From Our President

The Barbershop Universe

The Holidays are over, a New Year has begun, and it might be time to look at where we stand in the world of barbershopping, and where we’re going in the New Year. For most of us, barbershopping is what we experience every week at rehearsal, and at our local performances. This is the core of our experience in this great art form of ours. But I’d invite you to take a peek at where the Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers fits into the worldwide picture. It may be bigger than you think!

There is an organization called the World Harmony Council, which has thirteen members from male or female organizations, usually national in composition. Many have adopted clever acronyms, like the original SPEBSQSA. We have BABBS and LABBS, SNOBS and SPATS, BinGI, NZABS, DABS, and of course the biggies, SAI and BHS, and more. I’ll leave some of these as a mystery, but two of the more unusual acronyms are for Barbershopping in Germany, and believe it or not……… the Southern Part of Africa Tonsorial Society. The famous barbershopper Ed Waesche is the current President, and I’m holding down the job of Vice President. The Council hosts the World Harmony Jamboree during Internationals every year, which is a forum for affiliates to perform before audiences in the thousands. In so doing they raise enough profit to provide a grant to each affiliate of about $3,000.00 per year. We also share lessons learned and common goals in membership, education, performance, and all aspects of barbershopping where we can learn the best way from someone else.

The largest organization, now named the Barbershop Harmony Society (née SPEBSQSA) is divided into Districts throughout the US and Canada, with a membership of just about 30,000. We are also an affiliate of BHS, and follow their rules and guidelines on virtually all aspects of our craft. For a fee of just $2.50 per year per member we receive 85 copies of Harmonizer magazine, music support, a permanent “nomination spot” to perform at Internationals for our medallist chorus, open quartet, and seniors’ quartet, and member’s discount prices for music and Harmony Marketplace items. We are able to get all our judges, world class quartets, and educators to come Down Under for basic airfare, to perform, judge, teach, and coach for no further fees. We rely on great Aussie hospitality to provide billeting, transport, and a little sightseeing for our guests. This provides the expertise and inspiration of these stellar gentlemen at the lowest possible cost to our membership. A great example was the contribution of Saturday Evening Post, Riptide, and our recent Convention judging panel which did all their tasks and a whole lot more at the Convention and Harmony College without any fees.

That tells you where we stand, but equally important is how we stand. Our recent scores show that our “average” chorus is on a par with the average chorus of any District in North America. We have the knowledge and ability to put on great performances for our audiences, and truly further the reputation and success of our art form. How about a New Year’s Resolution for each of us to do our part to become the best we can be: as a singer, performer, chorus mate, and member of the worldwide fraternity of barbershop singers.

Mike Donnelly
AAMBS President

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FROM THE DESK OF OUR VP CONVENTIONS

A most Happy New Year to all of you. As we begin this new year and each of your choruses return from what I hope was a joyous holiday season, it is my hope that we all renew our commitment to this wonderful hobby of ours and that each of us will strive to not only improve ourselves and our choruses but also to encourage others, by our example, to do the same. It is also my hope that we will each make a special effort to introduced at least one prospective new member to our respective choruses so that as Sydney 2007 Convention time roles around, we can expect to top the 1000 delegate mark.

And speaking of Conventions, we can now begin the serious task of critically examining our recent past convention and even though by all accounts, it was an incredible success, there are always things to learn and ways that it can be improved. A vital part of that learning and improvement is the feedback that we get from each of you.

There are many convention issues that must be examined over the next few months and especially at the National Council’s face-to-face meeting in Melbourne in early March. To that end, I would invite each of you to give me your thoughts about the following innovations that were trialed at the Gold Coast Convention:

1. Six judge panel for the competitions.
2. New awards categories for both the quartet and the chorus competitions. Small, medium and large chorus award. Chorus and quartet handicap awards. Audience favourite award for quartet and chorus.
3. Chorus master class.
4. Sing with the champs.
5. Ice cream social following the quartet finals.
6. Combining the Youth, Senior and Open competitions on the same day.
7. Order in which the awards were announced.

Of course, if there are any other convention matters that you would like to address, I strongly encourage you to do so and while most of you responded to the survey that we put out last year, I am sure that there are always matters that either weren’t addressed in the survey or that you may have had a chance to have a closer look at following our recent convention.

Exciting times await us in the next two years and I can’t wait to start working with the Sydney Harmony Convention Committee as they start putting together our 2007 Convention and, in case you forgot, the incredible 2004 International Champion Quartet, “Gotcha” will be with us.

I look forward to hearing from you over the next few months.

Yours in harmony,

Bob Fritz

FROM OUR SECRETARY

It is ESSENTIAL that you keep AAMBS notified of any change of contact details – this applies particularly to Executive Members of each chorus. I am constantly surprised at how many times important emails are returned as “undelivered” or “unknown”. For you to be kept up to date on all aspects of AAMBS operations I must have correct contact details for your Club, and these need to be updated when any change is made. This is up to you.

Now for all you lovers of the Barbershop Style, let me tell you that the AAMBS Library now includes the Salt Lake City 2005 Convention CDs AND DVDs of the Top 24 Choruses and the Top 20 Quartets. These are available for borrowing for a limited period of 14 days each - to enable the widest possible membership appreciation. First in, Best dressed!

Yours, in Continuing Harmony,

Kevin White, Secretary
FROM OUR VP MUSIC

Some More Facts about Copyright of Print Music

- A song in public domain can be copied and arranged at will.
- Arrangements of songs in the public domain can be copyrighted by the arranger.
- Songs and arrangements are generally copyright for the life-time of the composer(s) plus 50 years.
- Arrangements of songs still in copyright are the property of the owner of the song, NOT the arranger.
- For a copyright song, the arranger must obtain permission from the owner of the song BEFORE the arrangement can be performed or rehearsed.
- The arranger of a copyright song has no distribution rights for the arrangement, since the arrangement still belongs to the owner of the song.
- Singing illegal music on shows and in contests is in violation of copyright law.
- AAMBS is in full compliance with copyright law and expects all members to be the same.

How To Acquire Legal Arrangements

- Buy published music from the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS). All published music since 1996 has included worldwide distribution rights. You must purchase all original copies from BHS (i.e. you can’t buy one and photocopy the rest).
- Music purchased from BHS before 1996 is still probably “legal” as described in Dave Brown’s article in Issue 81 of Barbershop Notes.
- If you obtain an arrangement from another source, it is your responsibility to check that the arrangement and copies are legal. If you are concerned about the legality of an arrangement you should ask for a copy of the signed form of approval between the publisher/owner and the arranger. If the arrangement is legal the arranger will be able to provide this.
- You will still have to make separate payment to the publisher/owner of the songs for the number of copies of the arrangement you want to make.
- If an arrangement needs clearance, AAMBS can help. Allow 60 days to hear back from the publisher, so plan ahead. Contact Music VP, Ian Mulholland at email: music@aambs.org.au, giving the details of your enquiry.
- On the BHS website, www.barbershop.org, do a search for “copyright basics” and get a free document explaining many more details.

Re-issue of the AAMBS Polecat Book

After some investigation, it has been decided NOT to re-print the AAMBS Polecat Book. This is because the songs are available from other current sources, viz. The AAMBS Great Australian Songbook (published in 2005 – see back issues of BS Notes for an order form), the Polecat Series Book published by The Barbershop Society (Stock # 6053), or available as public domain re-prints (via the “Free’n’Easy” series from BHS). Chapter Music Librarians can contact me for more details.

Arrangements of Contemporary Songs

A number of members commented in the recent Membership Survey that they wished for more contemporary songs to be available in the barbershop style. There are in fact quite a lot, but most of them are “unpublished”. That means they are available from BHS as “unpublished” and if you want to use them you need to arrange your own copyright clearance.

Arrangements of contemporary songs are also available from AAMBS arrangers. Contact me if you want more details. If you want to sing more contemporary songs in your chapter, ask your Music Director to contact me for some recommendations.

Cheers,
Ian Mulholland, AAMBS Music VP
“Increasing Laughter in your Chapter Meeting
by Kirk Roose, director, Akron and Lorain, Ohio Chapters

Research suggests that a good hearty laugh can help:
- Reduce stress
- Lower blood pressure
- Elevate mood
- Boost immune system
- Protect the heart
- Connect you to others
- Foster instant relaxation, and
- Make you feel good

Listen for the amount of happy laughter in your chapter. Nurture it. Your guests will be impressed if they hear during breaks, a happy buzz sprinkled with laughter. Not only recreational chapters, but all chapters need humor and delight.

Fortunately, we don’t need to force humor into our meetings, because barbershop music is inherently funny. Have we forgotten this? Barbershop music has a tickle, a stiltick. Meredith Wilson knew this, as he used the quartet of school board members in *The Music Man* to bring a chuckle to his audience with “ice cream – ice cream – ice cream – ICE CREAM!” And lyrics like “how can there be any sin in sincere”. The tenor soars, the bass descends, the lead holds a note while the other gyrate, it’s all good fun. This is why we had 40,000 men singing barbershop. Junior high school kids giggle when they hear us sing. We’re the hams that can’t be cured. So don’t forget the stokick.

Do something interesting with the music. Instead of just singing “Down Our Way”, ask them to sing “Down Our Way Cha-Cha-Cha.” You get the idea. Or sing the tag quickly, abruptly ending the song. See how fast they can sing an up-tune. Take an old repertoire song and it pitch it up a fourth (falsetto practice!). Or turn it into a waltz or a rap.

The director’s mood counts. Before you enter the meeting place, be ready to have the most fun you’ve ever had, tonight. While you are directing, if something funny happens feel free to crack up.

Add some funny choreography. Have them wiggle their hands by their ears every time they sing the word “wild” in “Wild Irish Rose”. Just make something up. You’ll get better at it. (And they are listening for lyrics!) It doesn’t have to be permanent.

Use quartets in a funny way during the chorus time. For some reason quartets are amusing. Have a quartet sing a chorus-repertoire song before the chorus sings it. Make the quartet funny – three tall guys and one short, or give them funny hats. Make sure your entire out-front team is on board, especially the guy who is in charge of the program.

A lot of this is in his bailiwick. If your chapter meetings have degenerated into chorus rehearsals, encourage your officers and program people to work with you to increase and improve the time that is not strictly “rehearsal”. As the musical director, you may be one of the most creative people in the chapter, and you may set the tone.

If you or any of your members or guests can tell a joke, let them. Surprise the chapter by calling on your funny man between two songs you are directing. If the joke bombs, that’s funny too. If there are two or more funny guys, call them up front for the joke of the week contest.

Your team should encourage the supporting actors. Handing out membership cards for renewals can be fun – in one chapter, the secretary does a funny walk out front, in another the guys applaud each renewal with the number of claps that the renewed member has years of membership (10 years, 10 claps). If your chapter has refreshments, let the refreshment guy come out in a chef’s hat and announce the “menu for this evening,” perhaps in an atrocious French accent.

What does it take? Fifteen seconds? And another guy gets to do his thing, another laugh.

Try improv. Improvised songs, skits and other creative entertainment can be worked into your chapter meeting. We had a lot of fun with this one: we divided the men into four groups, and told them they had ten minutes to go off in a corner and prepare a ‘corny song.’ Didn’t have to be barbershop or even harmonized. Ten minutes later, they came back and each group performed in turn. It was a hoot. I noticed that the newer and younger members and even guests especially participated. You are strengthening creativity and performance skills, too. Improv can be based around scenarios (“your third-grade music class”), or around props like a newspaper or cell phone, around funny poems the guys know, or around a certain gag or polecat. Use your imagination and encourage them to use theirs. For variety, sometimes give them a week to think about it.

Share your success with other chapters.

Notice what parts of your meetings bring down the mood and energy level. If appropriate, make them funny or at least interesting. Of course, humor is not always appropriate. If an announcement is made that a member has died, mirth is out of place. That is time for a few minutes of warm sharing of memories. Maybe hum “I Believe”. A great meeting may have both laughter and tears. More laughter in your chapter should increase the fun and energy. You will all be younger. You should hear a difference in the sound of your chorus, a more joyful sound. Guests will be drawn in. Members will want to invite their friends to these barbershop parties.

Your team should schedule special nights like “loud shirt night”. Or “ugly outfit night.” (You might win, even if you forget). You may have to work on this one.
YOUR TAG MAY BE IT:

A BARBERSHOP HARMONY WINNER

Composers, arrangers, songwriters and wannabes - especially ones that think in terms of short and sweet—are sought by the Barbershop Harmony Society.

The Society is calling on music aficionados to contribute an entry to the first-ever International Tag Contest.

A tag, usually about eight measures long, is customarily defined as the closing line or lines of a song.

Most true barbershop arrangements include memorable lines that create the flourish Making the song special and fun to sing.

Some tags are entirely separate from any song.

They are just a line or two with all the qualities of a great song ending.

"When we get together as barbershoppers, knowing tags is a quick way for even strangers to start singing together," said Noah Funderburg, Society board member.

"Someone first asks if the others know a certain tag. If they do, they can all sing away. If not, then the person familiar with the tag teaches the others to sing it. And, from there, friendships are forged."

Barbershop harmony, a uniquely American musical art form, is known for its tight harmonies and expanded sound. For those unfamiliar with the style, sample tags can be viewed at www.barbershop.org > Sing > Get Music > Music Library. Scroll down to tags.

All entries are due on National Tag Day, April 11, the 68th anniversary of the founding of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

In addition to bragging rights, the winner of the tag contest will receive two complimentary admissions to the Society's international convention and contests being held July 2 to 9.

The tag will be sung in front of an audience of nearly 10,000 at the convention, posted to the Society website and published in The Harmonizer, the Society's official magazine.

Runners-up will receive gift certificates to Harmony Marketplace, the official store of the Society.

For complete contest rules and prize, go www.barbershop.org > sing > getmusic home or call 800-876-7464.
Jim Catt's Retirement from Sydney Harmony

By now you will know that a few weeks ago I retired as musical director of Sydney Harmony.

Seven years ago Kim, Ben and I moved to Sydney for a major job change and then soon after I helped to form SH. Since then, the chorus has developed and had some great experiences along the way. A few months ago the time came for me to decide whether I wanted to continue on this pathway or do something different. At that time I decided on the latter. However, I committed to take the guys through to the Convention which was my final hurrah (with these guys). The guys performed the best yet in contest and thanks to our Performance Coach Lisa, the Music Team and of course the members!, we managed a creditable bronze.

I had some great times with SH and will miss many of the members and hope to keep in touch with the group as it moves into a new phase.

This change for me now gives me the opportunity to look further at some different musical challenges. I am still enjoying singing in FREEFALL and we are working on a collaboration for our next CD.

I am fine and happy and look forward to seeing, coaching or bumping into you at a show or a Convention sometime soon.

Love, Jim

Clarification about FREEFALL - AAMBS Champions 2003/4

Some people are under the misunderstanding that FREEFALL have disbanded or will be retiring from competing or singing. We made a decision not to compete in this year’s contest as our diary was getting very clogged around this time of year and we weren’t sure if we could have all been on the Gold Coast at this time. We also wanted to focus our efforts on the International quartet contest (see article).

Tony, Guy, Sam and Jim
- FREEFALL

It has been another busy period for the chorus, for the most part involving brushing up on Christmas Carols, learning a few new ones and then getting out and performing them.

We managed to perform on 15 separate occasions during December at a variety of functions. Highlights included the locally televised Carols event held at Burswood Park and being ‘adopted’ by a nine-year-old boy who stood during a performance. We to lots of people and barbershop handed out our as part of our at the various We are hoping to these new on January 30 at

We held our annual Christmas Party and Awards Presentation on December 10. Amongst all the mandatory celebrations we also awarded member Michael Day with the very first Vocal Evolution ‘Man of the Year’ trophy in recognition of his outstanding efforts in 2005 on behalf of the chorus. This is the first year that Vocal Evolution has made such an award and this trophy will now be presented on an annual basis. Mike put in a huge effort this year around various chorus activities. He has served as a member of the Management Committee as Member at Large and has taken on a variety of tasks including Convention Coordinator, organising social activities, riser duties, coordinating sponsorship and other fundraisers and last but not least, pitch-piper for the chorus – which is always an undervalued task!

Our MD Gina D'Souza and the rest of the Music Team are currently busy preparing learning tapes for the new additions to our repertoire so that they are ready to hand to members at the first rehearsal for 2006. They are also doing all the necessary planning and preparations for the recording of Vocal Evolution’s first CD which will be happening this year.

Our first rehearsal for the year will be on January 17 and we are looking forward to kicking off another fun and productive year. To all our barbershopping friends around the nation we wish you all the very best for 2006!
“Xmas is coming, the goose is getting fat...”. Not any more. Xmas has now come and gone, the tree is put away for another year and all the lights are carefully packed in the garage to be brought out next Xmas. At the time of print bush fires are blazing in NSW very close to our friends down there, while up here in Brisbane we are sweltering in the heat and humidity which has enveloped us over the Xmas holidays. All this will soon pass, so for now I extend wishes of happiness, success, good friends and health to all barbershoppers for the New Year.

Broadwater Connection finished the year with a combined candlelight sing-out in one of the city parks and a local end-of-year Garden Club celebration. How important is having the correct sound for your chorus. Well I can tell you all, and I’m sure most of you know, that having more than two microphones is essential as is having a sound engineer who knows his job. Singing in the open is hard enough. The chorus sang on stage with two mics only. As it was a large park the sound was not amplified enough. I had a word with the sound engineers and they assured me the sound would be OK. You don’t mess around with these guys, they are the EXPERTS. The chorus was popular and well received, but I would have liked the mics turned up more so that the harmonies could be heard.

The Garden Club was an inside, air-conditioned booking. I only had 8 men who could come along and I wanted to cancel this booking, due to no tenor. The guys worked very hard in holding the audience’s attention. They sang well (I sang tenor), they got the audience singing, some of the guys told jokes and all in all they were very well received and another booking pending. The old adage “the show must go on” is my motto.

The Committee will be trying very hard to recruit new members this year and we will be looking at purchasing (second-hand) costumes. With only a few weeks to go before we start back again, I will be looking through music and making tapes. Can you believe that I had phone calls already asking when we will be resuming. What dedication!! Janet Sippen

Musical Director

FLEURIEU HARMONY CHORUS

2005 was very enjoyable and successful for the Fleurieu Harmony Chorus. It started with busking at the local markets in Willunga and Goolwa to raise funds for the Tsunami victims and the Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Relief. We raised $2,500 whilst spreading our unique music form to very appreciative audiences.

Another highlight was the visit from the WestCoast Chordsmen in May where we joined with the Adelaide Festival Statesmen in workshops, barbeques and dinners which culminated in a combined Concert at the Marion Domain Theatre, which also included the ladies from Adelaide's Sound Connection. The Grand Finale with all four choruses on the risers singing ‘Perhaps Love’, arranged and conducted by Bruce Okely, was a highlight and will be remembered for a long time.

Our group were guest artists at an Oxfam Charity Concert at the Victor Harbor Town Hall in October, and this was followed by all our usual end of year gigs at local clubs, retirement homes etc., with our quartet 'The Nostalgia Four' doing a few extra shows. Twice a year the quartet are guest artists at a local 'Mirth. Mime and Melody' Concert and this year was no exception with the group bringing the house down with a special arrangement of ‘Robinson Crusoe’ at the November concert.

The New Year is already looking good with a visit from Kim Sebbage over from Perth for a workshop weekend in February, when we shall again join with the Festival Statesmen for what promises to be an enlightening couple of days.

In May we shall once again join with the Festival Statesmen, a total of 28 singers plus 17 partners, to travel to Perth for a week on a reciprocal visit as guests of the West Coast Chordsmen.

Life is certainly never boring when you are involved in Barbershop.

We wish all our fellow shoppers a Happy and Harmonious New Year

Yours in harmony

Gordon Tomlinson - Secretary

DO YOU KNOW YOUR REGIONAL CHAIRMAN?

Match the names and regions to the faces ....

1. Harry Owen a. Sunshine
2. Bill Purdue b. Western
3. Chris Mountier c. Eastern

(Answers: on the AAMBS Website – www.aambbs.org.au ... Contact Details)

- WARNING – WARNING –
- WARNING –
Never ever, ever open any emails from exec@aambbs.org.au or send any emails to this address. It is closed so anything you receive purporting to be from this email address is SPAM mail.
HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our friends across this great nation of ours. May it be full of promise and expectations are met happily.

Since we last met through the pages of our National newsletter, our club has gone into preparation for our trip to Denver. A lot of planning has already been done and from the new year we will be fundraising heavily to ensure that most members will be able to travel to the U.S.A. The associated cost structure has been laid out and the ground plan for our trip will be adhered to as it is hard to control when people want to do their own itinerary.

On the 9th of December, Rose had a little birthday party with a few people at Currumbin Sanctuary. As you may have guessed, her big day coincided with a singout. So about 500 people were there and it was a lot of fun. We then followed with our end of year Christmas party on the 16th. of December. This year we honoured a great many of our hard working crew of Blenders.

We also presented awards to the following people. Most improved barbershopper was Peter Gray. Albert Tomkinson Youth award winner was Coby Chapple. The Spirit of Barbershop award was won by Sue Beardsley for her sterling work with the Convention. Barbershopper of the Year was taken out by Mike Ludwig per medium of his outstanding contribution as our V.P. Music and 2005 National Convention chairman. Congratulations to all. You were deserved winners.

As is common to everyday living, ill health does not take a holiday. Irene Johnson has been into hospital. Hopefully the pacemaker works better for her. Then a relative died on Christmas Day and the funeral was almost N.Y.E. But the saddest news was Margaret Csabi, the wife of Charles. She nursed her son Andrew after the Bali bombing but sadly died suddenly on the 30th December and the funeral was held at Runaway Bay on the 5th of January. A lot of members were there to sing three songs during the service. Charles and his family will be helped through this sad time with the love of their extended family from the Blenders.

With most members having a well earned break, we are going back to rehearsals on the 30th of January and this year intend to release our 4th C.D. With a lot of new repertoire we should have a great selection to do. We even have another new member. Andrew Barany joined just before the break and is our 95th full member. Another Bass. That makes 32 all up. Welcome to the club.

The Blenders’ Awards for 2005

Barbershopper of the Year
Congratulations to Mike Ludwig

Mike – was our Music V.P. for 2004-2005. He was also Chairman of the Gold Coast’s National Convention held in October this year.

Mike Ludwig was born on 28.2.59 in Brisbane. He joined the Blenders in 1993 and won Gold medals from 1995-2005.

His occupation is in the Education Department - where he taught at Winfield – Rocky Point - Eidsvold - Burleigh and Windaroo as Principal in primary education. He now is Executive Director in the Roma to Ipswich areas. Played A Grade basketball in the State league. He sang in quartets with “B Natural” 1995-2001 – “Escapade” 2003 2nd Regionals – top ten Gold Coast 2005. Mike has served on our Executive as Secretary – President and V.P. Music. Mike became a life member in 1999

The Albert Tomkinson Junior Barbershopper of the Year 2005
Congratulations to Coby Chapple

Coby won the award for his excellence within the youth section. This year he has emerged as a more confident young man with leadership at his school being his biggest honour. He has merged into the front row of the chorus and also as a front man - warming the chorus up with great choreo techniques. The X-Factor star was a big hit with his somersaults and rap dancing. He also performed at the Gold Coast Arts Centre production of “Joseph”

Most improved award winner for the year 2005
Congratulations to Peter Gray

Peter stunned quite a few people by progressing to the front row and LEADING the way. He has performed creditably with quartets in the Sunshine Region and the 2005 Convention. This semi-quiet man also took on the roll of Vice President of the club this year and continues to be a role model for many in the chorus.

Spirit of Barbershop Award
Congratulations to Sue Beardsley

Sue has been a tireless worker behind the scenes – for the club for many years as Co-Treasurer with Grant and has organised the financial needs for Christ Church, the 2005 Convention and many more. This outstanding work ethic has given the Blenders a very much needed boost.

Until next time.
Harold Howson
As the inaugural men’s barbershop chorus in Australia, Men in Harmony celebrated 20 years of proud history in 2005. In 1983, Bruce Okely’s quartet, the Four Notes – were singing in a Fremantle Hotel to raise funds to attend a barbershop convention in the US, and a member of the audience happened to be Don Amos, the Life President of the British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS), who was to become a lifelong friend of Men in Harmony. Subsequent to this fortuitous meeting, the guys came home from St Louis fired up with enthusiasm about the great barbershop movement that was spreading across the world.

The following year Men in Harmony was established and as membership rapidly grew, they began to hear about isolated quartets across the country. The chorus took the initiative in 1987 to establish and fund the body that they called the Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers Inc., and began to conduct Australia-wide quartet contests using videotapes. After a visit to Perth with his 1987 winning quartet, Barbershop Boys from Queensland’s Gold Coast, Linc Abbot scampered home to advertise for singers to start up his own chorus. He initially received more interest from women than men!

Another initiative that was taken by the chorus was to attend the BABS convention in 1989. Approximately 50% of the members and their partners travelled to Bournemouth as the Downunder Chorus where they were invited to sing on the International Showcase along with two US quartets and choruses from the US, Ireland and the Netherlands. For the 28 blokes from downunder, resplendent in moleskins and akubras, this was an awesome experience. Many friendships were forged during that tour, and on the initiative of the tourists, AAMBS patented the name Downunder Chorus, to be used in the future by any composite chorus of AAMBS members who wish to tour overseas.

Men in Harmony were in the right place to establish a connection with the people of Perth and Fremantle during the America’s Cup celebrations, and this has resulted in the chorus’ position today as a respected entertainment group throughout WA, being called upon to sing at most of the ‘big events’. Each year, during Christmas in the City, we combine with Perth Harmony Chorus to perform in the official Forrest Place Christmas Concert, as well as carolling in the city streets and on the Santa Trains during the Christmas shopping week.

Men in Harmony were also involved in other activities with the local barbershop community in Perth during 2005. In September we participated in the Barbershop Spectacular, giving PHC, MIH and Vocal Evolution, and all competing quartets, the opportunity to do a public performance before going off to the various competitions, sharing the profits of the show. In October, as part of the Youth in Barbershop Development Initiative, the chorus lent its support to the Big Barbershop Day Out, which involved a day of workshops and performance for over 100 local high school girls and boys.

Our 20 year celebrations took place in August at an anniversary dinner at Scotch College with current and past members present, and Andy Aberle launched his second edition of the chorus history: “The second decade – the story continues”. With the recruitment of some dedicated younger men into the chorus, and under the leadership of our talented and inspirational Director, Carole Macintyre, we look forward to the third decade with pride and enthusiasm. Come and join us when you are fortunate enough to be visiting our great State.

Greetings and best wishes for 2006, a year which could see our Chorus demonstrating more potential than we ever dreamed of.

Our Executive Committee has prepared a new organisational structure which could be the key to improvements in the areas of Membership, Promotion and Performance, Fundraising and Convention, and Music.

We have also discussed the need for a Chorus name change which would:-
   a) link us more obviously to Geelong,
   b) end any further confusion on the part of AAMBS as to our origins and identity,
   c) indicate to our community that we have something skilled and exciting to offer.

The Committee is also keen to promote the idea of developing a Concert Party able to present up to 80 minutes of bright entertainment with Chorus items, Quartets, Solo items, Comedy items and Recitations, as our major fundraiser.

The Concert Party would perform perhaps twice yearly in the Barwon Region and be available elsewhere to help Community Service organisations to fundraise, for a share of the proceeds.

Instead of our Chorus simply following our established routine of revisiting our old material and demonstrating only limited enthusiasm for improving our skills and learning new material, let us each and every Chorus member, make a personal commitment to ‘lock and ring’ every chord we can.

Murray Anderson
President
MINER CHORDS,
Ipswich’s own exciting new entertainment chorus, had their debut at the end of November performing at a Citizenship Ceremony held at the Ipswich Art Gallery.

Miner Chords, under the direction of Mark McCann, performed for 93 new Aussies from 25 different countries as well as the Mayor, Councillors and other special guests.

So well received was the performance by Miner Chords that they were asked to provide an encore by no lesser person than the Mayor himself, Councillor Paul Pisasale. Later Miner Chords sang in the Rotunda as part of the official opening of the refurbished Ipswich City Mall.

Their publicity shows that currently Miner Chords boasts 20 men from 6 different countries and will welcome people from any country who want to sing. All they ask is “what part do you sing”? So, if you know of anyone who would like to sing and even if they are unable to read music, if they can carry a tune Miner Chords will teach them the rest.

For some FREE singing lessons the person to contact is Chris Featherstone on 07 3294 8815.

THE TAG
By Joe Liles, Tagmaster
– The Harmonizer, March/April 2005

The story of the tag of “The Story of the Rose”

I’ve heard it said many times that arrangers should always adhere to the ‘original intent’ of the writer(s) of the music; a nice gesture, perhaps, but not the way of ‘real-world music.’ A good melody has a life of its own and can be adapted to many styles. Great composer of the past centuries often made use of known melodies and folk songs, changing meter and/or modes of major and minor and adapting them to their personal style and liking. It’s how music grows and evolves.

The legendary Dave Stevens showed me how the old-time woodshed singers sang the passage below of “Story of the Rose”. He said the basses, first measure, jumped an octave to the high Ab to avoid the awkward interval of a major 7th. It created a wonderful high-tension chord that resolved to the barbershop seventh on the next chord. I love it. It’s fun to sing an certainly never on the composer’s mind. It creates a C7th with an augmented (raised) fifth in the bass.

Below I’ve shown the melody that Andrew Mack wrote. What a climactic peak this melody brings to the lyric! I’ve stylized it for barbershop; here it is, Dave, the way you always wanted to publish it!

STORY OF THE ROSE
(Heart Of My Heart)

Words by ALICE

Music by ANDREW MACK

[Sheet music image]

*Singing exercises? — No, the Tenor lost one of his Contact Lenses!*
**Hebron Orphanage**

**Bruce Okely and Keith Swannell**

**Kids, Beds and Barbershop**

Readers will recall that Hebron Orphanage, Andhra Pradesh, southern India, was adopted by our Association last year as a recommended charity for persons or groups wishing to aid victims of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. The particular connection between our movement and this orphanage has been set out in earlier articles and those running the orphanage are deeply appreciative of the gifts received. Over $11,000 was donated during the year from members, clubs and contacts of AAMBS. This figure includes a very generous $6,000 gift from the members of the church congregation of one of our members.

Richard Swannell, whose family is primarily responsible for the continued running of the orphanage, suggested that the particular project this sum, amounting to $600, could be devoted to was badly-needed beds for these new Tsunami kids". And so it was!

The money was immediately transferred to the orphanage bank account and the bed project was begun. Materials, mainly steel for the bed frames and fibre mattresses, were bought and the beds were constructed on site. It was possible with that amount of money to get 36 little tsunami orphans off the floor and on to beds.

In Richard’s words: “The kids sleep much better on beds than on the hard concrete floor (don’t we all!) and with better sleep they do better in their studies. So, a bed at this stage could well make all the difference in getting a qualification of some sort and a decent job at a later stage. This is important stuff”.

**The bed project underway**

Now the object of telling this story is absolutely not to say what good fellows we are – but rather to explain how incredibly useful even a relatively small amount can be, when placed in the right hands. Every cent that is donated goes directly into the hands of those operating the orphanage, is used with great care and is subject to independent scrutiny and audit so we have every confidence in encouraging anyone or any group who so wish to give it every possible support.

Richard Swannell has recently provided his contacts with a complete update on the history and progress of the orphanage. This is available by contacting Keith at kas33@aapt.net.au With Richard’s permission we provide the following extracts.

**Overflow of Children sleeping on the floor**

Toward the end of 2005 the Westcoast Chordsmen presented their annual concert: a program they share with the children of the WA Youth Orchestra. The financial proceeds, which previously had always gone to Save the Children, were, this time, shared with the Hebron Orphanage.

Ten days after the Tsunami, Mandy and I went to India and worked with the orphanage staff rescuing tsunami affected children. A full report on that trip can be found at: [http://www.swannellfoundation.org/tor.html](http://www.swannellfoundation.org/tor.html)

**Running Relief Camps and Accommodation Needs:**

Our challenge has been finding sufficient additional accommodation at the orphanage for all the tsunami-affected children that we rescued. We have 300 children at the present time.

Although we originally brought in about 150 tsunami children to the orphanage, many of them found it very difficult to be separated from the people and surroundings they were familiar with, and we ended up sending many of these children back to their ocean-side villages for a period of time. We ran relief camps at two locations to look after around 100 of the children for more than six months, with about 50 tsunami affected children remaining at the orphanage.

In the interim, we’ve been building an extension to the boy’s dormitory at Hebron Orphanage – which is close to finished. This extension will hold an additional 120 boys.

The completed ground floor has allowed us to sleep all our current children comfortably although some still sleep on the floor, while the first floor is still needing about another US$5,000 to complete. Until we raise the money, only the ground floor of the building is useable.

However, once the upper floor is completed, we will have room to bring in the remaining children presently housed in the Ongole relief camp – currently about 80 children. We were able to close the Andaman Island relief camp late in October 2005 after integrating the children into other local communities and orphanages. They will be transferred to Hebron at a later date.”

(Richard’s report goes on to outline the donations that have been received following the tsunami and the broad plans for future development of the orphanage.) He concludes:

“Current Needs

The needs are many and urgent: More toilets and showers; beds; dining and study hall; new school desks; classrooms; computers; raising land above flood level, finishing dormitories, meeting ongoing running costs, etc.”

**Donations:** All donations can be sent to Richard’s father, Keith Swannell of Westcoast Chordsmen at 1 Cameron Green, Floreat, 6014 WA. All cheques to be made out to Hebron Orphanage. This money is deposited into the Hebron account in Perth.

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Please make contact with AAMBS through the **Secretary** at our permanent addresses and phone number:

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**Travelling within Australia ???**

Why not contact and/or visit the local AAMBS CHORUS and sing along with fellow Barbershoppers, wherever you are, check them out on our Website – [www.aambs.org.au](http://www.aambs.org.au)

**Travelling Overseas ???**

Check out the local Barbershoppers on our International Choruses page

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**The point of contact for Barbershop Notes is**

[secretary@aambs.org.au](mailto:secretary@aambs.org.au)

**Deadline for the next edition is**

Friday 10th March 2006