate and do their thing. We are very grateful for our head Director, **Don Reckenbeil**, and especially for his merry assistants, **Richard Taylor**, **Rusty Williams**, and **George Schwerdt**. They stood before our group on many occasions over the summer. Thanks guys and keep up the good work.

A big “Thank you” goes to **Jack Gardner** for handling the Church Sing schedule this year and all those who participated in those events. Heath Village was another success with **Charlie**

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PROPOSED CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2004

by Art Cole, Executive VP Chapter Development

Creating a new list of board members for the coming year became a very interesting challenge. I don’t believe there has been a year since the inception of the *Hunterdon Harmonizers* that I haven’t been on the Nominating Committee. It’s time for some fresh insight, don’t you think? Anyway, the Nominating Committee consisted of two current board members. So, President Richard Kacvinski announced that he would like to help me nominate next year’s board members.

Well, as Rich and I discussed the possible nominations, one question kept coming up. “So, who do you want to be on your Board next year?” This is one subject I have been trying to avoid and sidestep. But it was pointed out to me that my position as executive vice president of chapter development (sounds important, doesn’t it?) is a stepping stone to the next Presidency. So I guess I really have nowhere else to go.

This challenge has been accepted on the basis of a couple of changes to how the Board is run. These changes involve the members-at-large and their duty to the rest of the chorus. It was my suggestion that each member-at-large be assigned to assist a particular vice president. If we assign an assistant to the vice presidents of music, program and membership, maybe we will be able to accomplish more good as we continue down the well-worn path of excellence. With that in mind, here are the nominations:

2004 Officers

Art Cole Jr.	President
Richard Kacvinski	Past President
Michael Fordice	Vice President of Music
Rich Cronce	Vice President of Program
Lee B. Roth	Vice President of Membership
Jack Gardner	Vice President of Public Relations
Ron Newsom	Secretary
Rich Cornelison	Treasurer

Members-at-Large

Chris Fordice	Support Music--Mike Fordice
Charlie Mohr	Support Program--Rich Cronce
Ed Kunkel	Support Membership--Lee Roth
Murray Natkie	Support Youth

As you can see, I think we have nominated a great group of guys to steer us into the next year. If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to speak to any of your board members. We are here as your representatives so let us know what you think.

AND, IT'S OFF TO WILDWOOD!

by Don Reckenbeil, Director, and Mike Fordice, VP Music

Last January we began to hear lyrics like: “*Now that you’re gone...*” and “*How I’d hug ya...*”. What’s this? A contest package that isn’t a parody? Wow, what a change! Well, yes it was a big change for the 2003 contests.

We began learning the two new contest songs with the aid of CDs—the first time our learning tracks were not presented on the more traditional cassette tapes. By now, CDs are the expected way.

In the early spring each chorus member was asked to make a personal commitment to the competition chorus. A portion of our Tuesday night meeting was dedicated to competition practice along with several Saturday rehearsals including one dedicated to performance. Coaching sessions with Ron Knickerbocker helped us fine tune our musical presentation.

And then, there we were in Bridgewater on a Saturday morning in early May. We presented our package and immediately got a standing ovation from much of the audience (not just our own supporters who were carefully primed to do just that!). As we were leaving the stage, it was exciting.

During the next couple of hours many of us were approached by people we didn’t even know, telling us how much they enjoyed our performance. One person asked me about the young people in our chorus—they were very impressed.

And then, the last chorus sang and the scoring sheets were distributed. We were so excited to learn that we finished in third place with 1286 total points—the highest score for the *Hunterdon Harmonizers* in five years.

During the evaluation session, one of the judges (Gary Plaag from Alexandria) mentioned that there were a couple judges from M-AD and that “local” judges tend to have an expectation of how a chorus might perform. He then said “Thanks!” for far exceeding his expectation.

During the rest of May and early June the other division con-

tests were held. When it was all over, we learned that we were the highest scoring New Jersey chorus.

As we moved into summer, we presented several shows and continued to work on the contest package along with songs for the next CD recording session, holiday music, etc.

Now, with only a couple of weeks to go, what do we expect. We certainly want to wow the audience again. We’re singing in the middle of the pack, so the audience will be much larger (and more awake) than last year when we had the “pleasure” of singing first. We are seeded eighth in the district based on spring scores and hope to finish at least that high. We have established a new baseline for ourselves.

The board and the music team send a huge “Thank You!” to the entire chorus for having worked so hard to achieve this level and the sustained effort that will keep that level rising..

FROM THE EDITOR

Ever wonder why we don’t produce electronic-only bulletins and save paper and stamps? This question has been posed to me a couple of times and I thought I’d share a few reasons I picked up from the PROBEMOTOR, edited by John Petterson for SPEBSQSA.

- Not all people use computers.
- Printed bulletins don’t “crash.”
- Electronic bulletins can’t be passed from a member to his wife by hand, read by both at once, or left lying on the coffee table for reading later.
- Electronic bulletins can’t be posted on the fridge for further reference.
- Printed bulletins can be read anywhere, anytime: in bed, on a trip, or in the back yard.

We supply the bulletin both ways for the convenience of all of our members and their families. Hope you enjoy reading it!

—Linda

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

VOCAL LESSONS FOR THE HOME-SCHOOLED AND GUESTS

by Rich Taylor

In June, Kathy Anne Natkie, **Murray Natkie**'s mom, called me to ask if there was some way we could publicize the Harmonizers to the home-schooled population in New Jersey. It seems that she was about to attend a statewide conference of home schoolers and their parents at Brookdale College in South Jersey. We spent a few minutes developing an idea and she then made up flyers that she and Murray handed out at the conference. **Jack Gardner** picked up on the idea and ran a few press releases to our local papers and the idea was put into place.

Vocal Lessons...the art of singing better...in five easy lessons

Taught by **Rich Taylor** and using a curriculum of standard *Harmonizer* resource material, the classes were set to begin on August 19 at the Elks Club. We enjoyed five sessions with eight wonderful men—some young and some not-so-young—who were there to learn and understand their own instruments.

We presented good solid vocal techniques that would help them

- warm up the voice
- practice good deep breathing exercises
- produce supported tones and smooth phrases
- learn and practice the sixteen vowel sounds
- expand their vocal range and the quality of their tonal production

We provided material for them to take home—much more material than was possible to teach in 5 lessons—that would help them to practice and improve their singing. With unbridled enthusiasm and a desire to learn, they attended faithfully and worked hard during the sessions. They asked intelligent questions and displayed a curiosity about their own voices that made us proud to be helping them.


2003 Vocal Techniques Class Graduates



Left to right: John Hudak, Jonathan Hudak, Instructor **Rich Taylor**, Gottfried "Bushy" Pletzer (rear), Benjamin Hudak (front), Daniel Birnbaum, Evan Birnbaum (front), Rick Porter (rear), and Christopher Birnbaum.

Why Give Vocal Lessons?

As part of our outreach, we want to help the home-schooled community fulfill the music requirements of their curriculum. We also want to be able to invite members of the community to take part in our annual show this December. It looks like we may have some takers on that level. We want others to know how once you start "doing" this thing called "barbershopping," you can really get hooked on it! We're hoping that a couple of the men in the class will actually join our chorus! A big "Thank you!" to Jack Gardner for his help in registering the guests, and also to the Harmonizers who helped out during the 5 sessions to make our guests feel

*"as welcome as the
flowers in May."* 

THE GOOD OLE' SUMMER OF 2003 (continued)

and it was one of the best we ever had with 60+ friends, family, and members taking part in volleyball, horseshoes, frisbee, and eating. For the first time ever, the grill sold out, but almost everybody had their seconds. The side dishes of salads, eggs, beans, cakes, brownies, and other dietary disasters were awesome!

CONTEST RESULTS:

- Volleyball ... no one kept score
- Horseshoes ... no one kept score

George Cronce tempted his quartet, the *Bell-tones*, to join us this year, and they sang and sang, to the delight of the crowd.

And the word got out that Val and **Carmen** (who has joined the Picnic Cooking Staff) are GONNA GET MARRIED! Congratulations, and thanks to all for a great time.

Also in August, we held a 4-week series of free singing lessons for home-school youth and men who enjoy singing. These classes were directed by Assistant Director **Rich Taylor**. These sessions are reported on above by Rich

All in all, a great summer! Makes you wish it was longer!



WORKING THE CRAFT AT THE ANNUAL PICNIC—there is always an opportunity to improve our craft! Even at a picnic! L-R: Jesse, Murray, and Don.

THE "NEXT LEVEL" IS MY RESPONSIBILITY

by Rich Taylor, Assistant Director & Lead Section Leader

(This is the second part of an article where Rich Taylor talks about what it will take to bring our contest scores to the A-level)

PART TWO

I have suggested that getting to the next level in our performance will depend on two things. First is what I call "Singer's Responsibility." This encompasses the philosophy that the minimum requirement for participation in the performing chorus is knowing all the words, notes, and moves so well that the chorus can perform the music without direction from Don. *This requires every man working, individually, for as long as it takes to bring his performance up to the minimum standard.* Our board of directors is already providing us with the very best in learning media. They are committed to providing private voice coaching for any member who is lacking in vocal skills. The chorus has received coaching from some of the most talented coaches from throughout the barbershop world. The music team has scheduled extra sessions to work not only with the chorus, but also with small groups of men within the chorus. Our visual coach, Vida, has been given a directive to provide individual help for problem singers so that their faces and the movements are elevated to a new level. So the ingredients of the recipe for A-level singing are in place.

Please think about what I just said. *Every singer must be willing to work as long and as hard as it takes to bring his performance up to the minimum standard.* Remember: note perfect, word perfect, and visually perfect. Some of our singers are blessed in that they can learn a song, note and word perfect, in about 3-

5 hours of work. I used to do that, but as I have gotten older, I now need 10-15 hours of real study to ensure that I am meeting expectations, and I understand that the 15 hours of practice that I need cannot take place on Tuesday nights. If I take responsibility for my performance and know my music when the deadline hits (usually after the fourth week from the time we received the music), then I will be ready for Don to create the interpretation of that music. Everyone will be at the same level because they would have all, each knowing what it takes for their own learning process, spent the time necessary to get to that level and we will be on the road to an A-level performance!

Reaching the next level is made of two components. The other key to our success in performance is the empowerment of our director. I firmly believe when the responsibility of the performance, everything covered so far, is transferred from Don to the singers in the chorus, Don will be free to become an artist. He will be free to assist in the ends of phrases, or the vowel targets, or the facial expressions, or the crescendos and decrescendos, or the special attention to a moving part. He will not have to beat out every note, and as important, we won't need him to conduct every nuance of the song! He'll be free to help us be beautiful and compelling and inviting and marvelous and wonderful and incredible . . . and all those other things that describe a remarkable performance.

Can the *Hunterdon Harmonizers* Team, with the current roster of players, score in the "80" range? I submit to anyone who wants to listen, that the answer to that question is a resounding YES! But it will not happen until each of us takes the responsibility for the performance out of the director's hands, and embrace the performance in our head, our voices, and most importantly, in our hearts. Let's empower **Don Reckenbeil** to be an artist and our performances will be garnering standing ovations all the time. I'm committed to seeing that happen. I hope all of you will come on the journey with me.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT *(continued)*

Mohr taking the reins with the help of our riser hauler **Ed Kunkel**.

The music team has been busy getting the music in place and setting up coaching for us. These guys spend a lot of time making sure the quality of our music stays high. The music for next year is being selected now and the schedule is being worked out. There are a number of issues involved in selecting a song for the chorus, and as you see explained by **Mike Fordice** in the article above.

The *Harmonizers* Craft Fair Sing is in progress while this bulletin is being produced, and Saturday was a great event—great chorus turnout, with special performances by *Scarred For Life* and *Voice reActivation*. Don't forget the coaching session on Saturday, September 27, in preparation for the contest on October 4. Let's knock their sox off with an outstanding performance!

See you in Wildwood!

—Richard Kacvinski, President

Happy Birthday!



- Sept 24 Pat Cerillo
- Sept 25 Ed Hoiler
- Oct 2 Jim Knight
- Oct 13 Ed Ringel

