From The President

Class Acts

With memories of the AAMBS Gold Coast Convention and Harmony College still fresh in our minds, I can think of no better way to sum them up than... "really class acts!" The work done by the host chorus Blenders, their partners and their friends was amazing, and we all got to experience what barbershopping is all about. There was intense competition, renewed friendships, moments to warm the heart, songs and techniques and tags learned, quartets to watch and hear that rivaled the best in the world, great weather, good food...wow, what a week. And it didn’t happen by accident. We owe a huge debt to well over a hundred men and women that were as hard working as they were clever. This army of volunteers was led by Convention Chair Mike Ludwig, VP Music Bob Fritz, Contest Administrator Bob Charters, and our Dean of Harmony College, VP Music Ian Mulholland. I won’t try to name all the people we should thank, because I don’t want to slight anyone, but we all know and can appreciate the true gift they gave to us, and the memories we’ll have forever.

Buoyed by the Gold Coast experience we should take our renewed enthusiasm, and musical knowledge forward with us in to the new year. Most choruses operate on a cycle of two years, planning now for the Oct 2007 Convention in Sydney. For many the upcoming Holiday Season presents a chance to share with audiences our Christmas music, sung in the barbershop style. And even caroling presents an excellent opportunity to interest some new men in our art form.

As this is the final Barbershop Notes for the year, I would ask the help of each and every AAMBS member in conquering what I consider to be our biggest dual challenge... membership retention and recruitment. All the singing, and Conventions, and educating, and fellowship we have will disappear if we don’t keep our current members fulfilled and enriched, and share our artform with more people to bring new members aboard. It’s a little early for a New Year’s resolution, but I personally ask you... note the guy next to you on the risers... to resolve to find one new member in the coming year to join us in singing music in the barbershop style.

Happy Holidays, and In Harmony,

Mike Donnelly
AAMBS President

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MEET OUR VP –

Bob Fritz is a retired Lawyer having practiced law in Los Angeles, California for 30 years after receiving his B.A. Degree from Alma College and his Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1960. In addition to his law practice, Bob served as a Superior Court Arbitrator for 15 years.

On his retirement in 1990, Bob and his wife, Sue moved to Sydney, where Sue, a country girl from Gunnedah, took up a position as a Lactation Consultant at the Mater Hospital while Bob decided to rediscover the world of barbershopping that he was first introduced to in 1946 at the age of 11. Bob’s Uncle and older brother were both barbershoppers and Bob began singing with them and attending the Chicago Chapter, No. 1 where he was soon singing lead and listening to the early Gold Medal winning quartets, The Elastic Four and The Misfits and learning from the chorus director, Frank Thome.

He continued to enjoy barbershopping until he began his law studies and, much to his regret, stopped singing on a regular basis for the next 30 years although continue to attend many of the shows and concerts of the local choruses and collecting barbershop recordings.

FROM THE DESK OF OUR VP CONVENTIONS

Bob joined the Sydneysider’s Chorus in 1994 and attended the Canberra Convention the next year. He served as Secretary of that Chorus as well as the Convention Chairman for the 1997 Sydney Convention. Following the Brisbane Convention in 1999, he was elected to the AAMBS National Council as the Vice President, Conventions, a position he continues to hold. Also, in 1999, Bob became a member of Sydney Harmony Chorus where he has served as Presentation Co-ordinator and Performance Captain and over the years has attended 5 International Conventions.

In a very proud moment in 1995, Bob became a naturalised Australian citizen. In addition to his barbershopping activities, he is an avid golfer and downhill skier and he and Sue also enjoy their travels with recent trips to Africa and New Zealand, where they completed the Milford Track walk. With 7 children and 7 grandchildren between them, they are frequent visitors back to the U.S.

Congratulations, first of all, to The Blenders, for hosting a magnificent convention. I’m sure that you will all agree that they have given each and every one of us who were there, a very memorable and extremely enjoyable event that I know will be a benchmark for conventions to come. I would like to personally thank Mike Ludwig and his hard working committee along with the entire Blender’s organization for their marvellous effort.

Congratulations also to all of you who participated in all of the events that were held during our four days on the Gold Coast. We were certainly given a wonderful opportunity to experience barbershopping in all of its glory and to enjoy not only the camaraderie of our own membership but also that of our visitors from overseas.

Congratulations to all those who came away with an award in recognition of your efforts and especially to our National Open Quartet and Chorus Champions, Alliance and The Blenders. You both certainly represent the very best that Australian barbershop-shopping has to offer and we are all very proud of your accomplishment.

Congratulations and thanks must also be given to the very hard working visitors from overseas. The success of our convention was due in no small part to your contributions and so to Rob Campbell, Brian Beck, Dwaine Brobst, Ron Black, Allan Gasper, Bobby Grey, Saturday Evening Post and Riptide, I say a very heartfelt thanks for your tireless efforts, your amazing talents and your willingness to share all of those with us.

Congratulations and thanks also to our very special retired Gold Medal Quartet, FREEFALL. These four gentlemen have certainly done our organization proud and have conducted themselves as befitting our National Champions over the past two years. And so to Tony, Jim, Sam and Guy the very best wishes for whatever the future may hold and our sincere thanks for being the kind of champions that we could all be proud of.

There were a number of innovations that were introduced at this year’s convention, the use of a six judge panel, the expansion of the awards categories, sing with the champs session and a chorus master class session to name a few. Each of these innovations will be reviewed by the National Council over the next few months and whether or not some or all of them will be retained will be determined, in part, by the comments and feedback that we receive from you. So I invite and encourage each of you to take a few moments over the next couple of months to make a note of not only the innovations that were tried but also whatever aspect of our convention you personally believe needs to be reviewed. I’ve already received a number of very positive and informative comments from members that will be given every consideration over the next few months and in the time leading up to our 2007 Convention in Sydney.

Finally, I invite all of you to mark you calendars now for 27 -30 Sept. 2007, for the Sydney Convention and for 30 Sept. - 3 Oct. for the Sydney Harmony College. I know that Sydney Harmony will be doing their best to make sure that your next convention experience will be one that will be long remembered.

Yours in harmony, Bob Fritz
FROM OUR 2005 CONVENTION CHAIRMAN & VP MEMBERSHIP

Fellow Barbershoppers,

2005 Convention – General Comment

I take this opportunity to again acknowledge the wonderful camaraderie and high-level performances achieved at this convention. Special thanks go to each delegate for his/her commitment to the program.

I am heartened by the numerous messages of support for the convention team and virtually all constructive criticism has already been factored into future planning at the National Council level courtesy of our VP Conventions – Bob Fritz.

While there has been some delay in the provision of contest DVDs because of sound quality at the chorus contest sessions, I can advise that all orders should be filled and mailed by the end of November. Order forms are easily accessible by visiting the website, going to the Registration Pulldown and then linking to the Merchandising pulldown. The website will be officially withdrawn by 31 December 2005.

One very clear message for future conventions is that the first planning priority is to generate corporate sponsorship. Only then can other aspects such as the size of the visiting international delegation, the registration fee and the range of electives be determined. The overall Convention, Public Show and Harmony College profit of $52,000 is significant because of sponsorship, significant donations of goods in kind, and additional front of house ticket sales, especially for the quartet sessions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the National Council, The Blenders and my wonderful committee for ensuring the outstanding success of this year’s event. I look forward to renewing acquaintances and singing with you in Sydney in 2007.

Always in harmony
Mike Ludwig

FROM THE VP MUSIC

Training School Qualifies More Judges

For the two days before the start of the 2005 Gold Coast Convention a group of 21 men and women were closeted behind closed doors learning how to become better and more effective judges. Led by a fantastic panel of visiting Barbershop Harmony Society judges, Ron Black, Rob Campbell, Dwain Brobst, Bobby Gray, Allen Gasper and Brian Beck, we were taken through our paces in a rigorous and disciplined way.

Each category group worked with their tutors examining the various aspects of the judging category, including criteria / elements, score setting and giving an effective and informative evaluation session. Two scoring tests were run where candidates had to score 10 quartet songs and 10 chorus songs each time. The results were fantastic, with a record 12 people passing all of the set assessment criteria (7 AAMBS and 5 NZABS). In addition, 8 of these candidates were good enough to be considered for the International judge candidate school in 2007.

An AAMBS/NZABS Guild of Judges is being set up to allocate judging assignments to qualified and experienced local judges. As a result of these judge training schools, you can be assured that people who judge AAMBS and NZABS contests from now on have done the "hard yards" and are competent and qualified to judge your performance and give you feedback on how to improve and enjoy your singing even more!

Harmony College a Blast

What a great time we had! No less than 11 instructors and 110 students were the ingredients for an exciting and inspirational Harmony College in the pleasant surroundings of the Gatton Campus of the University of Queensland.

Classes ranging from Vocal Techniques (Allen Gasper and Jeff Selano) to Arranging (Brian Beck), from Comedic Performances (Bobby Gray) to Music Theory (Rob Campbell), from a Director’s stream (Ron Black) to Quartet Coaching (Dwain Brobst, Rick Taylor, Tim Reynolds, Don Barnick, Scott Delude), kept us all enthralled and in awe of the skills and extensive knowledge of these fine instructors.
Social afterglows each night, with more impromptu singing (who can forget Don Barnick's 64 bar tags, or the chance to play in an impromptu jazz band) had everyone fully occupied to the early hours each day. Every person that attended came away with new knowledge, a new technique, or a new skill that will make them a better barbershopper, and something they can pass on to their colleagues at home for the benefit of all. Vocal Evolution had more than half of the chorus there (no wonder they won the small chorus division)!

If you didn’t register for Harmony College this time, put it on your calendar for 2007, September 30 to October 3 in Sydney!

Sing-kerely, Ian Mulholland
AAMBS VP Music

FROM THE SECRETARY

General Meetings

On 6 December there will be two General Meetings of AAMBS – An Extraordinary General Meeting (to consider changes to the Constitution) followed by the Annual General Meeting to receive the Annual Reports and elect members to the Council for the positions of:

- President
- VP Marketing and Development
- VP Conventions
- Treasurer
- VP Youth Development, to direct the training and recruitment into AAMBS of younger members.

The following Nominations have been received:

- President: Mike Donnelly
- Vice President, Conventions: Bob Fritz
- Vice President, Marketing & Development: Tom Smith
- Treasurer: Barry Joy
- Vice President, Youth Development: Steve Griffin

Membership

Clubs and their Members are to be congratulated on an almost 100% re-registration and on the introduction of many new members to pleasurable song in the unique Barbershop style, which is now gaining steady acceptance by the younger generation.

It would appear that some Clubs are not keeping us up to date with their current email addresses – some emails to presidents and secretaries are being returned, which means you are not being kept up to date on AAMBS events. Please ensure that you notify me of any changes to executive and members contact details.

A Strong Word of Warning

Members are cautioned to address your emails to secretary@aambs.org.au and NOT to attempt to contact AAMBS or open messages via the address exec@aambs.org.au - THIS ADDRESS has been invaded and leaves users open to contaminated messages. BE WARNED – any emails purporting to be from exec@aambs.org.au or containing reference to this address in the subject matter are SPAM and should not be opened on any account.

Yours, In Continuing Harmony,
Kevin White, Secretary
To the great band of barbershop singers who came to the Gold Coast for the 8th National Convention, we thank you.

AAMBS and The Blenders convention team are to be congratulated for the harmony displayed at this convention. The judging panel and the new contest administrator and his team also are to be congratulated for their dedication and hard work to make this convention a great success. After all it’s about the singing, isn’t it?

So many new faces performed this year augers well for the future and it was fantastic to see some new winners on the podium. As VP Membership it was thrilling to see 91 perform for The Blenders and also extremely pleasing to see what extraordinary sound could emanate from only 20 singers. I am of course referring to Vocal Evolution. What a performance!

At the welcome dinner it was a privilege and a pleasure to see Steve Griffin honoured with life membership of AAMBS for his work with the youth section and as an ex-president over an extended period. For once Steve was speechless. It was well deserved.

The week went very quickly and for me, I would definitely stay at the convention site next time. It doesn't feel the same in your home town.

The Blenders were pleased and I may add some what subdued about scoring 80% so I think they may be excited about going to Denver in 2007. It's a big job to organise such a trip. Still that's 21 months away.

Since the convention we are preparing to put down a CD. of our latest songs as we haven't done one for three years. This year will see the Xmas caroling a bit subdued as we wont be doing Southbank.

The club has made great strides this year and the workload of our music team headed by Mike Ludwig was a feature of our success.

Rose McGee MD and Andrew Howson our assistant MD, put extra work into the chorus to get us where we performed above expectations. The presentation team of Steve Johnson and Steve Griffin, chorus manager, Mitch Bruger and the section leaders all helped enormously this year. To the many others who put their hands up to help this year from the riser team of Mike Earwicker, Charlie Voges and Daryl Marshke to the support team, thank you.

Youth Quartet Gold Medal Winners – Fast Forward

The Blenders would like to extend to all other Barbershoppers the very best for Christmas and the New Year and we will see you at the next competition.

Goodbye for now.

Harold Howson

Hi to all our fellow barbershoppers

A big thank you to the Blenders including spouses and helpers for making the Nationals such a success. What a wonderful time was had by all. And also congratulations to Rose and the chorus on reaching “A” grade status. I am in constant awe of the dedication of the members of the “Blenders” and the terrific team that supports them.

I attended the Judging Course and am progressing to becoming a Presentation Judge. I came back from the Nationals with numerous ideas from the American judges to help my chorus or to help anyone who wishes to ask for my assistance. One of the judges ideas was to give each man an “energy cube”. My chorus didn’t know what struck them when I gave them each an “energy cube”. They are such good sports that when I gave them this imaginary cube, they actually took it and held it. We learnt about becoming “a band” and numerous other wonderful ideas to pass on. But we were there to learn to score and this is not as easy as it seems although after many videos and live judging it is becoming easier. The judges were very approachable and helped us considerably.

Broadwater Chorus has three more bookings before the holidays. We are having our Xmas party and “Bring A Friend Night”, the chorus is singing for an outdoor Christmas Carol Night, and a Garden Club afternoon. My tenor is now back from cruising down the Nile, but now my baritones are away so no baritone section this week. I didn’t realise how difficult it is for men to take 2 steps to the right and then the left. When I got the guys to do this some went to the left instead of the right crashing into each other. Then some took one step instead of two. I think this is the first time they have actually attempted some choreography. This is the fun of barbershop and it is a constant learning curve. To each member of all the choruses we (Broadwater Connection) wish you happy and safe holidays and look forward to seeing you at the Regionals.

Cheers

__________________________________________
Alliance - New National Quartet Champions

When Alliance formed in January 2004 the Gold Coast Convention in 2006 seemed a long way away. That event has now come and gone and here we are, extremely honoured to be given the privilege of representing AAMBS as National Quartet Champions for the next two years. The Convention was a blast and it was great to receive the hearty congratulations from so many people and to make a bunch new friends in the process. Our thanks to all of you.

Congratulations must go to Fast Forward who tied scores with us but unfortunately got Silver on a count-back, and also to The Blenders on their Gold Medal winning performance in the Chorus Competition. Not only that, but they did a great job of hosting the convention; a massive task done extremely well. We are also very proud to be a part of Vocal Evolution, now the National Silver Medal chorus. It’s great to be a linked with such a supportive team.

Looking forward to Sydney in 2007...

Alliance is Dan Millgate (bass), Les Goh (baritone), Adrian Gimpel (lead) and Ian Mulholland (tenor).

Our journey to the Gold Medal started some two years ago, when Dan, Adrian and Ian locked some chords at the Perth Harmony College. Knowing Les was returning from a work sojourn overseas, and having talked about the idea of a long distance quartet before with Les, Alliance was formed on the Australia Day weekend of 2004. Our first goal was the 2004 Western Region contest (gold), followed by the Pan Pacific contest in New Zealand (silver), and the 2005 Western Region contest (gold).

2005 has been a year of focused rehearsals, but on our way to the Gold Coast we stayed a couple of days in Dan’s hometown of Canberra. This was a novel experience for us as it is always Dan who travels to Perth for rehearsals (every 6-8 weeks). We finally got to meet his two daughters as well as his partner, the lovely Lidija. Along with doing some whirlwind sightseeing we also sang on a show with the Canberra Chordsmen and the Brindabella Chorus at the Canberra Irish Club. It was a fun show for all involved as well as serving as a great pre-convention warm-up for us. Our thanks to both choruses and associated quartets Synchronicity and Natural Gas for all your support.

Just prior to the start of convention, AAMBS ran a judging school, which Ian, Adrian and Dan attended. Ian of course as AAMBS Music VP, coordinated the school and has been qualified as a Music Category Judge in Australia for quite some time. We are happy to report that as a result of attending the school Dan is now qualified as a Singing Category judge and Adrian as Presentation Category judge within AAMBS. This means that we now have a whole judging panel within the quartet!

After convention we all moved on to Harmony College, which was a great experience as always. Getting coached by the likes of Don Barnick, Tim Reynolds and the inspirational Rick Taylor was a real treat (although watching Don teaching some complex tags in the early hours of the morning whilst singing his part and directing the other three parts simultaneously freaked us out a bit...). It must be said that the quality of the whole faculty was absolutely outstanding. It was difficult to pick electives because you wanted to attend everything that was on offer! Another highlight was getting to introduce a group of students at the college where we stayed to some barbershop by performing for them and then leading them through some tags. We also invited them to the Tuesday evening concert and most of them ended up attending this event.

We would like to thank the coaches who have worked with us over the last two years. To Cathy Rainey, Gina D’Souza, Carole McIntyre, Audacious! and Eddie Martinez we thank you for your willingness to so freely share your knowledge of the craft of barbershop. A special mention must go to Eddie who came all the way from Austin, Texas at the invitation of Vocal Evolution for the convention. His expertise and advice was invaluable to us during the contest.

Last, but never least, we thank our families for their unwavering support and for allowing us to indulge in this ‘hobby’ of ours. We most certainly could not have achieved our goals without you.

We are now looking towards another not-too-distant horizon, the International Convention in Denver, Colorado in July 2007. Right now we are busy putting together plans around fundraising, new repertoire, coaching etc in preparation for this. We would love to do as much performing and coaching as we can throughout 2006/7 so now is the time to get in touch with us so that we can discuss how we may be able to work with your group.

Visit our web site at www.alliancequartet.com for all the latest news and contact details.

All the very best,
Alliance - Ian, Adrian, Dan & Les
2005 Australian Quartet Champions
Greetings from Vocal Evolution
- Perth, Western Australia

Wow! What an amazing few months in barbershop it has been, culminating in a fantastic National Convention on the Gold Coast. After an event-filled build up, Vocal Evolution were absolutely thrilled to be awarded the Silver Medal at the Chorus Contest and improve upon our third place from the Perth Convention. It was a privilege to be able to present the WWII-era package we had worked so hard on throughout the year to all our peers. As always, the music and the camaraderie we all shared during the whole convention was awesome and continued to reinforce what a fantastic fraternity we all belong to.

Congratulations must go to The Blenders who once again set the standard for Aussie barbershop with their Gold Medal-winning performance on the contest stage. Equally as impressive was the effort that went into the organization and running of what was a very successful convention. There were so many magic moments for all of our members that we could write pages! Suffice to say that our sincere thanks and admiration go to all the Blenders and their helpers for running this event.

Many of our members were involved in a barbershop event run specifically for youth, the “Big Barbershop Day Out”. Music Director Gina D’Souza and others from the chorus worked in various roles in helping out on the day and also fulfilled roles in the organising committee. This was truly a team effort involving all the barbershop groups in Perth and was a ground-breaking event. We are all very excited about its success and are looking forward with anticipation to next year’s event with the Musical Island Boys from New Zealand.

On October 22 Vocal Evolution was invited to perform at a big concert event at the Swan Christian College in the Swan Valley and was very well received by the crowd. It seems that the audience had not had a lot of exposure to barbershop before, but from the many positive comments we received they seemed to enjoy the experience.

Vocal Evolution Inc held it’s AGM on 23 October and elected a new management committee. Notably, Adrian Gimpel, who has worked in the role of President for over three years, did not re-nominate for the role. His dedicated and untiring work on behalf of the chorus, along with the support of his wife Lynell, was acknowledged. Subsequently we are pleased to report that Roy Schofield has now been appointed to the role of President with Neil Cocker as Secretary and Renne De Waard as Treasurer.

The chorus held a Guest Night on 31 October. We are very keen to recruit more singers onto the risers and were pleased to attract 13 visitors of various ages to this event. We will be working hard to retain as many of these men as possible as well as running similar events throughout 2006.

The rest of our year will be focused mainly on Christmas performances. We, like many groups, have quite a few gigs booked during this time and are looking forward to these opportunities for sharing the spirit of the season with the general public, barbershop-style!

P.S. - Please take the opportunity to visit us at our website at www.vocalevolution.com
The “Big Barbershop Day Out” 2005 -- Western Region Youth Event

For some time now over here in the Western Region, and from within the men’s and ladies’ barbershop fraternities alike, there has been an oft-quoted statement uttered that goes something like, “How can we get more young people singing Barbershop?” Most of us realise that if we want to keep our art form alive and thriving, then we need to recruit from all age groups. It is probably safe to say, however, that at this point in time youth are somewhat under-represented in our choruses. The latest project to look at this has come in the form of the “Big Barbershop Day Out (BBDO)”. This event was instigated by the Youth in Barbershop Development Initiative (YIBDI), a committee made up of individuals who come from a wide range of barbershop groups in Perth.

I am very pleased to report that with LOTS of support from the local barbershop community, the first BBDO was held on Tuesday 26 October and was a roaring success!

About 9:45 am, 120 girls, 45 boys and 12 teachers from eight schools rolled up to St Stephens School in Duncraig to learn about and perform barbershop music. After being provided with morning tea to get the energy levels up, we all adjourned to the theatre, where Aimee of Perth Harmony Chorus and Alex of Nexus quartet got the crowds adrenaline pumping with some funky physical warm-ups.

The kids then split into two choruses, the boys ably led by Gina D’Souza and some of the Vocal Evolution guys, and the girls by Cathy Rainey with assistance from Jo Oosterhoff and a couple of the PHC ladies.

Cathy certainly did a great job in working with the huge crowd of girls and getting them singing and moving together on a song which the schools had received only a few weeks beforehand. All this and coping admirably with a couple of technical difficulties.

Gina also did a fantastic job in keeping the boys on task and enjoying themselves. It was great to see so many of the boys’ faces lighting up when we got them singing a couple of tags and ringing some chords.

The day culminated with a concert with performances by four of the school groups, a male ‘scratch’ quartet (one half of Nexus and a couple of ring-ins from Vocal Evolution), the boys’ chorus, the girls’ chorus, then a combined 160+ kids on stage singing a fun ditty together – what a buzz to see so many young people on stage at once, all singing barbershop and very clearly having a blast of a time! Mission accomplished.

This day would not have happened without the combined support of so many Perth barbershoppers. Many people helped to make the day the success it was. From those who made up the faculty, the YIBDI Committee, to those who came and cheered loudly at the concert and the guys who hauled the risers. Choruses and individuals also contributed financially and for this we are also thankful.

We’re hoping this will be the start of many great things to come on our local youth/schools scene. A two-day event is already well into the planning stages for 2006. New Zealand quartet champs and International Collegiate medalists the Musical Island Boys have been invited to visit Perth and conduct schools visits leading up to the weekend which will culminate in a public concert by the schools participants and headlined by MIB. We will keep you posted of developments!

Information about YIBDI, the BBDO and photos of the event are up now at http://www.mychorus.info/yibdi/index.htm

Adrian Gimpel
Chairman
AAMBS Western Region
Farewell Fred Brown – it’s been a triumph!

Fred Brown, genial Wellingtones Musical Director retires from the end of this year.

“It’s been a great ten years”. That’s how immediate past president Ken Hunt summed up Fred’s contribution to the Chorus.

Initially Fred Brown took on the role of MD as an interim measure. But members of the Chorus enjoyed Fred’s leadership so much that he stayed on for the following decade.

During this time Fred has always been generous with his time and talents including fostering beginning singers and quartets. And he has always delighted members with his continuing buoyant and quirky good humour that has helped the Chorus get through even the toughest times.

Fred Brown’s outstanding contribution to the Wellingtones includes taking the Chorus to three AAMBS Conventions – Sydney 1997, Melbourne 2001 and Gold Coast 2005. No doubt this makes Fred one of the most senior MDs in our Association.

Not only has Fred been a great MD, but he has also brought his wonderful gifts as an arranger to the Wellingtones and AAMBS. Fred’s arrangements make up the majority of the Wellingtones repertoire giving the Chorus a distinctive style that is greatly appreciated by local audiences. And two of Fred Brown’s arrangements, In a Field in France and Neighbours have been included in the recent AAMBS Song Book.

Over the decade Fred’s wonderful personal qualities have pervaded the Wellingtones. “He is a man of great compassion and generosity and truly a gentle man” commented one member.

Fred Brown will be greatly missed by members of the Wellingtones who will honour him with life membership at the end of this year.

Finally it is pleasing to see that Fred’s long term advocacy of a greater Australian flavour for AAMBS and a broadening of the arranging style are directions gradually being adopted by our Association. Perhaps Fred’s role as Wellingtones MD over the last decade can be best summarised in Fred’s own words, often used by him to describe a pleasing performance by the Chorus, “It’s been a triumph!”

Fred Brown – we salute you.

SOUNDWAVES

I would like to thank Gary Kirk and ‘SOUNDWAVES’ for their friendly gesture in allowing me to join in their presentation of ‘He Keeps Me Singing’ as their contribution to the 2005 AAMBS Convention Church Service.

This is a lovely song which I first heard them sing in Brisbane at the 1999 AAMBS Convention; I was taken by its lovely melody and lyrics. It seemed pertinent to my life and to my singing and I often sang it to myself but longed to sing it in chorus.

On the Saturday at this years convention I bumped into Gary and made mention of this to him. After a quick audition he invited me to join ‘SOUNDWAVES’ for the church service and rebuffed any of my queries saying,

"Isn’t this what the fellowship of Church and the camaraderie of Barbershop singing is all about? Joining together in singing praise!"

Even though my shirt was a different colour, all the ‘SOUNDWAVES’ were very welcoming and friendly and made it a great pleasure for me to sing alongside them.

So, many thanks to you Gary and to your chorus for your attitude, for the privilege of singing with you and for making the church service a memorable one for me. The camaraderie of the barbershop movement was very evident.

Rob Wansbrough
Hills Harmony

HILLS HARMONY
CONVENTION REPORT - WOW, WHAT HAPPENED??

Things are finally returning to normal here at Hills Harmony after a wonderful time at the Convention. The reception we received for our Nerd set in the
can't wait for Sydney 2007 and congratulations to all the medal winners. It's great to be in such an environment. Many thanks to the Blenders for a great Convention, and keen to do new stuff, and the constant cry is such a boost to our group. We are eager, enthusiastic members of the chorus and their families has been a “Hill's Shuffle”. Recognition at last.

Now we're home and settling into Christmas mode with several performances already lined up.

The ongoing joy and happiness carried back by all members of the chorus and their families has been such a boost to our group. We are eager, enthusiastic and keen to do new stuff, and the constant cry is “What's next?” It's great to be in such an environment.

Many thanks to the Blenders for a great Convention, and congratulations to all the medal winners. We can't wait for Sydney 2007

As Australia's newest chorus we were delighted that so many of our guys made the trek down the coast to witness the various aspects of a magnificent Barbershop Convention. They were so impressed that they can't wait for the next one. Well done The Blenders on a splendid effort and go Sydney Harmony for 2007.

With the exception of singing our National Anthem at the official opening of the newly refurbished Ipswich City Mall on 24 November we have knocked back numerous gigs until next year when we are confident we will have sufficient repertoire to be able to perform with credit to our craft. In the meantime we are thoroughly enjoying every rehearsal under the very positive and talented direction of Mark McCann, singing barbershop harmonies (usually in pitch), ringing chords and relishing our hobby enormously.

We look forward to receiving visitors who are always welcome and wish you and yours a truly peaceful and blessed Christmas and an harmonious New Year. ttfn

Chris Featherstone

A SALUTE TO JIM CATT

There are changes happening at Sydney Harmony. The most significant is the retirement of the Chorus' founding Director Jim Catt.

Jim Catt began his musical directing career at the age of 16, when he took the helm of his first barbershop chorus, Shannon Express. Over the following 12 years, he directed this chorus in such prominent venues as The Royal Albert Hall and The Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. After twice reaching the finals of the prestigious Sainsbury’s Choir of the Year competition, Jim and Shannon Express became the subject of a BBC documentary. In 1996, after winning a coveted gold medal at the National Barbershop Championships the previous year, Shannon Express went on to represent their country in International competition, where Jim also sang for his country in his (then) quartet ‘Harmonix’ on three occasions in the mid 90s.

Jim’s unique talent lead the Australian Government to award him a distinguished talent visa in May 1996 and he migrated to Australia the same month. From 1996 to 1998, he directed the Blenders (Gold Coast, Qld) and in 1997, Jim led this group to another National Gold medal.
In 1998, Jim with his family, Kim and Ben, moved to NSW and in early 1999, he helped form and became Musical Director of ‘Sydney Harmony’. Jim sings ‘lead’ - 2003/4 lead in the Australian champion quartet ‘FREEFALL’ whose members were drawn from Sydney Harmony. The quartet have more recently sung in cabaret at Sydney’s ‘The Basement’ and collaborated with celebrated musicians, Lisa Schouw and Peter Bailey in shows at the city’s ‘Bar Me’.

Jim has the unusual honour of representing two Countries both England (his native country) and Australia (his adopted home) at the International barbershop convention. He has now done this on 4 occasions during the 90s and more recently revisited Salt Lake City, in July 2005. Jim also sang with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in the largest mixed choir of its kind. There were over 600 International Gold Medal singers and 300 Tabernacle singers set in the beautiful Salt Lake City Convention Centre. For something quite unique, Jim and the FREEFALL boys also sang at Jim and Kim’s recent Australian citizenship ceremony.

Jim continues to coach and inspire quartets, choruses and choirs from England, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand with his legendary skills. He is branching out into other areas of music, lately leading a beginners singing course at ‘The Actors’ Centre’, Sydney and teaching young singers at ‘The Sydney Conservatorium’.

We know Jim plans to remain involved with the barbershop community with his coaching and teaching and we wish him well with his exciting plans for his musical future.

Jim’s retirement leaves a large hole to fill in the Chorus’ music leadership. There is an advertisement going out worldwide now. In the meantime, Guy Gibson has stepped into the role. Guy has directed us before when Jim was away earlier this year and we also have the support of our very talented movement coach Lisa Schouw.

Thank you, and best wishes, Jim, from all at Sydney Harmony !!

The Chorus has a daylong workshop that features Ken Hatton, Lead of the International Gold Medal Quartet, “Bluegrass Student Union” and former assistant director and director of the Louisville Thoroughbreds Chorus, on the 12th of November and its Annual Dinner & Awards Night on 3rd December. Our last rehearsal for the year is on 19th December which will be a talent night where anything goes.!

Rob Walley
President – Sydney Harmony

### Men In Harmony

Starting the year in January we performed at two naturalization ceremonies, one a usual event every year for the local council in which area we rehearse and the other to see our M.D. become a naturalized Australian.

September, a month before the Convention we combined with “Vocal Evolution” and the “Girls” – “Perth Harmony Chorus” (on their way to the U.S.A. as we were departing for the Gold Coast) in a Friends and Family Night. This was a sell out and held at the Penhros Girls College – a lovely venue.

By 18th October saw most of us back from the Gold Coast and getting organised for Christmas Carols in December. This is a regular outing performed for the Perth City Council – this year, as well as singing in the streets, we start for a full blown concert together with Perth Harmony Chorus.

As usual, our two yearly Australian Get Together was a great success. The Gold Coast, being hard to beat as a venue – a bit different to Perth in the winter months.

Congratulations are well and truly in order to the Queensland lads for their organisation of the complete event, from the opening dinner, quartet and chorus competitions, the concert, church service and closing lunch were greatly enjoyed by all. Apart from our own Australian entertainment during the Convention, “Sep” and “Riptide” finished it off.

Congratulations also to those who featured in the medals, good to see “Vocal Evolution” put W.A. on the map as well as quartet “Alliance” – three West Australians and one from Canberra, this gold could not get any closer – looking at the count back with “Fast Forward”, everyone holding their breath. “Vocal Evolution” would be proud of “Nexus” also.

Our next convention in Sydney 2007 will be upon us in quick time – in the meantime as 2005 comes to a close, “Men in Harmony” wish all good singing and a Happy Christmas.

Peter Raven
MIH

First of all, the Clippers wish to congratulate the Blenders not only on their most accomplished performance at the Convention, and their corresponding gold medal, but also on the vast amounts of hard work and brilliant organisation that made the Convention such a resounding success. Half of the Clipper delegates were “first timers”, most of them with less than eight months experience of barbershop; attendance at the Convention was enough to “cement” them firmly into the barbershop community.

We were all extremely proud of “Who’s Counting”, our senior quartet who came home with the gold medal.
The success of the lads has encouraged the development of a number of new quartets within the chorus, and this can only benefit every member, and the chorus as a whole.

Gold Medal Senior Quartet – Who’s Counting

We also were delighted that the gold medal for the school quartet was won by the boys from Marist College, Ashgrove, in Brisbane. The boys had sung at our schools’Clippers’ concert, and a couple of us had been able to spend an hour or so with them just prior to the convention. The boys got a real “buzz” out of their participation! We’re hoping to continue encouraging the barbershop movement in our secondary schools.

The skills of the chorus as a whole continue to grow, as we develop breathing and singing techniques taught to us by the visiting American experts. New members keep trickling in, as we polish up some new Christmas music in preparation for traditional visits to the Mater hospital in December.

At our recent AGM, the current executive was maintain our enthusiasm and drive. The meeting recognised the most valuable contributions of John Shelton, double gold medal winner and Vice President - Recruitment, conferring on him life membership of the chorus.

The Clippers take this opportunity to wish barbersoppers all over Australia wonderful Christmas time and a successful New Year.

E R Andrew
President

CONGRATULATIONS TO REALTIME

International Gold Medal Quartet, Realtime – with Australia’s own John Newell singing Lead.
We hope to see them in Australia in September or October 2006

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MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Sydney Harmony is seeking to appoint a Musical and Artistic Director to replace its retiring Foundation Director, Jim Catt.

We seek a committed and experienced musician to take us to the next level of our growth and musical development.

This award winning men’s chorus of around fifty members sings a cappella vocal harmony in the barbershop style and is affiliated with the Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers Inc. (AAMBS).

We were placed third in the Chorus Competition of the AAMBS National Convention at the Gold Coast in October 2005. In 2004, the Chorus won the John Lamble Australasian Community Choirs Championship at the McDonalds Performing Arts Challenge and were finalists in this contest in 2005.

We are looking to pursue vocal excellence under the guidance and inspiration of a talented and experienced musician who possesses high leadership ability and a strong commitment to vocal harmony.

Working closely with the Executive Committee, the successful applicant will have every opportunity to put his or her stamp on the chorus and to achieve artistic and competition success with a group of like-minded men who enjoy making music together.

Initial enquiries should be directed to the Search Team by contacting Bill Purdue, either by telephone on +61 2 9488 9275 or by email on bill@purdue.id.au.

Naturally your enquiry will be treated in the strictest confidence.

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2005 Convention Happy Snaps

Blenders President, Barry Joy  Blenders at the Getting to Know you Barbeque  Delegates from the Central Coast of NSW

Saturday Evening Post at Barbecue  What’s with the Blond Hair ?!!  A Convention AAMBSassador

Ian Mulholland conducting the Sing Out  Barbershoppers from all States at the Singout  Is this our future?

The back of the pack  President, Mike Donnelly  Barbershoppers chatting after the singout
SEP at the President’s Cocktail Party

Riptide at the President’s Cocktail Party

A Cajun teaching Australians vowel sounds !!!

Saturday Evening Post in Workshop mode

The Queen was in her Counting House ... The very hard working Sue Beardsley, We hope she got to see more than the inside of the office.

Wood shedding
(or is that Sheep Shearing in Australia ??)

President Mike Donnelly with AAMBS Life Members

Happy Dinners at the Welcome Dinner

Bram Nicholson on a Good Hair day !!

Members “Strutting Their Stuff”
Where would we be without our supporter? Our Hard Working Judges. Barbarella & A Fella (is that Bram Again?)

Quartets - Youth & Senior – at the Sunshine Hospitality Night Councillors at the AAMBS Meeting

Winning Open Quartet – Alliance. A very large quartet – SEP & Riptide combined Riptide sing Baby Mine, with a background slide show of their kids – heart renching Stuff !!

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OPPORTUNITY TO DIRECT A SWEET ADELINE CHORUS

Sydney Town Chorus is a committed group of Sweet Adelines.

Our aim is to grow in number and advance our skills to enable us to achieve within the sweet Adeline organisation.

We are looking for a musical leader, preferably with directing experience or someone with barbershop experience willing to train and qualify as a Sweet Adelines director.

Opportunities to advance your own skills and barbershop knowledge.

Please contact: Linda Watt Smith, Team Co-ordinator Sydney Town Chorus Email: ljcox1@bigpond.net.au
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So you are travelling within Australia –
If you want to contact and/or visit any
AAMBS CHORUS and sing along with your
fellow Barbershoppers, wherever you are,
check them out on our Website –
www.aambs.org.au

The point of contact for Barbershop
Notes is
secretary@aambs.org.au
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