

# THE HEARTBEAT

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## Earn Your Black Belt

By **Keith Mullen**, Music VP

In last month's Heartbeat article, I quoted Deke Shanon from the a-cappella group VOCALosity. When asked about what he learned from barbershopping, he called "Barbershop: A-Cappella's Martial Art." I have been thinking about what he said and there is a lot more truth in that than what we see at first look.

To be proficient in martial arts, there are fundamental things that need to be done and practiced until they become instinct, so the person needn't think about them any more, they just do them. Some of these rules are:

1. Learning the fundamentals and do them correctly, don't just do what everybody else is doing. **DO THEM BETTER THAN THEY DO.**
2. Repeat doing them correctly until they are automatic. **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**
3. Perform each thing you do as well as you can, don't just glide along and think, I'll do it right next time. **STAY FOCUSED ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING AT ALL TIMES.**
4. Constantly try to improve your skills, no one gets better by being satisfied. **ALWAYS STRIVE TO BE BETTER.**

Martial arts are not easy but these are the rules people follow to get better. If it was easy, we all could be experts and a black belts would mean nothing. Guess what? The same rules apply to barbershop singing. Martial arts and barbershop singing both require hard work and focused effort to be done correctly. Go through the rules listed above and think how they apply to our singing. They all apply. Barbershop singing is a unique form of vocal music. Different from most others in that we do not have instrumental accompaniment. Barbershoppers have to sing true tones, not only on pitch, but sometimes shade that note to make the chord ring. Now, after learning to singing the notes correctly, we have to superimpose words on these notes using proper vowels, holding these vowels open and true as long as the music calls for, singing diphthongs correctly and together, start and stop words

together (attacks and releases) and finally, you are asked to smile and dance while you are going through all of these vocal and mental gymnastics. Learning martial arts is not easy and neither is barbershop singing. Both require hard work and discipline to do them correctly. But the results are worth it. Let's all do our homework and practice our vowels, work on singing on pitch and learn the music that **Scott** asks us to perform each week. We can do these things at home or in the car while you are driving around. We just need to make the commitment to do them.

**BARBERSHOPPING IS NOT FOR SISSYS! LET'S ALL STRIVE TO EARN OUR BLACK BELT IN BARBERHOP SINGING.**



**LiveWire**

### C&J news: BHS Judging program now open to women

During the recent Midwinter convention in Reno, the Society Board of Directors voted on and approved a Society Contest & Judging Committee proposed rule change to allow for BHS Associates (women) to become certified BHS judges.

**Why the Change?** Simply put, we're looking for the best judges available to adjudicate our contests and provide the highest quality service to our choruses and quartets. The SCJC recognizes the fact that the "best of the best," which we are attempting to recruit to join our judging ranks each three-year cycle, are not all necessarily just male.



### HeartThrobs

By Roz Fischer

Hi all. Well, the singing Valentines have all been sung, and spring is on its way. March will be here very soon, with even warmer weather and allergies with it.

Easter will be here on March 27, so the snowbirds will be heading back a little earlier this year. We all wish them a safe journey and a healthy, wonderful summer. For those of us who live here full time, we will have to survive the heat and endure another beautiful summer. How terrible is that? I guess because I taught school, summer has always my favorite time of year and always will be. Our children and grandchildren can come down to visit because school is out. The trip to Disneyworld is very close, so a stop at Grandma's and Pop's house for a free meal and maybe a free night of fun and sleep is in order. Time is more relaxed, and we seem to have time to meet friends for dinner at a favorite restaurant, take a day trip to a near-by attraction, shop until we drop at our numerous new stores, take a 30 minute ride to Ocala or Leesburg to find that item that eludes us, or just enjoy a big, huge glass of lemonade at a friend's house. Nothing is hurried, and schedules are more flexible.

Our February ladies' luncheon was well attended at the El Ranchito Restaurant. The meal was delicious, and prices were wonderfully low. Our next luncheon will be on March 11 at 1 p.m. at the Oakwood Restaurant on CR 441. The decision to go to Oakwood was unanimous. Rides are available, so let me know if you need a ride when you RSVP. I really enjoy our luncheons because I know there will be a lot of laughing and fun. It is so easy to have a good time with the other HeartThrobs, since friendship is such a big part of our group. Come have some fun with us. If you are returning north, be sure to keep in touch by phone or email, stay well, and above all, stay happy. Keep a song in your heart until we meet again.

#### MEET THE HEARTTHROB - MARY O'DONNELL

This cheerful lady was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 16. She and her husband, **Bernie**, met at dance and have been married 53 years.

They have been blessed with three children and seven grandchildren. After living in New Jersey and Maryland, Mary prefers living in Florida. She worked as an x-ray tech for 38 years, always wanting to live in Florida. Mary's hobbies include singing, reading, and Bible study. She is very proud of her more than 7000 hours of volunteer time invested at the Villages Regional Hospital. Figuring that out, she has nearly 292 (24-hour) days invested. Incredible!

At the present time, she is a buyer for the gift shop at the hospital and has served as past treasurer of the Auxiliary Board and Chairman of Gift Shops. I am certain you have seen the very



lovely variety of items for sale in the gift shop. While **Bernie** is at practice, Mary has early practice at St. Mark's Church.

This gal feels that she is very proficient as a buyer and enjoys her job. Her bucket list includes a visit to Latvia, where her daughter-in-law was born. Should she and **Bernie** win the lottery, Mary would help her family pay for the grandchildren's education. This very "giving" lady volunteers and gives of herself every day. Mary is a wonderful example to others. We are very fortunate to have her as a member of the HeartThrobs.

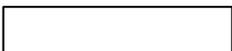
#### TOP TEN REASONS FOR BEING A BARI

Seen in Concho Capers

10. You get really good at singing C sharp.
9. You get to sing the same note for 12 consecutive bars.
8. You don't really need to warm up to sing 12 consecutive bars of C sharp.
7. If the chorus is rough, it's unlikely the bari's will be blamed.
6. You have lots of time to chat during lead solos.
5. You get to pretend that you are better than the leads, because everybody knows that people only sing lead so that they don't have to learn to read music.
4. You can sometimes find part-time work singing tenor.
3. Bari's get all the great intervals.
2. When the leads are holding some outrageously high note at the end of a piece, the bari's always get the last words.
1. When the bari's miss a note, nobody gets hurt.

#### Birthdays in March

Norbert Schneider	2
Pat Haley	5
Bob Thames	15
John Kirk	17



## 15 Reasons Why You Should Sing

As seen on Facebook, posted by the Barbershop Harmony Society. Seen in *The Voice Of Rushmore*, John Elving, Editor.

1. Singing releases endorphins, which make you feel instantly happier.
2. When you sing you also release oxytocin, which is a natural stress reliever and is found to alleviate feelings of depression and loneliness.
3. You'll also sleep better, as a result of being less stressed.
4. Tests have shown that singing improves heart rate visibility, which reduces the risk of heart disease, which is the No. 1 killer in America, so singing is clearly a powerful thing.
5. And, when singing with someone else, your heart rates can even sync together.
6. Your posture will get straighter and you'll gradually look more confident, because you have to stand tall to really belt it out!
7. And your feelings of safety and confidence increase when singing in a group. If you're in a choir, you can take risks and be on stage without having a panic attack.
8. It's actually a good workout. You'll work out your lungs, improve your circulation, and tone your abdominal and intercostal muscles.
9. Singing also has been proven to boost your immune system.
10. Even if you're already sick, just hum a little number and you'll open up your sinuses and respiratory tubes.
11. It's really good for your brain and will enhance your mental awareness, concentration, and memory. Also, reading music in general improves your math skills, as well as other cognitive functions.
12. You'll develop healthier breathing patterns, which can help cope with various lung diseases, as well as provide similar effects to yoga.
13. It's been used as an all-natural way to help treat dementia, lung cancer, depression, and chronic pain.
14. You'll probably live longer, in general. A 2008 joint study by Harvard and Yale stated that choral singing in a Connecticut town had increased residents' life expectancy.
15. So raise your voice, because the benefits are ..

## The Glory Days of Quartetting

By Bob Dykstra, Curmudgeon-at-Large

I joined what is now called the Barbershop Harmony Society in 1953 during what many of us recall as the “Era of Quartets.” Arthur Godfrey, for example, employed as regular members of his “Little Godfreys;” both the **Mariners**, a male quartet, and the **Chordettes**, a female quartet, who initially sang primarily barbershop harmony. Jack Benny featured his **Sportsmen Quartet** and Fibber McGee countered with the **King's Men**. Other well-known quartets on the radio and in the recording studio included the **Maple City Four**, the **Green and White Quartet**, the **Four Freshmen**, the **Crew Cuts**, the **Four Lads**, and the **Ames Brothers**, just to name a few. The **Wheaties Quartet** ushered in an era where companies came to be represented by quartets--the **Leinenkugel Four**, the **Westinghouse Quartet**, and the **Ewald Golden Guernsey Quartet**, for example.

I was reminded of all this a few years ago when the **Hut Four Quartet**, which sang from 1953 through 1971, got together with their spouses for their annual Christmas party. Bob Spong, long-time tenor of the **Hut Four**, brought along a little black book in which he had meticulously kept records of our singing engagements from 1957 through 1964. We were amazed by how many gigs we sang back then and how different that experience was compared to quartets of our ilk today who often struggle to get their music before the public. As an illustration of the latter point I checked out the performance schedules of two recent Land O'Lakes District Quartet Champions on their respective websites. One quartet lists five shows from July 2015 through October 2016. The other is scheduled for three shows during the period April 2016 through October 2016. No doubt both performance schedules will expand as time goes on but allow me to make a comparison with quartetting in the “old days.”

Let me preface the data I'm about to present by stating that the **Hut Four** was not a perennial top ten international competitor. In fact, we never achieved that pinnacle of success (although we did finish eleventh in 1959). We were crowned Land O'Lakes District Champs in 1958 and had some favorable publicity during our army days quartetting, by appearing on national television a few times. But we were not that different from many barbershop quartets of the day and I'm sure many of them would not be surprised by our performance schedule.

So here goes. From 1957 through 1964 the **Hut Four** sang 453 paid performances or an average of 56.6 shows per year--an average of more than one paid show per week. This number does not include the Minneapolis Chapter

### First-Time Visitors for February

Don Smit  
Steve Villavi  
Gary Phillips

Dennis Laperle

show, competitions. The lowest number of paid gigs during that period was 48, the highest was 64.

In 1958, the year during which we first earned the right to compete at the International Contest, as well as the year we won the district contest, we sang 27 chapter shows, one of which was for a Sweet Adelines group. Sixteen of the shows were in Wisconsin, seven in Minnesota, two in Iowa, one in Upper Michigan, and one in Canada. And remember--this was before freeways came along and we drove to most performances.

We were also booked a lot by agents and for a number of years belonged to whatever the appropriate union would have been at the time. And good old compulsive **Spong** entered into his little black book every job we sang, every song we sang on any given show, and any attempts at humor that were included in our performance. This was useful information because we sang many chapter shows numerous times. He also listed our quartet repertoire during the period which included 52 songs--only ten of which we sang in B-flat. (I'm not sure what that means).

A number of reasons come to mind for such a busy quartet schedule:

- (1) Quartets were very popular at the time.
- (2) A chapter show in the fifties was literally a parade of quartets as choruses sang only a few numbers, so chapters typically hired multiple quartets.
- (3) So many small towns back then had a Barbershop chapter, many of which don't exist today.
- (4) International gold medalist quartets at least part of the time during this period had their performances booked by the International Society during their gold medal year and the established fee was sufficiently low that it enabled chapters to hire other quartets in addition to the top-of-the-line star attraction.
- (5) Quartets in general charged far less (even considering inflation) because they tended to live in the same community, thus making travel to shows and rehearsals less costly, and they paid comparatively little or nothing for music, coaching, and arranging compared to today.
- (6) Quartets tended to stay together longer than they do today so they became more visible to chapters and others.

In retrospect, I'm glad I was young during the period I've just described. And I'm doubly glad that all members of the **Hut Four** married women who allowed us to pursue this wonderful hobby of ours to the fullest extent. There were no divorces among members of the quartet (believe it or not), although we did curtail our schedule considerably when children came along. But I remember those busy days with fondness and regret that too many of today's

quartet participants get so little opportunity to experience the thrill of singing for the world's most welcoming and receptive assemblages--The Barbershop Audience.

## ALL TOGETHER THEY SPELL "BARBERSHOP!"

By Mo Babineau in St. Lambert, Quebec *Tempo*,  
Editor, R. Johnston

B Ballad, Baritone, Bass  
A Ability, Accomplish, Assurance  
R Reliability, Responsibility, Right?  
B Behave, Belong, Benefit  
E Eager, Emotion, Energy  
R Respect, Regular, Repertoire  
S Sing, Sevenths, Satisfaction  
H Harmony, Happy, Humor  
O Obliging, Optimistic, Organized  
P Please, Participate, Promptly

## True Facts

Armadillos can be housebroken.  
The first Fords had engines made by Dodge.  
A mole can dig a tunnel 300 feet long in just one night.  
Peanuts are one of the ingredients in dynamite.  
Ancient Egyptians slept on pillows made of stone.  
A hippo can open its mouth wide enough to fit a 4 foot tall child inside.  
A quarter has 119 grooves on its edge, a dime has one less groove.  
A hummingbird weighs less than a penny.  
Until 1796, there was a state in the United States called Franklin. Today it is known as Tennessee.  
The flashing warning light on the cylindrical Capitol Records tower spells out HOLLYWOOD in Morse code.  
Every time you lick a stamp, you're consuming 1/10 of a calorie.  
The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year.  
One in every 4 Americans has appeared on television.  
The average American will eat about 11.9 pounds of cereal per year.  
Over 1,000 birds a year die from smashing into windows.  
The State of Florida is bigger than England.  
Ants stretch when they wake up in the morning.  
Thomas Edison, light bulb inventor, was afraid of the dark.