Barbershop Notes
Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers (Inc.)
Mar - Apr 2008

Barbershop Notes
Issue 102

Think of the difference between a solo voice and a large, beautifully tuned chorus. A classic example of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. We all know a barbershop chorus, singing in perfect harmony, with heart, and energy, and passion, can move an audience to tears... sometimes tears of the heart, and sometimes tears of joy. It doesn't always happen, but when it does you know why you are an integral part of our precious artform.

Now consider a gathering with a multitude of quartets and choruses, including the very best of the best at a national Convention, at a Pan Pacific Convention, or at an International Convention. These events are also greater than the sum of their parts. And I'm not making this up. It's true! The intensity of feelings, the camaraderie, the realization that you are with several hundred guys that can feel what you're feeling... is indeed a wondrous thing, and no barbershopper should miss it.

I have had the privilege of being at every AAMBS national Convention since I arrived Down Under in 1995... and every PanPac Convention, and every Barbershop Harmony Society Internationals Convention since then. I know without a shadow of a doubt that these events are a source of inspiration, motivation, and fulfillment like nothing else we do in barbershopping. Now admittedly I'm a softie for moving barbershop experiences. I sometimes get choked up when my own quartet is singing Irish Blessing at the end of a rehearsal. But I am not exaggerating one bit in my feelings about barbershopping on a grand scale.

I just wish I had the eloquence to encourage, persuade, or plead with every single barbershopper in Australia to make a pledge to attend the great barbershop gatherings that happen around Australia, and around the World.

Comming up are the Regional Competitions, and the Pan Pacific Convention in October 30 – Nov 2 of this year in the paradise of Hawaii... with the Sweet Adelines Internationals in the same place on the following weekend. And then there is our next AAMBS Convention in Hobart in Sept 2009, with Harmony College for all, immediately following. And every 4th of July weekend in the US are Internationals, with the top quartets and choruses in the World, where you will be overwhelmed with the incredible music, the emotion, the humour, the excitement, the drama, and the unreserved friendship.

We all experience the joy of harmonizing, and the camaraderie of our weekly chorus sessions. It's a great thing... it's why we're barbershoppers. But now is the time to get organized as a group, talk to your chorus Board, and plan to experience the "big time" at a Barbershop Convention. Don't concede and settle for "why we can't"... find a way. You'll return home with memories you'll never forget.

In Harmony,
Mike Donnelly

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Barbershopping on a grand scale! What are you waiting for??

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From our VP Marketing

ENJOY AND ENTERTAIN

What is it with us guys? We so obviously enjoy getting together and singing each week. Relaxed and in good company, enjoying the banter before getting down to some serious work. Did I say "serious"? Is there a problem with that? Take a look at the Chorus DVD of the Sydney Convention. If you haven’t got one yet, order one and keep looking at it.

Why is it that during our most significant seven minutes of the year, being assessed, a large number virtually "freeze", even though they are trying not to? The songs have been learnt, the words known, mostly, (only kidding), vowels and consonants well rehearsed and yet? Rabbit smiles, sheer terror of some while others are sheer magic to behold. Why do people walk straight past us sometimes at sing outs in public places with barely an acknowledgement? Great mystery? Or is it. Okay let’s watch that DVD again. Mostly entertaining, to us anyway. Perth? Okay. Brisbane? Not bad. Hills? Very funny. Blenders? Outstanding in every department. Play their performance again and again. Yep! That is why they have been National Champions all those years and keep us all honest by keeping lifting the bar.

Remember the guy on the street in New York who asked a local for directions, “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?” And the quick answer came back, "Practice man, practice" Well we all do plenty of that; so what's the secret? We sometimes feel hobbled by the emphasis our genre puts on our performance requirements. "Realtime“ broke through the mould. Watch one of their performances on the DVDs available.

RELAX - ENJOY - ENTERTAIN. Get out and about and see as many entertainment styles as your time and budget will allow. You will be richly rewarded if you watch and listen carefully. Unlock the "secrets". Ask yourself why it is that a street performer can hold the attention of a passing audience for a full fifteen minutes while not seemingly doing much at all. Why does the performance of one actor hold you spellbound whilst others churn out their lines and create yawns?

There is whole lot more that Barbershop can offer the audiences out there with their songs and harmonies and the outstanding talents and skills that we know, collectively, we have. If we are going to market ourselves to a wider public we must earn their enthusiasm and appreciation. Our genre deserves it. Relax, enjoy, and above all ENTERTAIN! The very next time your audience politely claps, or worse, shows their indifference with their body language, be concerned. Be very concerned!

Next time you are walking the dog in the park, smile at those walking the other way. If your smile is genuinely sincere and warm, they will return the smile. If it is stagey or ghastly insincere, you might even get arrested. Think about it!

Derek Churchill

Ramblings from the desk of our VP Conventions

I recently received a letter from one of our choruses regarding the organization and running of AAMBS conventions. It was full of useful advice and suggestions. One sentence especially caught my attention.

The most crucial decision a convention committee must make is “do they wish to make the maximum amount of profit for AAMBS and their (local) chorus or do they want to offer maximum value to their fellow barbershop delegates?”

In reality, the former can only be achieved if the latter is satisfied. If we go chasing the profit for its own sake then we will surely fail. It is my intention that conventions be satisfying, interesting, challenging and above all ‘collegial’. It can only be all of these things if you are there and your needs are being met.

The convention is more than a competition. That’s why we have dinners, afterglows and other social events, workshops and forums. Then there is the Harmony Spectacular on Saturday night.

Are you coming to Hobart in 2009? If your immediate answer is “no” or “maybe” then you provide us with a challenge. Tell us, what is it that we have to do to make the idea of being part of convention move higher up your priority list? We want the experience to be so good that you want to sign up for Convention 11 as soon as Convention 10 is over.

None of us is a mind reader. Please don’t assume that we will know what you want. Please tell us your good idea or your concern so that we can share the experience of designing a great convention together.

Visit the convention website using the link on the AAMBS home page, go to the feedback section and submit your ideas as soon as possible – oh, and by the way, if you do it before March 31st you will be in the running for a prize.

Heritage Harmonizers

One of the ideas already under consideration is the formation of a Heritage Harmonisers Chorus to assist in the Big Sing and other convention events. At the last convention in Sydney only 13 of 30 clubs were represented in the Chorus Competition. Just imagine - if the other 17 clubs had just one of each voice part in the HH Chorus then it would already be 68 singers.

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Convention 11
Now is the time to start thinking about the location for Convention 11. Most convention committees like to have a full year to contemplate their options, and, of course, be ready to invite members to the next convention at the closing dinner on Convention Sunday. At this stage I am interested in expressions of interest and general enquiries before opening the bidding process formally. While not ruling any option in or out at this stage, wouldn’t it be great to visit some place new with 700-1000 singing mates?

Richard Gardam

From our VP Music
For many years, I have been concerned about the musical leadership within the Australian barbershop community. With certain exceptions at the higher level, there is a need for improvement in both skills and knowledge amongst our music team leaders.

To obtain significant improvement in our choruses, with a flow on to quartets, we need to provide continuous education for our singers: the occasional Harmony College only attracts a small percentage of our singers and occurs once every two years. Workshops, although effective, do not necessarily attract those that should attend. Continual education must therefore come from our Directors, Section Leaders, Judges, Coaches and visiting Luminaries. Let’s look at each of these in detail.

Directors - Of the thirty four choruses in AAMBS, only three could be considered to have experienced and “qualified” leaders in the barbershop style; the others have come up from the ranks, were the slowest to step back or have come from a good musical background: quite often without a cappella choral skills. Looking at competition scores for a combination of singing and music (the key indicator of overall chorus quality) it can be seen that, apart from the top three in these scores, the average chorus score has been 58.6% (2003), 47% (2005) and 55.8% (2007). As it stands all but two are in the "C" scoring level. This doesn’t take into account the 21 choruses who didn’t attend.

Section Leaders - From my experience, there are many cases where these are men who have the "qualifications" of being: the only ones who read music - have been singing barbershop the longest - do it because no one else will - have got the strongest voice - are in the director's quartet: you choose. Without training and a plan to work with the director to correctly coach their section in consonant singing, voice projection, etc., they are simply note and word monitors and add little to the development of the chorus and so the Director has to do it all anyway.

Judges - There are 6 Singing/Music Judges In AAMBS - 2 in Sunshine Region, 2 in Eastern Region and 2 in Western Region. Mostly they are not used by the "C" level choruses to assist at rehearsals. The use of judges as rehearsal coaches has a two way benefit: 1) to have a resource that can come on a regular basis to "remind" both director and singers as to what was agreed last time. 2) allows the judges to work with their skills and hone them towards "perfection", hence making them better judges (and better coaches).

Coaches - There are coaches available from many sources: Top quartets, top chorus directors (both AAMBS and SAI), singing teachers, etc.. They will cost some money to get them but they are a continuing resource. They can be used for a specific program to improve particular aspects of a chorus performance. Most choruses do not make use of these people.

Luminaries - We have had many visitors from overseas who have come and dazzled us with their knowledge and skills. Some have come as AAMBS sponsored coaches and have stayed in Australia for some months and visited all the regions. Others have made a quick visit to a region shortly before competition and have worked with a chorus and quartets to fine tune their performance. Whilst there has been a great deal of short term activity and enthusiasm, this has generally not been carried through into the following months and the training has been lost. Much of this is due to the chorus director lacking in the ability to absorb and then consistently re-teach the lessons learned. There are some directors so fixed in their way of doing things that it as if the coach never ever appeared and others who don’t want their inadequacies shown up in front of their chorus.

Following comments from the judges at the last competition, I believe that the plateau that the "C" level Choruses have reached is mostly due to their directors not having the ability to take that next step. To improve our overall choruses by Hobart, AAMBS is developing a plan to take this training to the choruses throughout the country, where directors can be coached individually with their own chorus. This will also improve the quality of performance in the "marketplace" which will, in turn attract better singers.

Ian Miller

From our Secretary
It seems that some Club Executives are still not keeping us up to date with their membership details, even though I keep reminding you that if you have not paid membership fees for the men on your risers or if any of your Quartets is not currently registered with AAMBS Public Liability Insurance Policy if they are in any way responsible for injury to members of the public attending a performance. This means that if they are involved in an accident either at a rehearsal, a singout, a workshop or a convention or any other Club event, then your individual Club could be held liable. Don’t say you haven’t been warned!

Sin(g)cerely, Kevin White
Australian Barbershop Quartet Challenge
Nominate your quartet NOW

In conjunction with the Sunshine Region Chorus and Quartet Competition

2 day weekend event
16th & 17th August 2008
George Hogg Auditorium - Ipswich Civic Hall
Nicholas St, Ipswich Central

Take the Challenge
♫ Open to all a capella singers (do not need to be a member of AAMBS)
♫ 4 part a capella harmony in the barbershop style
♫ International and Australian judges
♫ Evaluation and coaching school following the weekend

Categories
♫ Schools
♫ Collegiate (25yo & under)
♫ Open
♫ Seniors (min age 55yo - minimum total combined age 240)
♫ Mixed

For more information contact AAMBS secretary Kevin White on 0500 547 111
Email: secretary@aambs.org.au

Watch for the Entry Form on the AAMBS Website
www.aambs.org.au
AAMBS Eastern Region Workshop February 2008.

The Eastern Region Workshop was held over the weekend of Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th February 2008 at the Greenhills Convention Centre in Canberra and was attended by 58 very enthusiastic barbershoppers from eight separate choruses including Melbourne, Geelong, Wollongong, Canberra, the Central Coast and three Sydney choruses.

“The Red Chorus with Ian Miller at the helm belting out the Zip a Dee Doo Da with lots of smiley faces”

Events organizer and head coach Ian Miller very capably led the proceedings throughout with very able assistance from coaches Vicki Dwyer, Vicki Sutton and Danny Millgate.

Topics covered by the coaches included basic and advanced vocal technique, sight singing, section rehearsal technique, music and movement (very popular) and quartet training for both first comers and experienced groups.

The highlight was the Saturday evening concert where all attendees participated in one of two large choruses singing either Lazy River or Zip A Dee Doo Da plus a number of individuals performed various acts to the delight of the very receptive crowd.

Due to the success and popularity of the event and the venue, (even the food was good), the effort put in by the coaches and organizers, ER are looking at holding a similar event at the same venue at a similar time next year.

Bob Haynes
ER Secretary

FROM THE SUNSHINE REGION
WE HAVE A DATE!
IPSWICH 9am 16 August 2008.
DO NOT MISS ALL THESE FIRSTS ON A GREAT DAY
“INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL QUARTET CHALLENGE”
Integrated with
“THE 2008 SUNSHINE REGION QUARTET AND CHORUS COMPETITIONS”
Continuing at 7pm with
“THE CONCERT OF CHAMPIONS”

Visit www.ipswichcivichall.com.au to check out this superb new venue in Ipswich, the Civic Centre of the Fastest Growing Corridor in South-East Queensland.

Our hosts “Minor Chords” expect a sell-out concert and to gain new chorus members from the huge Public Exposure in a region where growth in “The Arts” matches the rapid population growth.

The Sunshine Region will organise Billets or other affordable accommodation in your choice of The Gold Coast, Brisbane, Ipswich or The Sunshine Coast.

Book early by completing the Entry Requirements publicised elsewhere in this issue of Barbershop Notes, call Trevor Remphrey on 0438 127 059 or (07) 3353 4556 or e-mail trevor@absbrisbane.com for further information.

The RIVER CITY CLIPPERS have booked for the PAN PACIFIC CONVENTION in Hawaii with over 40 members on the risers.

“The Clippers” have extended an invitation to other Barbershoppers registered with AAMBS in the Sunshine Region to join them on the risers in Hawaii.

Conditions apply with regard to prior attendance at practices and Boot Camp. If interested please call Trevor Remphrey at the above numbers or e-mail me at trevor@absbrisbane.com.

All of the above activity indicates the ever increasing strength within the Sunshine Region.

We expect further increases in membership this year, particularly in the region of Ipswich after the support and publicity for the National Quartet Challenge.

Please personally support the above activities to the best of your ability.

Trevor Remphrey
Chairman Sunshine Region

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Meet our new VP Marketing and Development

Derek Churchill has been singing bass with the Brisbane River City Clippers since July 1993 and has sung at the last seven AAMBS Barbershop Conventions. He attended the original Harmony College at Coolum and has been to several others. He has hosted members of overseas visiting quartets on many occasions. He was MC for the Quartet competitions at the Brisbane and Melbourne Conventions and also arranged the ticketing for the Concert in Brisbane.

Derek has been married to Vi for 44 years, has three adult children and seven grandchildren under seven. He is an ex-soccer player and water polo player. He was educated at Windsor Grammar School in England and graduated in Social Science from Southampton University. He undertook an exchange scholarship in America and served with the RAF in Malaya on active service for two years.

His background is in Real Estate. After coming to Australia and working with Caltex Oil for ten years, serving as Far North Queensland Manager and Darling Downs Manager, he branched out on his own and was one of the twelve originals who formed the Professionals in his office in June 1976. He took the concept to Melbourne and Western Australia, and was Vice Chairman of the Group. He was appointed to the Board of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland and served on the Board for seven years. He was Queensland Chairman of Multi-list for five years and National Chairman for three years. He was Senior Vice President of the Institute and made a fellow of the REIA. He was the first Australian Guest Speaker at the American Annual National Association of Realtors.

Until recently he was on the Board of the English Speaking Unions and has been President of Apex, Brisbane Beef Steak and Burgundy Club, North Star Soccer Club and Senior Vice President of the Windsor Historical Society.

AAMBS Eastern Region Canberra Workshop – February 2008

I sang my first barbershop tune last December (at a Sydney Harmony rehearsal), so I think it’s safe to say I was the greenest of the greenhorns at the Eastern Region workshop in Canberra last month. For what they’re worth, here are a beginner’s observations of the weekend.

Firstly, this is what we did. On Friday night we ate, sang, drank and sang, and slept. On Saturday we ate, sang, ate, sang, danced (in Vicki Sutton’s music and movement class), ate, sang in a concert, and drank and sang. And slept, eventually.

My inexperience was revealed on the first night, during a drinking/singing session in the C Block common room. Someone realized I didn’t know what a polecat was, and therefore, horror of horrors, didn’t even know the bari part for My Wild Irish Rose. It didn’t help that there were 20 singers in the room and I was the only baritone (we’re a rare breed!). Next time I will be fully prepared for all the golden oldies.

As a newcomer to all this, there were several moments during the weekend where I found myself thinking: “hmm, I wonder what my friends would think if they saw me now?!” Like in Ian Miller’s vocal techniques class when we all stood around seeing who could stick their tongue out the farthest, or in Vicki’s movement class when over forty blokes over forty (some of them WELL over!) tried to remember, doing the Time Warp. But it’s all part of the fun.

Then there were moments of sheer delight. Like when the blue chorus finally nailed Up A Lazy River; complete with outrageous choreography; the many goose bump-inducing performances at the concert; the note that Vicki Sutton held for what seemed like five minutes at the end of From The First Hello; and when the Sydney Harmony version of Irish Blessing sent chills up the collective spines back in the C Block common room.

And then there was that moment when I wished my friends HAD been there, when I sang on stage with a quartet for the very first time. Sadly everything Ian had taught us that morning about how to stand, how to relax your face etc was soon forgotten, as I spent the entire song trying to stop my right leg from shaking.

It’s only natural that a bunch of Aussie blokes on a weekend away from their partners would want to share an ale or three. But what makes you guys special is that the beer is just lubrication for the singing, especially after the concert on Saturday night. The only song we all knew was I Still Call Australia Home, but didn’t that sound amazing with all 60 of us in full voice. Mind you, a couple of the blokes proved that barbershop singing is a bit like playing pool or darts - your performance improves after the first two or three beers, but falls away badly after the fourth, fifth, sixth etc!

One final memory from that weekend will stay with me. On Saturday morning I went for an eight km run along the road towards Canberra before breakfast. I had the sun rising over the fields ahead of me, the full moon setting over the hills behind me, and the baritone practice tape for Waltz for Debbie playing on my ipod. It was a magic moment, and I hope the workshop will be back at Greenhills next year, so we can do it all again.

Tim Wilson

News from The Brisbane River City Clippers

Life is full and life is fun for the members and supporters of the Brisbane River City Clippers. The Christmas break was enjoyed by all but all that seems long gone, as the chorus girds its loins for a very busy 2008.

Already, at the invitation of our sponsors Radio 4BC/BH, we have been involved in a very different performance. The Brisbane broadcasters conducted their breakfast show on Valentine’s Day at the Queensland State Library at Southbank, where sixty invited couples made a public (on air) renewal of their vows to their respective partners. Such a different occasion had the Clippers perform a selection of their favourite love songs, which drew warm applause from the guests. All this at 7.00am in the morning meant jumping out of bed at quite a
ridiculous hour to make the journey to the venue by 6.30am, warm up voices and be ready to perform on time. But then Clippers men are tough men and notched up yet another good job.

Just five days after the St Valentine’s Day performance a team of dedicated chefs and their supporting partners conducted a sausage sizzle at Bunnings Store, Mt Gravatt. Once again the Clippers delivered the finest sizzling sausages in the country. With the many opportunities provided to us by Bunnings to delight the Brisbane public with culinary delights, many chorus members have developed such a level of skills that they may launch a new career in the restaurant industry.

Early March saw us cooking and singing our way through a Sunday at Bunnings Store Rothwell. The Clippers are enormously grateful to our great supporters Bunnings for the opportunities they offer to the chorus. As members of choruses all around Australia would know the costs involved in maintaining a large chorus are considerable and support from sponsors and supporters is vital to existence.

March 14th –16th saw the Clippers in serious weekend workshop mode with our very popular and deeply valued clinician Virginia Humphrey-Taylor, who once again made the journey from the “Land of the Long White Cloud” to be with us. Little more can be said of Virginia’s time with us, other than, “Brilliant”!

With eyes firmly set on Hawaii for the Pan Pacific Convention in late October, the chorus will stash away in the memory bank all the learnings from the time spent with Virginia, in their aim to be the best they can be, as proud Australian representatives at this International Convention.

The Clippers are deeply indebted to Cheryl Ivess, wife of member Mike Ivess, who has navigated her way along the very challenging path of arrangements involved in sending a large party of approximately forty Clippers and twenty-five partners on their way to the Pan Pacific Convention. Twenty-five Clippers and their partners are then set to follow up the event with a six-day cruise of the Hawaiian Islands, which Cheryl has also set in place.

Amongst all that happens at the Clippers our Wednesday night gatherings are the core of what we are – a fellowship of friends bound together by our commitment to make those chords ring and provide good entertainment for all who stop to listen.

THE MELBOURNAIRES
MEN’S BARBERSHOP CHORUS

READY TO TEACH SINGING!

Not content just to be recognised as one of Victoria’s most highly regarded male harmony choruses, the Melbourne based “Melbournaires” is increasingly being recognised for their now annual “SING in HARMONY” courses.

Interested potential singers are encouraged through the media to register for the 6 weeks course which is taking place each Monday evening from the 7th April 2008.

Those who attend will be given some basic voice training and music orientation as well as useful course material. During the training they will sing with the “Melbournaires” and at the end of the six weeks join them in a concert to show off their newly developed skills.

There are not many opportunities in this life to sample a latent skill in this way and have that interest developed on a totally free course. However that is what will happen on the 7th April and already there have been a large number of registered “students”. It is exciting to have interested singers join the chorus bringing new blood and talents to the risers.

For the first time the course is being supported by the Manningham City Council through the Community Development Grant Program – further testimony to the growing stature of the course.

The “Melbournaires” are very keen to welcome this year’s students and make them feel comfortable with their new interest. If there any potential male singers who would like to register for the course please contact Peter on (03) 9815 0961

Bill Kennedy

Every AAMBS Member Should Read This Truly Inspirational Speech by Dr Jim Henry

Your editor received a request from Rob Walley of Sydney Harmony for us to reproduce the “Gold Medal Moments” article by Dr Jim Henry, from a recent issue of The Harmonizer, in this edition of Barbershop Notes. As the article is long and detailed (it runs from Pages 16 to 25!) it is not possible to include the full article in BSN. Here is a snippet to whet your appetite:

“Don’t take a half-hearted effort to audiences and proclaim ‘this is barbershop.’ Don’t just sing as if it were a hobby, sing as if it were your life. Sing with the fullest measure of your intelligence and spirit, For, you see, it isn’t just a hobby; it is a ministry. You might not consider it a Christian ministry, but it is a ministry nonetheless. You are making a positive difference in people’s lives. And your own. You’re bringing beauty and art to the world.”

So, gentlemen, we recommend most strongly that you borrow a copy of the November / December 2007 issue of The Harmonizer from your Club executive and read the article yourselves.

Inspirational - is the word!
Prior to the 2007 National Convention, Hills Harmony Chorus realised their quartets, including a novice quartet, needed more time in front of an audience and could benefit by experiencing a proper “Contest” environment.

Thinking that quartets from other Eastern Region choruses might also gain a boost, they extended an invitation to all, and committed to going ahead irrespective of the response.

The result was a terrific night of fun, fellowship and fine singing, with 11 quartets in a proper Contest-like setup which included formal registration, running sheet, traffic pattern, introductions, stage entry and exit, rousing and enthusiastic applause, and access to the three judges presiding, all of whom had been asked to give a less formal assessment and critique to those who requested it.

So successful was the evening that the chorus has now made it an annual event, expecting that the more often our quartets put themselves to the test, the more comfortable they will become in front of an audience, whether or not a table of judges are present.

This year, the HILLS HARMONY 2nd ANNUAL BARBERSHOP CONTEST is being held on Saturday afternoon 19th April 2008 in the hall of the Galston Uniting Church, in the northern quarter of the lovely Hills district of Sydney.

We cordially invite any quartet of any level of experience to come and have a sing with us. Please contact Ian Fraser on (02) 4739 3859, or email singerdad@optusnet.com.au for entry details.

The rules are basically:-
Rule 1: The two songs you sing need to be in the barbershop style, and of a nature that would be acceptable if sung in a proper AAMBS Contest
Rule 2: You MUST have fun.
Rule 3: Refer to Rule 2
Rule 4: Refer to Rules 2 and 3 above.

But wait, There’s more! This year we’ve opened the contest to CHORUSES as well.

Please do come along and join us for another afternoon of fun, fellowship and fine music with yours friends at Hills Harmony. You’ll be very welcome indeed. Ian Fraser

Further details and Entry Forms available from Ian Fraser 4739 3859
(Email singerdad@optusnet.com.au )
Greetings to all Barbershopers, from Adelaide. Although you don’t hear a lot from us, it does NOT mean we are not active. We have two very active choruses and a couple of active quartets. These include:

**The Festival Statesmen**

We are part of Western Region, and in that capacity, we are hosting our **THIRD** combined event. **West Coast Chordsmen** and several members of **South Side Harmony** with their partners will join us on 29th April for six days of fellowship and workshops, culminating in a programme at the **ROYALTY THEATRE** in Adelaide on Sat. May 3rd at 7:00pm. All sections will be performing in their own right, with a finale of massed voices. Guest Artists for the evening include:

**“SISTERS OF ABUNDANCE”**
An a capella group from ‘Down South’

**The “FISH BOWL BOYS”**
Current AAMBS High School Quartet Champions

And **“MARK SMITH”**
Current 3 times Australian Champion Trumpet and current Australian Flugelhorn Champion.

No doubt an exciting week for all, finishing with a Church service and a Farewell Dinner on Sunday. This would not be possible without cooperation from all the Choruses and especially the hard working guys on committees.

A successful event may well pave the way to greater events in the future which will assist in the advancement of Barbershop Choruses in Australia

Enquiries can be made through:
Rod Whyte, rodini@aapt.net.au
Secretary of Voices in Harmony Committee

Yours in Harmony, Graham Whetter

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**BELIEVE IT OR NOT ……. WE ARE NOT PSYCHIC !!**

It seems that a number of Clubs think that we automatically know when you have a change to your Executive – sorry, we don’t! So -- unless you keep us up to date with your contact details you will miss out on notices of AAMBS related topics.

So, Gentlemen – please take special care to let the AAMBS Secretary know of any changes to your Executive line-up and / or their contact details. In this way you won’t miss out on receiving relevant information from AAMBS.
Heritage Harmony 2009 a great success.

We also asked for BIG IDEAS to help us work towards making Heritage Harmony 2009 a great success.

Here's a taste of what members are saying:

- There is strong support for a pre-convention Wednesday offering of workshops for club administrators, musical directors and/or singers. To date we have had suggestions for workshop topics as well as offers to lead workshops.

- There is very strong support for a Heritage Harmonizers Chorus. We are thinking of having a special chorus created just for the convention. This would be primarily for delegates who are not part of a competing chorus, but anyone who is interested would be most welcome. This chorus would lead the massed singing on the Thursday. Other singing opportunities would be provided. Participants would be sent a learning CD and scores to allow them to prepare in advance. Rehearsal for the chorus would be on the Wednesday before convention.

- There is overwhelming support for Singing in the City. The idea is to invite quartets to perform in Hobart stores, restaurants and public places to promote the convention. We are thinking Wednesday would be a good day.

- There is strong support for a reception at Cascade Brewery on the Wednesday evening.

And among the BIG IDEAS:

- Organise the Saturday evening afterglow so that quartets who want to sing can do so in a quiet environment. The suggestion is for a separate room to the main afterglow room.

- Make sure the Saturday night Harmony Spectacular doesn’t finish too late, providing plenty of time for the afterglow. With a 7.30 start the concert could finish by 10.00pm.

- Send out copies of the newer tags so that less experienced singers can join in.

These are just some of the ideas we have received to date. The survey remains open until the end of March. To give your input go to http://www.hmbhc.intas.net/Convention2009/Welcome.html.

And don’t forget, all entrants are entered in a draw for a year’s subscription to Tasmania 40 South.

Trevor Rootes
The next few hours were quite eventful as they were spent at St Vincent's Hospital Accident and Emergency department. It was... how can I say... Interesting to be in Sydney City's busiest A&E dept on a Saturday night, Midnight till 3:30am. Through a mild haze of a cocktail comprising multiple Panadine Forte and Ibuprofin tablets, I semi-blissfully watched the goings-on around me with an icepack on my knee and still wearing our trade-mark red suit pants until a doctor came and checked me out and gave me crutches and a leg-brace. These would prove to be my close companions for the rest of the convention which began 3 hours later with the Blenders Breakfast prior to the Chorus contest. I had now resigned myself to having no hope of doing any kind of justice to my position on the front row other than perhaps a sympathy vote. Whilst my brothers around me were very supportive of my plight, I was feeling pretty low within my own mind that morning whilst trying to appear positive and unaffected.

As I hobbled into the big auditorium and was helped up onto stage, I could hear the murmuring amongst the applause as I took my "new riser spot" on the first row of the risers for the chorus comp performance. I had run through the riser choreography several times that morning as it was quite different from the front row choreo I had locked in from the months of rehearsal in the lead up and I hoped and prayed to myself that I wouldn't mess it up too bad. Once again we were done and off stage in what seemed like the same nano-second. As it happened I managed to get most of it right and didn't look too much out of place. I set about doing some practice and decided to perform the front row choreo in the evening showcase in my normal front row spot and nailed it. I did this more for my own spirit but I think the audience (or at least those who knew) got a kick out of it as well.

My second big goal for the convention was to sing "No More Blues" with Idea of North at the afterglow where Nick Begbie stood out and I sang his tenor part that I had spent the past month or so learning by listening to their CD a million times. It was such a thrill that for those few moments I forgot all about the knee and the associated hassles that would lay before me. Other than being slow to get around and now also having multiple bruises in my arm-pits from the crutches, I went on to thoroughly enjoy Harmony College and self medicated in the evenings with Jim Beam and Coke, a very powerful pain reliever.

Fast Forward (no pun intended) to several months later, and having had a Knee reconstruction to replace the torn Anterior Cruciate Ligament with one harvested from the tendon that runs down the front of the same knee-cap and also various repairs to the Meniscous (cartilage section that supports the movement of the knee) and the most painful part of the whole process which was the physiotherapy (the cruel and sadistic means of getting the patient up and walking again) - I am now walking relatively normally.

Two days after the surgery, the Blenders and I travelled to Australia Zoo where we were invited to perform for the International Steve Irwin Day along with Olivia Newton-John and Jimmy Barnes. I was honoured to sing solo John Williamson's "Home Among the Gumtrees" and "True Blue" with Jonno Albertini on Acoustic Guitar to a packed Crocoseum. As they say, the show must go on.

I would like to take this opportunity thank all of you who wished me well after the injury with the exception of those who, before we competed said: "Break a Leg!" (You know who you are) I will try not to take you so literally next time...

Mitch Bruger, Publicity Officer, The Blenders

Music Director for The Southern Highlandaires

The Southern Highlands Men's Barbershop Chorus is fishing.

We have been without an official, full time Music Director for well over a year. In that time we have greatly increased our membership and attracted much interest and many regular engagements.

The work ethic and individual responsibility to learning, practice and performance, shouldered by each member has been responsible for our gains. We have qualified musicians and teachers, who understand harmony, as guests every few weeks. Their input is always excellent. Even our tenors behave themselves.

We would love to keep the club spirit and our guests while also gaining a full time Music Director.

Anyone who is interested is invited to email

Ray Hill: ray_h@hnh.org.au
or Brendan Akhurst: oakwood@hinet.net.au

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## AAMBS CALENDAR – 2008- 2011

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<th>JAN</th>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>BHS International Mid-Winter Convention</td>
<td>AAMBS Council Meeting</td>
<td>BHS International Convention Anaheim CA 28- 5 July</td>
<td>NZABS Quartet Regionals</td>
<td>AAMBS Council Meeting</td>
<td>NZABS Quartet Regionals Harmony University Missouri USA 26-Aug 2</td>
<td>AAMBS Council Meeting</td>
<td>AAMBS 10th National Convention Hobart Tas 24-27 AAMBS Harmony College</td>
<td>AAMBS Harmony College - Tasmania</td>
<td>AAMBS Council Meeting</td>
<td>SAI International Nashville TN USA 3 - 7</td>
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<td>BHS International Mid-Winter Convention</td>
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<td>AAMBS Council Meeting</td>
<td>BHS International Convention Philadelphia PA 27 – 4 July</td>
<td>NZABS Quartet Regionals Harmony University Missouri 25 – 1 Aug</td>
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<td>NZABS 21st Convention Hamilton</td>
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<td>SAI International TBA</td>
<td>AAMBS Annual General Meeting</td>
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THE AAMBS COUNCIL

President
Mike Donnelly
12 Jutland Rise
OCEAN REEF WA 6027
Phone/fax: 08 9300 5430
Mobile: 0432 802 296
Email: president@aambs.org.au

VP Marketing & Development
Derek Churchill
95 Montpelier Street
Wilston Qld 4051
Phone: 07 3356 7379
Email: marketing@aambs.org.au

VP Conventions
Richard Gardam
P O Box 88
SNUG Tas 7054
Phone: 03 6267 9265
Mobile: 0403 396 515
Email: conventions@aambs.org.au

VP Youth Development
Steve Griffin
330 Rio Vista Boulevard
Mermaid Waters QLD 4218
Phone: 0411 951 259
Fax: 07 5572 3659
Email: youth@aambs.org.au

Secretary
Kevin White
P O Box 6026
WEST GOSFORD NSW 2250
Phone: 02 4369 8369
Fax: 02 4369 8379
Email: secretary@aambs.org.au

Treasurer
Barry Joy
1 / 23 Hooker Boulevard
Broadbeach Waters QLD 4218
Phone: 07 5572 0284
Mobile: 0403 979 643
Email: treasurer@aambs.org.au

VP Membership
Tom Smith
50 Hinkler Drive
MILL PARK VIC 3082
Phone: 03 9404 1216
Fax: 03 9437 7847
Email: membership@aambs.org.au

VP Music
Ian Miller
20 Mimosa Road
BUDGEWOI NSW 2261
Phone: 02 4390 3893
Mobile: 0408 620 921
Email: music@aambs.org.au

Send your items for Barbershop Notes in 9 pt Arial font to:
secretary@aambs.org.au

The deadline for receipt of material is 15th of each odd numbered month –
January
March
May
July
September
November