Hi Barbershoppers,

The immediate satisfaction and enjoyment of our unique artform of singing in the barbershop style comes from our weekly chorus and quartet sessions, and from the performances we continually share with the public. The hard work and dedication of AAMBS members continues to raise the level of our singing and performances. In fact, several judges from Internationals have said the “average” Australian chorus sings as well or better than the “average” chorus of any country in the World, including the United States. We should be proud of this, and continue to work hard at our craft, while we are having fun.

With all the great things going on right here in Australia you may not know our distinguished spot in the “Barbershop Universe.” The founding organization, and still by far the largest, was SPEBSQSA. Founded in an age when acronyms were all the rage, and bigger was better, this stood for “The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America.” Chapters were formed from south Texas to Alaska, and Hawaii to Maine. A few years back the name was changed to “Barbershop Harmony Society” in the hopes that a shorter name would make it easier for us to talk about the Society when recruiting new members. There are 9 affiliates of the BHS. By acronym they are AAMBS, BABS, BingI, DABS, FABS, IABS, NZABS, SNOBS, and SPATS, standing roughly and respectively, for Australia, Britain, Germany, Holland, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, and South Africa. And at the highest level is the World Harmony Council, which contains BHS and the affiliates above, as well as the thousands of ladies in our sister organizations, Sweet Adelines International, Harmony Incorporated, Holland Harmony, and the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers, So the almost 1000 members of AAMBS are part of the worldwide barbershop fraternity of over 100,000 of our contemporaries.

At the very pinnacle of our artform are a new World Champion Chorus and Quartet. Given their Gold Medals last week at the International Competition in Nashville, Tennessee, were The Masters of Harmony, and OC Times. It is just amazing to hear the sound and performances presented at the highest level of our craft. If you can, get a CD or DVD from the BHS marketplace, or borrow one from the AAMBS library, and see what the champions can do……… it’s awesome!!

In Harmony,
Mike Donnelly

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From our Secretary

QUARTETS

Here is a repeat warning to you all which is outlined again as some Quartets are still not registering with AAMBS before entering AAMBS competitions.

1. Each year you MUST RE-REGISTER your quartet with the current AAMBS Secretary and show the current line up. If your quarter members are financial members of AAMBS registration is free. If your quartet members are not financial members of AAMBS there is a $60.00 registration fee. Once you have re-registered you will be sent your official QUARTET REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION.

2. When submitting an entry form to compete in any AAMBS competition, whether it be Regional or National, you MUST INCLUDE A COPY OF YOUR CURRENT CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION OF YOUR QUARTET with your Competition Entry Form. If you fail to do so you cannot be considered for a place in the competition.

3. When competing overseas as a representative of AAMBS YOU MUST BE REGISTERED FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

CHORUSES

1. You must re-register your Chorus with the AAMBS Secretary each year and, like Quartets, you MUST INCLUDE A COPY OF YOUR CHORUS REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION with your entry form whenever you are entering an AAMBS Competition.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPETITION COMMITTEES

1. When accepting entries for your Regional competitions you MUST SIGHT a copy of the current Registration Confirmation for each Chorus and Quartet applying for entry into your competition.

Sin(g)cerely,
Kevin White

From our Treasurer

AAMBS insurance cover

AAMBS provides all registered clubs, quartets and members with insurance cover for public liability. It is for an amount of $20 million and is current until 1st June 2009 when it will be renewed.

The policy is arranged at Lloyds of London by Sportscove Australia Pty Ltd under instructions from our broker, DanceSurance Australia. A copy of the Certificate of Insurance Currency has been provided to each club secretary and is available to produce whenever a venue may request evidence that an appropriate policy is in place.

Apart from USA/Canada the cover is worldwide. It is designed to indemnify against any claims made by a member of the public that they suffered injury as a result of an accident at a performance given by an AAMBS registered chorus or quartet.

This policy does not cover an accident to an AAMBS member who is performing. AAMBS Council has received several enquiries about the possibility of taking out an additional insurance policy to protect members in the event of an accident at a club rehearsal or function.

After researching the cost and cover available AAMBS Council has taken out, on a trial basis, an Accident Policy for members. It is current until 1st March 2009 when it will be reviewed and a decision made if it will be continued.

A copy of the Policy Schedule has been provided to each club secretary and further details are coming.

Yours, in financial harmony

National Treasurer

Issue 104 Barbershop Notes – July / August 2008
From our VP Music

THE NEED FOR MUSICAL LEADERSHIP.

It was fascinating to read, in the May/June Harmonizer, the individual stories from the youth choruses that competed at the first Youth Festival held at the 2008 Midwinter Convention. The enthusiasm, camaraderie and commitment shown by young men would surpass most of our “less youthful” choruses in Australia.

The Marcsmen put 28 men on the risers with an average age of 20 years. Their first rehearsal was held on Nov 16th 2007 with 10 guys attending. A few more rehearsals saw the Christmas break dent their progress a little as there were only 6 at their early January rehearsal. On January the 26th, they went on stage and won.

How did this happen? Well, most of the singers are music education students but these are mainly instrumentalists: the singing students were too busy singing in other areas. That gets the problem of reading and learning music quickly resolved. Young minds already involved with serious study should have no problem with learning the relatively few lyrics in 50 or 60 bars of music: another problem overcome.

The last musical hurdle that had to be overcome was musical leadership. Brent Dunavant, assistant director with the Heart of Texas chorus, is their director and although Brent is young and also a music student he brought a high level of skill and experience to his singers through older associates and coaches from the HOT chorus who must have worked tirelessly with these young men to achieve this great result.

What does this mean for us in AAMBS?

With our current push to get involved with schools and youth we have to be able to move at their pace not ours. Every Region and State has to be able to provide the necessary musical support to ensure that these young minds remain completely captured by their first experience of our craft. If we are unable to maintain their required progress, some other road will become more attractive and they will be lost to us. It has been clearly seen that young men can work wonders if given the right tools, environment and training.

As we start to work into the schools, universities and other areas we must be able to provide educators for both singers and directors: if directors are not instantly available from within the institution, then we must provide them. At the present, I believe that we do not have the necessary skills available to cover the whole country effectively. The resources must be local and be available “on Call” if required.

At the end of this month, I will be attending Director’s College in the USA, and apart from learning much to bring back with me, I will be developing a plan, with the assistance of a number of experts at the college, for continuing music leadership education in Australia. I would like all chorus directors to think about their own limitations and needs (don’t tell me you haven’t any) and let me know them. My aim, at this stage, is to work individually with directors in their own environment and with their own choruses.

See you all in September
Ian Miller

From our VP Marketing

DON'T BE SHY. FACE YOUR LIONS

Okay we all love singing and going to weekly practice where we enjoy convivial company. If we didn't we just wouldn't go would we? Our uncertainties begin there. Are we good enough to be singing with these guys? Are we spending enough time learning our parts? It's a big ask and we have enough to do without getting involved with the actual running of the Chorus and its promotion. Let the dominant guys and organisers do that. Right? WRONG!!!

So many of our Choruses are struggling and not entirely happy with having between twenty and thirty members. Or even worse, twelve to nineteen. If we only had just ten more to hide those gaps which we know are there when the occasional wrong note creeps in. Lucky Blenders huh, with all those fellows on the risers making such a big sound. No, not lucky, they've worked on it for many years and attract members because they are successful.

Just three years ago Brisbane's River City Clippers were at the crossroads when an ego outburst caused many members to leave. Numbers were down to 22 (from 50) and one of the remaining Basses was under pressure to be recruited elsewhere. He had other ideas and had been raised to believe in an ideal called loyalty. Determinedly he took personal action to turn the tragedy around, calling up media favours and holding impromptu auditions in the Queen Street mall. The Clippers now command a respectable 60 membership and are looking for more,
This one singer, John Shelton (Bass of "Who's Counting") has a lot to be proud of and the atmosphere on the risers has never been happier (and noisier says MD Don Godfrey). So what's the point?

The point is that AAMBS currently has a membership of over 800. If every single current member grudgingly admitted, yes, it is up to me I can't be shy and retiring any longer, and committed themselves over the next twelve months to introduce just one friend or contact to come along with them one night for a listen to their chorus all our MD's would be happier. With 1600 members our smaller choruses would be larger and the rafters would really ring in Hobart next year. So called small choruses would no longer be too shy to turn up to regional Competitions let alone the awesome Nationals.

The public out there can be forgiven for not always giving Barbershop singing the appreciation that its talent so richly deserves if we individually are not doing more to enlarge our Chorus. MAKE THE COMMITMENT. DON'T BE SHY AND FACE YOUR LIONS!!

N.B. The Great Australian Quartet Challenge in Ipswich Qld on August 16th and 17th still has vacancies in the line up. It’s is not too late. Get your Quartet organised, jump in the car and enjoy some Minor Chords and Queensland hospitality. Contact Kevin White, AAMBS Secretary, this week. (entry forms available on our website – www.aambs.org.au)

From our VP Conventions

THINK DIFFERENT ……

At the Harmony College conducted after the recent Sydney convention, I was engaged in conversation by a number of barbershoppers whose choruses were encountering the same sorts of problems that we in Hobart had grappled with – recruitment of younger singers and the effect of preparing for competition where not all members were attending convention. In addition there was the problem of retaining older members where night rehearsals were becoming too difficult.

I was reminded of the statement which I read in a Harmoniser article some years back: “If you keep doing the same things, don’t be surprised if you keep getting the same result.”

The purpose of this article is to get people to think “different” rather than “the same”. In the case of the Wellingtones Chorus, we decided to restructure and rename the Club.

You can imagine what goes through a young person’s mind when he comes to your chorus for the first time. “They are so old!” Next week he is nowhere to be seen.

Of course, we know that if the young singer stays around a while he will discover that the “oldies” are alright. What to do? In our case, we decided to form a youth chorus that would meet in a separate room at the same time at the same venue as the open chorus. In order that the youth chorus members feel that they are part of the whole club; there are planned combined activities and repertoire. Sometimes we warm up together with the Youth Chorus Director taking the warm up. Sometimes we finish the evening by working on a combined repertoire piece. Sometimes we organise a social event – barbecue, ten pin bowling night.

Some of our senior members have trouble driving at night. They also tend to tire more readily. Being retired, however, they have time to do things during the day.

We decided to maintain their membership of the Club by forming a Senior Chorus which could meet for rehearsals and performances during the day. This chorus has its own repertoire as well as some combined repertoire with the rest of the Club. It also helps us fill our public service responsibilities by regularly performing at retirement villages and other community venues. This chorus puts on a one hour concert featuring solos and sing-a-long items. It rehearses on the first and third Friday of each month at a member’s home.

Some of our members are interested in the Convention & Competition scene, others, not. To allow for that but not impinge on rehearsal space for the other groups we decided to create a “travelling chorus”. Any member of a Club Chorus and/or quartet, plus any other interested person, can come together at a different venue and time to specifically work on two competition pieces. After Convention, the travelling chorus goes into recess for 12 months before beginning the preparation for the next Convention.

In the lay-off period, the music committee selects two suitable pieces and a quartet undertakes to work with the MD to develop the interpretation. When the Chorus meets there is already a learning program in place.

So, there we are. Our club is now the Hobart Men’s Barbershop Harmony Club Inc. with four choruses: Tag Team for Youth, The Silvertones for Seniors, The Wellingtones and the Competition Chorus - Deep South. There are some Club members who are in three Choruses and a quartet as well!

Should you follow our model? If that suits your needs, well and good. The more important thing is to begin to think “different”. Richard Gardam
CALLING POTENTIAL JUDGES & CONTEST ADMINISTRATORS

Have you ever sat in the audience at a contest and wondered how the judges derived their scores? Did you ever disagree with the ranking given in a contest? Did you think you could have done a better job? Are you interested in developing your barbershop skills to a whole new level? Are you interested in making a contribution by becoming a Contest Administrator?

Do you think you have what it takes to be a Judge or Contest Administrator? If you do, AAMBS needs YOU!

We have openings in all Judging categories to be candidates at our next Contest & Judging School to be held in Hobart from 19-22 September 2009, just before the 10th AAMBS Convention.

The process is simple, just apply to Contest & Judging Chairman, Ian Mulholland, on synmul@bigpond.net.au, or phone him on 0418-956-492. Ian will tell you what hoops you need to jump through (there aren’t many), and soon you could have the best seat in the house at the next contest!

Ian Mulholland
Chairman – Judges

NO MORE FREE CALLS…. 

Telstra has recently cancelled their 0500 free call service – which covered your calls to the AAMBS Secretary and for which AAMBS picked up the Nationwide charges.

You will see on our updated letterhead, website and BSN Contact page that the number for the AAMBS Secretary is now his home phone number – 02 4369 8369.

So from now on you will have to pay for your phone calls to him.
SUNSHINE REGIONALS
16th August 2008
Ipswich Civic Centre

WHERE ARE THE MISSING QUARTETS?

Now is your last chance to enter the inaugural
NATIONAL QUARTET CHALLENGE
You must be In it to Win it!
Book your spot now
(Free beds still available)

All entry forms & fees must by received by 31 July
(Mailed to AAMBS Secretary, P O Box 6026, West Gosford NSW 2250)
Forms available on the AAMBS Website – www.aambs.org.au

The Choruses from the Sunshine Region are coming from as far afield as -
Gympie
Toowoomba
and the
Gold Coast
But where are all the quartets!

Ipswich City Council has backed the Miner Chords to ensure full public support and a great day concluding with the Parade of Champions
It was early on a grey morning when 60 members of The Blenders left on the bus to Sydney to record their first Battle of the Choirs at the Channel 7 studios in Sydney. A crowd of fans and family waved them good bye amongst “Go Blenders Go” banners. Lachlan Grant, who at age 11 is the most junior member, was farewelled by Alex Maitland, the oldest member, who was 86 years young.

Being a TV star is not as easy as it sometimes appears, as over 700 participants in 16 choirs were soon to discover. The hard work started early in the morning while travelling to the studios. Reminders such as, “Don’t forget your gear” and “Is everyone on the bus?” got the guys in the mood and moving in the right direction. After a full day of rehearsing, last-minute choreography changes, learning, singing, posing for the cameras and a full rehearsal in the studio, the moment of truth finally arrived.

The first notes of the show’s theme song started and about two hundred voices start singing “I’ve got the music in me” together with a whole lotta shakin’ going on. What a powerful opening! The cameras were buzzing over the performers’ heads like UFOs, the spotlights were on and the excitement was at its peak. David Koch, the moderator of the show, did a great job and one could tell right away that he’s a pro. But oops – he said something wrong. No worries, mate – it’s not a live broadcast – just record it all over again. One more time, “I’ve got the music in me…”

The first heat there were four choirs battling against each other. Each choir had to choose a 90 second song for this round, followed by a medley sung by all the choirs. The parts of the medley were given to the participants only one day before. It was a real challenge trying to come up with a winning combination! After that the jury had to decide about the ranking. The competition rules state that the number one choir goes right away to the next round and number four is out of the race. All choirs receive two battle songs two weeks before the show. If they come in second or third they have to fight it out for the privilege of continuing and the losers have to pack up for home.

The Blenders impressed everyone with their rendition of “Man In The Mirror”. Michael Jackson’s hit was excellently arranged by “The Idea Of North” and Naomi Crellin. The choreography came across brilliantly as well, and The Blenders managed to make Charli Delaney shed a tear or two. Well done Blenders! The medley did not suit the chorus as well, because Kylie Minogue’s hit “I’m Spinning Around” was written too high for the male barbershop singers and did not necessarily fit their style. That being said, The Blenders had no choice and they managed to turn this girly song into a bloke’s song – “I know you’re feelin’ me ‘cause you like it like this”.

We all know how the story went from there – The Blenders marched right through to the quarter finals amid tears shed by the girls of “Cantabile” who had to go home early.

The Blenders’ joy was somewhat dampened when they heard the sad news that their oldest member Alex – the guy who waved good bye in the morning – had passed peacefully away. They dedicated their interpretation of “The Lord’s Prayer” to him at the end of the show, as Alex accompanied them from above with a smile.

At the end of the day the show was a great success for The Blenders. It demonstrated that team spirit, hard work and relentless insistence on quality can bring out the best in a person and a group. Thanks to all who helped to make this happen. You can also be sure that the beer at the Irish Pub after the show soothed those tired vocal cords as well! Now we can’t wait to see how the story goes on. But you will have to wait for some weeks until The Blenders are back in the Battle Of The Choirs. Cross fingers that they might get to the next stage again. You can find more on the Gold Coast Chorus at www.theblenders.com.au

Gunther Illek
PR Co-ordinator

Vocal Evolution

Vocal Evolution is pleased to announce the appointment of Alex Morris as its new Musical Director. Alex was previous Assistant MD and is currently studying for a Bachelor of Music (composition) at the University of WA. VE is grateful for the work Gina D’Souza did for the first 6 years of VE’s life, taking the chorus to three national conventions securing a bronze and two silver medals. Gina has left the
chorus in strong shape for Alex to put his own stamp on its development.

The Western Region convention was held over the weekend of 20-22 June. We congratulate all competitors and are proud that VE’s quartets did particularly well. Three Men and a Tenor won the youth section and placed third in the open. Nexus continues to improve and won the silver medal; and Alliance was thrilled to take out the gold. The Western Region board worked hard to organise the weekend and Vocal Evolution enjoyed singing at the social choruses evening on the Friday and in the showcase with the quartets on the Saturday night. We hope this even can get bigger and better each year.

Vocal Evolution was also very proud at the news that its very own Alliance has recently been invited to represent AAMBS at the Barbershop Harmony Society international convention in 2009 in Anaheim (LA) and has accepted the invitation. VE, and I’m sure all Australian barbershoppers, wish Alliance every success.

As part of the Wester Region weekend, Alliance launched its debut CD, “Anthem”. VE is proud of the guys for all the hard work and wishes them well with CD sales. For a copy of the CD visit www.alliancequartet.com. Sales will help the guys fund their trip to international next year.

Bob Pyper, from The Northern Lights chorus in Canada, is currently visiting Perth for a couple of weeks and is kindly lending a hand to VE. His first rehearsal was Monday 14th July and Ash (VE Music VP) is busily scheduling a range of rehearsals and meetings to make use of Bob’s considerable expertise and good-will. We thank Bob very much for making himself available. As part of our thanks, we’re taking Bob to see the Wallabies play the Springboks here in Perth in July 19.

Also at the rehearsal on July 14, VE celebrated our 6th birthday. It’s pretty exciting to think of how far we’ve come in a short time and we’re as determined as ever to keep working hard to achieve our potential.

To finish, a quick congratulations to Andrew Howson (formerly of The Blenders and Fast Forward), who we cheered on in the quartet “Thunderbox” at this year’s international. I trust he enjoyed the “shout out” we sent him in the wee small hours of Thursday morning. Australian time. The guys scored 78%, which is very admirable, especially at international level.

Richard Reeve
President

We want to tell you of our next concert being held at Norths club, known to many of you as North Sydney Rugby Leagues Club, at 12 Abbott Street Cammeray, Sydney on Sunday afternoon the 27th of July in the main auditorium (the Celebrity Room). The doors open at 1:30 pm for the 2pm commencement. You might like to have lunch at the club in either the bistro or the Tingha restaurant beforehand.

Seating in the performance room is cabaret style with tables and individual chairs and the bar will be open.

The concert lineup is detailed in the attached flyer but I’ll also tell you here just in case you can’t open it –

In addition to Sydney Harmony, current National Bronze Medal holders in Oz Men’s Barbershop competition, there will be “Circular Keys”, National Silver Medal holders in Sweet Adelines competition and “Accolade” the current National GOLD medal holders (again) in female quartets.

‘Not only but also...’ the very popular ”FREEFALL” men’s quartet – 2003 National Gold medal winners in male quartets.

Tickets can be purchased from any member of the chorus whom you know or from John Gleeson, (042434 9243) or from Norths (9245 3000).

Tickets are $25 for non-members and $20 for Norths members.

The concert is just weeks away – See You There……

John Gleeson

MINER CHORDS

Right now Miner Chords are very excited at the prospect of "hosting" their first Regionals in Ipswich together with the very exciting inaugural National Quartet Challenge. This will be held at the Ipswich Civic Hall, Nicholas Street, Ipswich Central on Saturday 16th August 2008 from 9am with choruses expected to start at 11am followed by the quartets. The evening concert "Parade of Champions" will start at 7pm and will be opened by the Mayor of Ipswich Councillor Paul Pisasale. As the show is on sale to the public and being very well publicised there will be a few variations from the usual all Barbershop format. Remember that chorus members competing need to pay $20 a head to their chorus Treasurer for which they will receive 2 tickets to the evening concert. The public however will pay $15 a ticket and their tickets are available from the Box Office during normal office hours on 3810 6100. Don't forget to let the Sunshine Region know if you require a billet. Ipswich is now a lot closer to Brisbane than it used to be with the introduction of the bitumen road!

Losing 7 members over the Christmas New Year period has knocked us around and we are only just beginning to recover. The singing however has been very pure and it is to be hoped that the stimulus and excitement created by The Blenders and others in the Battle Of The Choirs will create more community interest in joining a chorus, not only in Ipswich but right round Australia. Now is a good time for every chorus Publicity Hound to be unleashed to capitalise on the wonderful publicity generated by The Blenders. Congratulations guys on a fantastic effort to publicise our art form.

SYDNEY HARMONY

The Harmony Spectacular concert held last year as part of the National Barbershop Convention has contributed financially to enabling the chorus to compete in the Pan Pacific Convention in Honolulu Hawaii later this year.

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One thing we have done differently this year is to practise our carols early so we have no nasty surprises later in the year.

Our calendar is starting to fill up fast with people booking us for new gigs next year already.


Saturday 26 July Christmas In July at the Junction House Restaurant Warwick Road, Ipswich.

Saturday 16 August Regionals in Ipswich.

Sunday 14 September Bunnings Sausage sizzle @ Bundamba.

Saturday 11th October Black Snake Creek Festival Marburg.

Saturday 8 November 8pm A Night In Venice with the Ipswich Symphony Orchestra. Civic Hall Ipswich.

Sunday 17 May 2009. Ipswich Heritage Fair at Woodlands in Marburg. Chris Featherstone President

BRISBANE RIVER CITY CLIPPERS

The boys from Brisbane, The River City Clippers, are moving into final focus mode for their expedition to Hawaii in late October for the Pan Pacific Convention.

Despite that narrowing focus, there is always much to do for the Clippers in many other directions. Sausage sizzles for our good supporters, Bunnings, took place in late April and early June. These occasions give the chorus a good opportunity to perform for the Brisbane public in an informal setting as well as providing the opportunity to display its craft before the predominantly male customer population that makes the pilgrimage to the big hardware stores each weekend. Sometimes it takes a lot of enthusiasm and talent from the chorus to distract many of the male customers as they stride past without so much as turning their heads - so focussed are they on their imminent purchase. It seems amazing to Barbershoppers that the ringing of a new power saw or drill could hold more appeal than a beautiful set of chords.

The Clippers in performance mode at the RACQ Motorfest at Eagle Farm Racecourse in June

On the tenth of May, Radio 4BC, one of the Clippers major sponsors, requested the presence of the chorus at the celebrations to mark the twentieth anniversary of the 1988 Expo at Brisbane’s Southbank and June 29th saw the chorus performing at the RACQ Motorfest, a very large event attracting car enthusiasts from all over the state. July 19th will see the Clippers Octet continue the long association with the Zonta organization. The Clippers have over the past fifteen years or more never failed to perform at their annual Fair. The chorus is very busy on this day as in the afternoon the chorus will be in action again; this time supporting the Sweet Adelines, Redland Rhapsody Chorus, at their annual concert. An exciting performance with the ladies singing “Baby it’s Cold Outside” should be an audience pleaser. July 25th–27th will see the Clippers involved in their second weekend workshop of the year with their highly respected clinician Virginia Humphrey-Taylor who will make the journey from the “Land of the Long White Cloud” to be with us once again. Virginia’s visit will bring the Hawaii performance into prime focus.

In the midst of all that happens in the life of such a busy chorus, long time barbershopper, Mell McMichael is running yet another of his Scratch Quartet competitions, designed to breed confidence among members and hopefully lead to the creation of a quartet culture within the Clippers. Some very tuneful performances have been welcomed to date with more to follow in the coming weeks.

One could conclude that in the River City of Brisbane all is harmonious and life is “clipping” along at a good sharp pace! Keith Drury

THE HIGHLANDAIRES

The Highlandaires are celebrating their twelfth year of singing barbershop choral music in the Southern Highlands of NSW. With a current membership of sixteen and always being on the lookout for new ‘recruits’, The Highlandaires are seeking new members to join them at practice and be part of their singing engagements. They have also said an additional Musical Director would be of great value as they strive to move forward with their performances.

Venues include local shopping centres, hotels and restaurants, wineries, clubs, aged care and retirement facilities, parks and gardens and private functions.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas 2007, The Highlandaires were inundated with requests to sing at Christmas parties and functions, including a guest spot at the local ‘Carols by Candlelight’ in Corbett Gardens, which attracted media exposure and many accolades from the community.

In the Southern Highlands they celebrate ‘Christmas in July’ in a big way and The Highlandaires have already had many requests to sing during these celebrations and bookings for August are also being received.

The Highlandaires practice each Tuesday night at the Salvation Army Hall in Bowral and they are committed to donating part of the monies raised at functions back to the ‘Salvos’.

During the 2008 Red Shield Appeal, The Highlandaires sang at various venues in the Southern Highlands and were pleased to be part of the fund raising, helping to make this year the largest (for recorded donations) in the Southern Highlands.
As the membership increases and social interaction and camaraderie strengthen, the future development can be focused on quartet singing and involvement with interclub competitions.

The recent musical workshop held in Bowral in conjunction with the Central Coast SOUNDWAVES chorus and the contribution by their musical director, Gary Kirk, and 20 of their members (plus the ‘surprise’ guest appearance by Ian Fraser), proved to be an invaluable experience for the club and its members. This type of club interaction is essential to assist in developing barbershop singing skills and to help define the objectives of The Highlandaires and future expectations of the club.

The Highlandaires were also very pleased with having the opportunity to meet AAMBS Secretary, Kevin White and his wife Nerida, (Editor of Barbershop Notes) who came along to the workshop.

The Highlandaires have just received notification of a successful submission to the 2008/2009 Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme. They had recently applied for various donations and grants to assist them in developing awareness and learning programs in local high schools and colleges, whilst promoting participation in four part harmony singing projects in the Southern Highlands.

The funds allocated through this donation will assist with the cost of purchasing sound and recording equipment and will be presented to The Highlandaires at an official ceremony on 30 July 2008.

The group has also been invited to join eight other choirs and choral groups in what should be a great experience.

The Chorus and our Quartet took part in the recent Adelaide Eisteddfod, the Chorus received Second prize in the Male Voice Open Chorus Section and the Quartet Third in the A Cappella Open Ensemble section.

Our next event is to join with the Festival Statesmen as a combined chorus, "The Evergreens, in a fundraising Film night at the historic Capri Cinema with the Adelaide Sound Connection and The Fishbowl Boys and the famous Wurlitzer Organ with all its marvellous percussion features. After the entertainment the new release film Mama Mia will be screened.

Don't forget, we are always pleased to welcome any interstate barbershoppers visiting Adelaide, check AAMBS’ website for our details.

Well done and good luck in the next round to the Blenders, weren't they good.

Gordon Tomlinson Sec.

(Ed: Note their new, clearer logo. Congratulations Fleurieu!)

Men In Harmony

.......................................a busy time

Yes, we've been on the go since last report with new Music Director, Richard Davies, keeping us on our toes. There's new music to learn and some fresh ideas for brightening up our rehearsals, like breaking into mini-choruses as a variation on section practices and the re-introduction of the random quartet schedule, which involves everyone having a go in “scratch” foursomes (sometimes trying a different part for a change) – great fun! We’ve enjoyed some very successful outings under Richard’s direction. The Buddha Birthday Festival event was different, when we joined other choral and instrumental groups in providing a varied program of entertainment for the celebrations. Last month we again shared the stage with the Perth Concert Band and a dance group in a fund raiser for a worthy Botswana cause and there are more engagements coming up next month.

Thanks to a great deal of forward planning and preparatory work by the Region Committee, (on which we are represented) the annual Western Region Convention, held over the weekend, June 22-24, was very successful. The quartet contests, workshops and social activities featured new ideas and the organizers will no doubt assess their effectiveness for future planning. However, there is no doubt the opening social evening was a winner, with a nice meal, the choruses performing, along with some quartets, and good fellowship all round. The national quartet Silver Medal winners, Alliance, was there and they, of course, topped the bill at the Saturday Showcase concert together with our long standing friends, the ladies of the polished Perth Harmony Chorus. The Men in Harmony chorus was well represented in all the activities and our quartets took all three places in the Seniors contest. Our Gold Medal Seniors quartet, Phoenix, opened the concert program and our wonderful ladies of Partners in Harmony organized and ran the refreshments during interval. However, my best moment occurred at the social night when a young lad who I didn’t know, approached and asked if I’d like to sing a tag - that was nice – carrying on a fine tradition!

The convention weekend was preceded, on the Monday, by a very successful 2008 Big Barbershop Day Out for West
Australian school students. This annual event has developed dramatically in the few years since its inception and this year attracted about 280 girls and boys, with their teachers, from a large number of schools. The students participated in a fun day of workshops and learning about the barbershop style of singing and the day culminated with a concert in the evening which “show-cased” the day’s work – it was amazing what was achieved in just those few hours with very creditable presentations from girls, boys and combined choruses. It was a tribute to the small band of dedicated men and women whose vision, inspiration and hard work had produced such a response. Men in Harmony contributed financially and members enjoyed the concert, which was filled out with some adult quartets and choruses. This annual project offers great potential for the future of barbershop singing in Western Australia.

Chorus numbers at rehearsal are reflecting an extraordinary year for people away with medical problems and also the taking of lengthy leave breaks for extended travel. This tends to slow down the musical work but the Music Committee is pressing on with the planned program. Management is also working up an energetic recruiting plan for the spring so there is plenty to keep us busy and we are looking forward to increasing action as the year progresses.

All the best from the fabulous West!

Andy Aberle

News from Alliance Quartet

It was with great pleasure that Alliance recently received a letter from AAMBS offering us nomination to represent Australia at the 2009 International Convention in Anaheim, California. We are thrilled to accept this invitation and hope that we can do all barbershoppers in Australia proud.

Going to International is not a cheap exercise, so we’re now going into fund raising mode. Recently Alliance released a CD, and we would encourage everyone who wants to support our efforts to buy one. We’re sure that you’ll enjoy listening to it! Orders can be made via our website, www.alliancequartet.com, or by phoning 0409 084 491 (see advert in this edition of BS Notes). Alliance would also love to sing on your next chapter show. Please contact us if you’d like to explore that exciting possibility.

We are eagerly looking forward to our visit to the Sunshine Region coming up in August to attend the National Quartet Challenge, where we are honoured to have been asked to judge, and we’ll be appearing on the Saturday night show as special guest, so we hope to see lots of our barbershop friends from around Australia there. We’ll have lots of CDs with us, so watch out!

Finally, we had a great time at the recent Western Region Convention and Contest. The organising committee did a great job, the judges had a great time, and we scored our highest marks ever, averaging over 78%, so we’re rapt with that. We’re now working very hard on our set for International, and of course for the Hobart Convention next year.

Regards from Adrian, Dan, Ian and Richard

FAREWELL FROM FREEFALL

After over 7 years of singing together, the guys in FREEFALL have finally decided that it’s time to call it a day and gently slip into quartet retirement. We’ve had so much fun and shared so many great times and successes over the years that there are certainly no regrets for us in our parting of the ways. To put it simply, it’s been a blast! It will be a time of our lives that we will always remember fondly and almost certainly be hard to top as the highpoint in our respective barbershop and vocal harmony careers.

FREEFALL would like to thank all the many people who have supported us in our endeavours over the years - particularly our families and all our friends and fellow singers from around the country and those we have come to know from other parts of the globe. We would like to extend special thanks to all the members of Sydney Harmony chorus, past and present, for the camaraderie and generous encouragement given to us - from those very early days of our beginnings through all the years to now. Thanks guys!

FREEFALL appreciates all the efforts and support shown to us from AAMBS and Region 34 of Sweet Adelines International....and all the members of those two organisations whom we’ve met along the way. The love and level of support we’ve received from the Australian barbershop community has made our time performing for you very special indeed.

We will be singing just one more “official” gig. On Sunday 27th July, FREEFALL will be appearing at the Sydney Harmony “Voices @ Norths” concert, along with our very good friends Accolade and the Circular Keys Chorus. We would be delighted if you can make it to the show. For old time’s sake we will sing
some of our most popular performance songs and some of our personal favourites. For full concert details, go to www.sydneyharmony.com.au

To anyone who has raised a smile, tapped their toes or shed a tear at a FREEFALL performance, we personally wish to thank you for being there and for making it all worthwhile. We’ve enjoyed the ride immensely. Hopefully we will see you at the show. Till next time....

FREFALL
Tony Sykes, Jim Catt, Sam Taylor, Guy Gibson
www.myspace.com/freefallquartet

Thank you, FREEFALL, for the many hours of pleasure & inspiration you have given to Barbershoppers both in Australia & overseas. We’ll miss you, your fantastic arrangements and your wonderful harmonies.

COMING EVENTS

2008

July 19 – SOUNDWAVES at St David’s Presbyterian Church, 118 -120 Blackwall Rd, Woy Woy. 2.30 pm

July 19 – Miner Chords, Jazzing Up July St. Paul's Anglican Church Ipswich, 7.30pm

July 22 – SOUNDWAVES performance for Kincumber View Club at the Davistown RSL, 1.00 pm

July 26 – Miner Chords - Christmas In July at the Junction House Restaurant Warwick Road, Ipswich.

August 14 – SOUNDWAVES sings for Naturalisation Ceremony, Gosford Council Chambers, Mann Street, Gosford at 3.15 pm

August 16 – AAMBS Regionals and National Quartet Challenge in Ipswich Qld.

Aug 16-17 – Australian Barbershop Quartet Challenge George Hogg Auditorium, Ipswich Civic Hall, Nicholas St., Ipswich Central

Aug 16-17 – Sunshine Region 14th Annual Convention Ipswich Central

September 11 - SOUNDWAVES sing for Naturalisation Ceremony, Gosford Council Chambers, Mann Street, Gosford at 3.15 pm

September 14 – Miner Chords Bunnings Sausage Sizzle @ Bundamba.

October 11 - Miner Chords October Black Snake Creek Festival Marburg.

Back issues of the following Barbershop Harmony Society’s newsletter, The Harmonizer, are available from your AAMBS Secretary, Kevin White. If you would like any of them you should contact him ASAP as numbers are limited.

Nov/Dec 2005

March/April 2006

July/Aug 2006

Sept/Oct 2006

May/June 2007

July/Aug 2007

Sept/Oct 2007

Nov/Dec 2007

Jan/Feb 2008


November 1 – The Highlandaires “Singing Quilt Concert” Bundanoon Hall with 8 other local choirs. Details: Ray Hill 02 4869 2077

November 8 – Miner Chords A Night In Venice with the Ipswich Symphony Orchestra. Civic Hall Ipswich. 8 pm

November 28 – SOUNDWAVES sing for Lake Macquarie View Club at 1.00 pm

December 12 – SOUNDWAVES sings for Gosford Probus at 1.00 pm

2009

April 5 – SOUNDWAVES sings for The McGrath Foundation at Castle Hill RSL. Time TBA

May 17 – Miner Chords at Ipswich Heritage Fair at Woodlands in Marburg.


Sept 27-30 – AAMBS Harmony College, Hobart

NOTE: For more details of coming events check Upcoming Events on the AAMBS Website, www.aambs.org.au

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**Letters to the Editor**

(after Western Region’s BBDO 2008)

Can I also add my congratulations to all involved. I only experienced the evening show this year but what a credit to the organisers who made sure it ran on time (to the minute), gave everyone a go and ensured there were no long performances which can sometimes bring on boredom especially in kids. Nothing was overdone and it wasn't a late night, which would have been much appreciated by parents.

It was good that the kids got to have a taste of PHC, VE and Nexus who were inspirational.

I would say the audience was left with a feeling of wanting to see more which augers well for the future.

The photographer was also an important part of the night and made it even more special for the kids.

Did Bruce O get a little choked up about seeing so many kids singing Barbershop - I think he did - and rightly so - it was simply fantastic.

I reckon this could become bigger than Ben Hur in the future. Next stop the Convention Centre maybe???

Helen Schofield
SoulJoy, Perth

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**Barbershop excitement**

I recently attended the regional secondary schools barbershop contests at Lower Hutt Town Hall.

Hundreds of students and their families attended the quartet section on the first night. The next night (the chorus section), I naively thought there would be more room. Wrong.

There must have been more than 1000 people crowded in, some having to stand.

Ten minutes before the start, the queue stretched back to the car park to make its way into the hall.

It was a wonderful experience and I'd not have missed it for anything.

The place buzzed with excitement. At the end, the crowds just didn't want to go home.

I couldn't help but think what a wonderful thing barbershop was for all these hundreds of young people and their parents.

What a great influence in their lives, and such a contrast to see these positive, excited young ones at an event like this on a Saturday night, instead of hanging around street corners.

EILEEN GORDON
Woburn

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I haven't spoken to my wife in years.
I didn't want to interrupt her.

-Rodney Dangerfield
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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