IS THAT MY JOB?

I think every barbershopper in Australia would agree that having their chorus sing and perform better — is a good thing. It lets us “reach out and touch” our audience, it increases our sense of accomplishment, it even adds to the really big goal of keeping our artform of barbershopping alive. So how do we get our chorus to make a better sound?

We have Music Directors that study the music, listen to tapes, consult with other directors, avail themselves of AAMBS Director Training, and constantly seek ways to inspire, educate, and motivate us. We have biennial AAMBS Conventions, with a variety of competitions to give us a benchmark of how we’re doing, and provide a tangible reward to work toward as a team. We have a national music library for free loan of CDs and DVDs so we can see and hear exactly how the “superstars” of our artform do it. But that’s not enough. Ninety-nine percent of the progress a chorus makes comes from you … or it doesn’t 😊

Each singer on the riser has a huge range of opportunities to contribute to, or build, the overall sound. And yet, how often have you reached the end of a song in rehearsal and realized you had hardly noticed what you were singing? TRUE STORY – Singing Christmas carols with my quartet on the City mall, somewhere in our second hour, we reached the end of our song and I put on my best “performance smile” as the audience applauded. I stage-whispered “Let’s Do Hark the Herald” next. To which our Bari – the astute one in the quartet - replied “That’s what we just sang!” The brain is an amazing thing, and I now know we can sing in total “auto-pilot.” But, of course, that does absolutely nothing to improve our performance.

So my single challenge for all of us is to focus, and concentrate, with intensity, as we go through songs on the risers. I don’t know if anyone can hold 100% intensity, for 100% of a rehearsal. But if you’re focused singing level is maybe 25%, then think how much better you could contribute if that level was 50%. We reach a point where the Directors have reminded us enough about breathing, and vowel matching, and white spaces, and singable consonants, and projecting, and colour and dynamics in a song. But none of that matters if we don’t focus. So next rehearsal I’m going to take stock at the end of each song and ask myself what I though about. If it was the cricket test score, the pending household repair, the status of my Super, something clever my Grandchild did — then chances are my performance was a little short of what it could have been.

No-one can force the required focus and concentration on us at rehearsal. But the degree to which we accept that responsibility and use self-discipline, is the factor that will make a huge difference in the performance level of our team – the quartet, or the chorus. Every chorus has a team of leaders that work diligently to provide us with the tools to improve. But how well we use them — well, that’s our job.

In Harmony,
Mike Donnelly

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From our VP Membership

United We Sing

Looking back through my collection of Harmonizers, I noticed that the US, Canadian (and British) barbershop organizations regularly plan tribute events for their Remembrance Day on each November 11. Whilst Australia also remembers our fallen soldiers on November 11, our national day of remembrance is Anzac Day; a day of increasing outpouring of, dare I say it – ‘Patriotic feeling’ particularly with our younger generations. It seems to me that Anzac Day is one day that the Australian Barbershop fraternity could participate in a tribute to all men & women who have served their country.

Anzac Day is still 3 months away and my encouragement is for Clubs around Australia to seek out how they could stage such a tribute in their community. It is understood that some clubs may find organizing such an event to be a daunting experience so, for the rest of the article, I’ll pass on some tips that I hope will make your task easier.

START NOW.

It begins with a commitment to take part in the event. Once the commitment is there, form a committee to oversee the planning and publicity. Basically success will be realized because someone steps up and says, “I can do that” rather than sitting at home and waiting for someone to call.

INVOLVE OTHER SINGERS

Prepare a press release inviting outside singers to join you and send it to your local media. Also send invitations to other choral groups in your community inviting their singers to take part in the April 25 observances. You’ll need to make a decision whether to include female singers. Choosing to do so and/or working with local Sweet Adeline clubs will do two things. It will increase the level of participation and offer more variety in the program. You might consider inviting students to participate as well.

INVOLVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Secure the co-operation and support for the tribute from the Mayor’s office at the outset. The best time to hold the tribute would be after the parade – you’ll have a ready made audience in place. If you are near a military base, you have easy access to keynote speakers for your event.

ALERT THE MEDIA

Events such as these are unique – and that has great appeal to the media particularly if you have the participation of any political figures, local, state or national. The media get a story and you get free coverage.

FRINGE BENEFITS

In no way is this program ever to be presented as a membership campaign. But the reality is this: When non-Barbershoppers are invited to participate, they often do become members.

Look, people respond to our music. In a typical community, there aren’t many groups like ours that have the capability and resources of the local club. Plan – right now – to take part in an April 25th tribute.

Tom Smith
VP Membership
From our VP Marketing

At the Pan Pacific Championships in Hawaii in November the Kiwi Choruses undertook a fantastic initiative that worked. Several choruses met just a few times to present a big sound. The result? Unbelievable!

Queensland celebrates its 150 year birthday this year and steps are being taken in the Sunshine region for such a sound to be presented at a major event which will have an enormous affect publicity-wise for barbershopping in the region in a way that the public have not seen before. Watch this space for future bulletins.

It may well be the basis for a pattern for our genre to reach huge audiences. Choir of Hard Knocks? Yeah, great marketing and they sold themselves for six hours of television. A wonderful ploy but, guys, you just know our performances can do better than that. Everyone has now heard of the Choir of Hard Knocks. Ask the man or woman in the street if they have heard of Barbershop. Yes they have shown us the way and we now need to be pro-active to rethink how we are going about things. Have all chorus committees appointed a publicity man? Are we content to sing out in shopping malls and retirement villages which are worthy and earn us some brownie points with those who have heard the songs.

Eastern Region will be meeting in Canberra shortly. What a great opportunity to get together and plan for such a major appearance in NSW or Victoria? At the Sweet Adelines Convention in Hawaii in November they displayed a huge banner. It read ‘GROW BIG OR GO HOME’.

Most of our members have watched videos of those gorgeous 100-150 American choruses in full voice. As Barack says, "Can We Do it?" YES WE CAN !!!

Derek Churchill
Marketing Director

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From our Secretary

This is a Clarion Call ! Please, Please notify me of any change whatever to your particulars registered with AAMBS – whether it be a change in your contact or your e-mail address, a change in your Quartet line-up, or indeed if there is a change in the Executive of your Club, again with the contact particulars of each individual.

These are some of the hiccups I have to face when, for example, Club Secretaries are changed without prompt notice, with the result that important mailings or messages go astray or remain unanswered. So please – it is in your interest to ensure that the AAMBS records are kept up to date at all times. And in case you think that I am belabouring the point – which I am – Make absolutely certain that Your Quartet is currently registered with me at AAMBS – It is not sufficient to simply make your Club Secretary know who you are. Come the Qualifying Contests prior to the Convention, you may find that your inattention has cost you the opportunity to compete, and that you are excluded.

Kevin White
Secretary
Our Gary gets a Gong – congratulations Mr Music. . . .

VALENTINE’S DAY 2009 …..

……… is a Saturday this year – this is a great chance for Choruses and Quartets to get out there and promote Barbershopping.
CONVENTION REGISTRATION OPENS

Online Registration
This year, we are going online. This will make it easier for you to register or for clubs to complete registration on behalf of members.

Registration Opens Monday February 16th
Your Club will let you know the preferred method for registering. If your Club is subsidising members it will probably want to look after all registrations. Other clubs will probably encourage members to do their own registration. Check with your Club.

Lowest % Increase
Full Delegate early bird is $295 and Accompanying Delegate early bird $275. This is the lowest percentage cost increase between conventions since 2001.

Registration is all inclusive. It covers all competition sessions, Harmony Spectacular, the Saturday Night Afterglow, also the Welcome Dinner and Farewell Luncheon.

One Payment Only
To save you two separate transactions, one payment only is required by 15th July for early bird registration.

You can still register up to 15th August. Note, there will be an extra cost of $15 for each registration after 15th July. Get in early and save.

Payment Methods
For your convenience, you may pay by cheque or EFT.

Get In Early: Prizes to Win
The first 40 delegates to register will be included in a draw for one of four free annual subscriptions to Tasmania 40 South. This quarterly magazine is one of our Convention sponsors. Richly illustrated with superb photographs, it presents the wilderness, wildlife, culture, industry, landscapes and people of Tasmania. Go to: www.fortysouth.com.au/index.html.

Registration for Wednesday Activities
Keep in mind the Wednesday activities when you are planning your visit. There’s Information available on the Convention website. You’ll find it on the Registration Page. Join the Mount Wellington and city tour, Heritage Harmonisers Chorus, the Cascade Brewery Tour, and the Evening Meal at Shipwright’s Arms Hotel in historic Battery Point. What a great opportunity to get to know other delegates before the formal convention begins. Registrations for these activities will open later in the year.

Accommodation
Bookings opened in December. Over half the available rooms at Convention HQ, Hobart Grand Chancellor, have already been booked. Remember, first in best dressed.

Convention Website
Check out the website at: www.barbershopconvention.com.au.
THE YOUTH IN HARMONY CHALLENGE

Here are some suggestions edited from the Barbershop Harmony Society magazine “The Harmonizer”, September/October 2008. Your Secretary has received copies of the magazine so you can borrow one and read the full article.

- Help a high school choral program start up a Singing Valentines fund-raiser among their peers. In addition to raising money, they’ll experience first-hand the thrill of four part singing for receptive peer audiences. Assist with the fundamentals of marketing, scheduling and running the program.

- Send five or more club members to a school choral concert (many concerts/performances take place in December) and send a note afterwards to the school choral director thanking them for the music and congratulating the students on their performance. (Take note of the program’s strengths and needs to determine where non-musical club assistance might later be welcomed. Do not critique them or offer coaching!)

- Send 5 or more club members to volunteer at a school concert – ushering, taking tickets, setting up or tearing down concert staging or working at a concert fund raiser.

- Identify a member of your Club as your 2009 Club VP Youth in Harmony. Make sure your club secretary identifies him as such on Club records.

For further information contact AAMBS VP Youth Development, Steve Griffin at youth@aambs.org.au

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Vale -- Bernie Cureton

Bernie Cureton died in Queensland on Friday 23rd January 2009.

Within the British Association of Barbershop Singers he was a qualified music judge and sang lead in two gold medal quartets, Curtain Call in 1990 and Sound Assembly in 1994.

He came to Australia in 1997 to take over as musical director of The Melburnaires. In 1999 he moved to the Gold Coast to take on the role of musical director of The Banana Blenders. He took The Blenders to a gold medal in Melbourne in 2001 and remained MD until 2002.

Bernie was a gifted musician, a composer, arranger, instrumentalist and a sought after coach.

He had many foibles and could be exasperating, but he brought a great deal to barbershop in Australia.

Who will forget his often repeated references to “choreorrible”

Bernie was the epitome of a Music Man

Barry Joy

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The New Year heralds in a new logo and a new website for this new chorus as we prepare for the 2009 Hobart Convention. Our logo features on the professional business cards Les Barker has organised. Check out our website at courtesy of our talented webmaster Tony Hynes.

Year’s end brought with it an enjoyable and busy season of Singouts and activities for HAH. Led by our talented, hard-working and enthusiastic MD, Mike Ludwig, the focus of our energies and singing since the last report has been to start to build a solid foundation for longevity and quality for our chorus. This includes building our repertoire, enhancing the quality of our sound, holding social events, organising fundraisers (eg. BBQs) and searching for sponsors.

Our members have tightened our organisational processes by affiliating with AAMBS, setting up committees, holding our AGM, and formalising membership requirements and Singout qualification. Our gigs, the radio and the local rag have provided opportunities for us to promote ourselves in the community.

Our Open Night in October was highly successful, attracting many potential interested and interesting singers – including younger guys – some of whom we look sure to snaffle. What made the night really special was a visit from our buddies, the Miner Chords. Thanks guys for your support! We’re building our numbers to 20+ regularly attending rehearsals.

We had successful Singouts at St John’s Lutheran Hall, as part of a play by Toowoomba Repertory Theatre, at Centenary Heights State School and Carols at St Luke’s church. Such opportunities as these, that build our confidence and skill, give us a buzz about participating at our first National Convention!

We held a successful fundraiser BBQ at A-Mart Sports Store. Mike was especially pleased with the contribution of a relaxed atmosphere to our singing. It gave the punters and shoppers more than they bargained for on a Saturday morning shop.

Our social get-together at Patty and Ross Fulloon’s residence was a great consolidation of the mutual enjoyment of each other’s company. We had beautiful food, perfect weather, a superb sunset across the Gowrie plain, lots of singing – including a wonderful sing-a-long led by Peter Devey on guitar, and an inspired campfire chat about Hobart convention possibilities. Our wonderful Support Group sprang from this gathering. That there is a feeling of camaraderie among families bodes well for the future.

We had a happy end-of-year dinner at Kingfisher restaurant with a nice meal and some singing. We were lucky to have Derek Cosburn as special guest. The quartet Escapade – Mike Ludwig, Steve Griffin, Owen Buckley and Chris Gray – entertained us. As if their dazzling singing was not enough, Steve presented our uniforms courtesy of the Blenders! Thank you Benders for your generosity and support!

We’re grateful for the continued support, inspiration, leadership, advice and friendship of our barbershop buddies down the mountain. Thank you all!

Ivan Nugus
(Secretary)

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Miner Chords

Ivan Nugus
(Secretary)

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For further information contact AAMBS VP Youth Development, Steve Griffin at youth@aambs.org.au
The Sunshine Statesmen

After a really busy lead up to Christmas, as detailed in our last "Notes"...the “Sunshine Statesmen” are raring to start rehearsals again on Wednesday January 14th. Buderim Uniting Church Hall on the corner of Gloucester Road and Main Road, Buderim every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm is where you’ll be made most welcome as a visiting barbershopper.

The success of the “Kawana Shopping World” singouts before Christmas, where shoppers by the score came up to compliment the chorus in their three performances there, has the men keen to start the year in the same successful way.

On Christmas Eve, in gallant style by rising so early in the morning for a 6am start, one of the chorus’ quartets..."Just for Fun"... Danny, Brian, Benny and Eric......gave ABC 90.3FM radio listeners a great taste of Barbershop style by performing at the studio’s Christmas celebration..."A Very Merry Christmas Brekky on the Docky"...where the broadcast was done in full hot morning sun on the river deck outside the station. Several live interviews followed giving the chorus some excellent publicity. Despite protests from the brekky announcer, Rob, that he could not sing a note in tune, in the end he was persuaded on air to join the quartet....and gave an admirable attempt for a first timer to one of the Christmas Carols. What a pity that he rises at 3am to prepare for the brekky show, or we might have had another new member! The lads were each given an ABC show bag and while not exactly singing for their supper, they DID sing for their breakfast and enjoyed a good nosh up before the show ended at 7.45am. Plus a great contact was made for future radio publicity.

On Sunday February 1st, the members and their wives will gather for a barbecue at Maroochydore’s beautiful Cotton Tree Park...right on the river, to socialise and ring some ripper chords across the river. At this venue, the opportunity will be taken to plan and consolidate events to further fundraise for Hobart 2009. There are moves afoot to form also a “Ladies Support Group” which will definitely assist the men with ideas and organising assistance in raising funds. Led by the wonderful Estelle Laming...the ladies group is going to be an invaluable aid to the chorus.

A “High Tea” with barbershop entertainment on a pleasant Sunday afternoon is one of the excellent ideas already mooted while not exactly singing for their supper, they DID sing for their breakfast and enjoyed a good nosh up before the show ended at 7.45am. Plus a great contact was made for future radio publicity.

We wish a great and “Chordial” New Year to all our fellow Barbershoppers out there

Shane Bycroft
Sunshine Statesmen

"Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

-- Berthold Auerbach

SYDNEY HARMONY

SYDNEY HARMONY

PAN PACIFIC CONVENTION HONOLULU OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 02 2008

Sydney Harmony took 30 singers to the Pan Pacific Convention in Honolulu Hawaii last October/November and achieved our highest judging score yet, coming 6th (out of 17 Pacific Rim Choruses) in our first International. The chorus was well received and we were pleased with our performance. While it was quite a logistical exercise to manage the operation of the chorus in the lead up and during Convention every one of our members had a wonderful time. It was especially exciting to be involved with so many singers from other parts of the world as well as the men from Soundwaves and River City Clippers. The evaluation sessions were especially well run and so-o-o-o-helpful. If we could just go back now and re-do the two songs again what could we score? The Sunday Seminar Sessions were also a fantastic learning experience.

THIRD ANNUAL SING IN HARMONY COURSE

One of the highlights coming up for Sydney Harmony will be our third Sing In Harmony course over six weeks starting on February 16. This will be conducted by our wonderful MD and teacher Vicki Dwyer. We are currently pursuing a vigorous promotion campaign and looking forward to a major addition to our ranks for the six weeks – and we hope for a long time after that as well.

Voices@Norths

A second “Voices@Norths” concert is planned for early August. It was such a spectacular success last year, (we completely sold out the venue!) that we are already working on ways to make it into another memorable occasion.

AAMBS NATIONAL CONVENTION IN HobART

We will be commencing planning for the much anticipated Convention in Hobart this year. It seems the Hobart chorus is well underway in their planning and is really looking forward to presenting a couple of new songs for us and renewing friendships with our barbershop friends from around the country. Many of us will find it a little more relaxing after the stress and pressure of running the last convention in Sydney.

Chris Miley

THE HIGHLANDAIRES

The Highlandaires finished 2008 on a (whew!) quality note.

A great one day workshop, at the Bowral Salvation Army Citadel in July, run by Gary Kirk and the Soundwaves chorus was followed by 14 weeks of extra tuition by Ian Fraser (Hills Harmony).

Their input gave our small chorus new spark and resolve, enabling us to acquaint ourselves quite well with a number of Carol singing engagements in December. Ian is the bloke who put in 3 months and many kilometres, back in 1998, to get us started. In 2018, we hope to be properly ready for his return.
2009 is the start of a new era of harmony singing in the Southern Highlands.

Regretfully we have lost our champion little secretary, Ray Hill, who leaves us to attend to some health issues. Ray was with the Highlandaires for just 18 months and brought a huge amount of goodwill and publicity our way. We wish him safe passage.

Brendan Akhurst
President

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**FLEURIEU HARMONY CHORUS**

The Fleurieu Harmony Chorus has had a busy and enjoyable festive season performing as top of the bill at a fundraising concert for a local radio station and an open air Christmas concert for the local residents of Strathalban Town. The chorus also fitted in a couple of fundraisers for Cancer Research and The Heart Foundation as well as the usual Christmas parties at nursing homes and social clubs, etc.

The next items on the agenda are a recruitment drive and then a joint venture variety show with the Festival Statesmen later in the year.

Members of the chorus have also been assisting two members that have been forming a new group in Victor Harbor on the south coast and it is anticipated that there will be regular get togethers with them and we wish them well for the future, the more groups the better for all of us.

We wish all fellow barbershoppers a very happy and more importantly (none of us are getting any younger) a healthy new year.

Gordon Tomlinson
Secretary

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**BRISBANE RIVER CITY CLIPPERS**

The Big News from the Brisbane River City Clippers can’t get any bigger than the selection of Brisbane as the location for the 11th National AAMBS Convention and the 6th Pan Pacific Convention in 2011. The Clippers are looking forward to welcoming national and international visitors to what will be two events in the one package.

The facilities we have available here in Brisbane are world class with The Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (situated almost on the Brisbane River) already booked as host venue for competition and other functions. Convention-related organisations are keen to assist with providing advice on travel and a wide range of accommodation to all prospective delegates. The weather at that time of the year will be perfect, the city will be alive, the opportunity to explore Brisbane and the exciting State of Queensland, post or pre convention, will be made available via Queensland Tourism, Brisbane Marketing and similar organisations.

Now for the most important ingredient to make this convention successful: YOU!

Start your planning now to join us here in Brisbane in 2011, Give “The Clippers” the opportunity to welcome you to Brisbane as we strive to host the best convention possible.

The Clippers at a recent rehearsal hard at work at improving their facial expressions.

(The truth is: This photo was taken by a Clippers member, who happened to find himself at Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco, after the Pan Pacific Convention in Hawaii. The “Quart” or Quartet were part of a very interesting Museum display of Coin slot machines over the past century. For a small coin the four good looking gentlemen could belt out something that distantly resembled harmony).

The Clippers finished up their program in 2008 with their involvement in the 5th Pan Pacific Convention in Hawaii which was a community building experience for the party of seventy (made up of members, spouse, partners and friends) who attended. Most of the touring party wound up the Hawaiian Convention with a cruise of the Hawaiian Islands. The obvious effort and expense to make the journey was repaid many times over by the building of friendships across the entire party of tourists.

Assorted members and friends of the Clippers demonstrating “How to enjoy a cruise of the Hawaiian Islands.”

Once the Clippers put their feet on Australian soil it was a case of “all hands on deck “ again to round out a very busy and successful 2008.

Nov 16th saw the chorus present another of their famous Sausage Sizzle and Sing-Outs at Bunnings Mt Gravatt Store.

Nov 26th David Spillane was re-elected as President for his second term of office at the annual AGM.

Dec 4th had the Clippers Octet “ 4x2 plus” lead the way with entertainment at the Bunnings staff Xmas Party at the Stafford Store in Brisbane’s North.

Dec 6th the Clippers performed for City Care in Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley. On the same day twenty members performed in concert at Bunnings, Kingston Road Store.

Dec 7th was time-out for members and guests at the annual end of Season Break-up Dinner held at the River Room at Southbank.

Dec 14th had us back at Bunnings Store in Stafford for a very successful sausage sizzle and performance. And finally two great annual events – Carolling for patients, staff and visitors at the Mater Hospital on 17th Dec and the Wesley Hospital on Dec 22nd.

With new candidates for membership still finding their way to the Clippers and a busy year ahead culminating in the Convention...
in Hobart in September, 2009 looks like another year of challenge and excitement as the chorus continues to move forward to be the best it can be.

Keith Druery
Publicity

VE Wins Battle of the Christmas Choirs

During December’s Christmas carol period, VE entered and took out the Battle of the Christmas Choirs competition, held by a Perth shopping centre.

From a field including some of Perth’s best a cappella groups, VE progressed through three rounds of competition to be the overwhelming winner and clear crowd favourite. Indeed, VE was the only chorus where the audience spontaneously began applauding before we finished each of our songs. There was a real buzz around the chorus after our performance and the announcement. and the $3,000 prize money will go towards coaching and other expenses leading up to convention in Tas. Congratulations also to Perth Harmony chorus, which placed second, and A Cappella West, which made it to the final.

This competition was in among VE’s annual carol singing. Last year (yes, 2008!) we sang a similar number of gigs over about a three week period, adding valuable funds to the coffers. After a few weeks of summer vacation to go to the beach and watch a bit of cricket, VE is excited about our “kick-start” weekend on 16/17 Jan to officially get our year under way. The weekend will be a combination of rehearsal and general relaxation to start the year off with some momentum and fellowship.

Best wishes from VE to everyone for a wonderful 2009 and see you in Hobart!

Richard Reeve
President

There’s no bad day that can’t be overcome by listening to a barbershop quartet, this is just truth, plain & simple.


COMING EVENTS

2009
Jan 31 – Eastern Region Board Meeting, 9am, 67 Mill Drive, North Rocks
Feb 20-22 - Eastern Region Workshop – Greenhills Conference Centre, 1437 Cotter Road, Weston, Canberra ACT
March 1 – AAMBS Council Meeting - Teleconference
May 2 - 3rd Annual Hills Harmony Barbershop Contest – details TBA
May 17 – Miner Chords at Ipswich Heritage Fair at Woodlands in Marburg.
May 30 – Eastern Region Qualifying Competition – Details TBA
Sept 21-23 – Contest & Judges School, Hobart TAS
Sept 27-30 – AAMBS Harmony College, Hobart, Eastcoaster Resort on Tasmania’s Holiday Coast

2011
AAMBS 11th Annual Convention and Pan Pacific Convention, Brisbane Qld – Hosted by The Brisbane River City Clippers

1. Send details of your events for Barbershop Notes and the AAMBS Website (Arial 9 pitch please)

2. For more details of what is happening in Barbershopping in Australia and overseas check Coming Events on the AAMBS Website - www.aambs.org.au
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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

Please make contact with AAMBS through the Secretary at our permanent addresses and telephone number:
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Website: www.aambs.org.au