New Members – Assimilate or Lose Them!

We’ve had a great guest night and several guests have returned for a couple of rehearsal nights – and we are pleased with ourselves. But then, one by one some of the new members drift away from the Club.

Sound familiar? There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that anywhere up to 50% of new members stop attending rehearsal meetings within their first year.

— here are some thoughts on how involvement could be achieved

- Make every club meeting night a fun night. There are some great involvement ideas, particularly fun quartet stuff, in the newly published manual, "How to Give your Club Meeting Night some Pizzazz!". If you haven’t seen this manual yet, speak to your Club Presidents and Secretaries – they have a copy.

- After passing the audition, induct a new member in a dignified and meaningful way. Present him with his music portfolio and an AAMBS lapel badge and the Club name badge. How about on presentation, the Club members stand and applaud the new member.

- Create special badges for new members to wear for one year. Encourage other members to look for the badges and make a special effort to talk with the new members.

- Hold orientation sessions for new members – covering Club history and Structure and AAMBS history and structure, including info on the AAMBS regions.

- Encourage attendance/participation in public performances or Club shows.

- Encourage attendance/participation at a local, Regional or AAMBS workshop or Harmony College.

- Serve as a greeter at a Club meeting night.

- Ask the new member – especially the younger ones – to find two or three other new members from among his peer group. When a member successfully “sells” the joy of barbershopping to someone else, the member himself becomes stronger and more enthusiastic about the Club and AAMBS.

Utilizing these orientation/assimilation ideas addresses the need for retention and the challenge of membership growth and lowering the median age of our membership.

Tom Smith
VP Membership
Question: How many barbershop quartets from the Southern Hemisphere have finished in the top 30 at Internationals?  

So far, only one. And that one actually is an International finalist, finishing 10th at last year's competition. Why is this important? Because you have the opportunity to hear them later this month. AAMBS and Sweet Adelines Australia have pooled their resources to bring *Musical Island Boys* to Australia for a series of youth workshops. Read all about it in the article inside this very edition of Barbershop Notes. Don't let this Golden Opportunity to hear and socialize with one of the absolutely best barbershop quartets in the World pass you by.

More good stuff: The River Harmony Pan Pacific Convention is getting bigger and better than Ben Hur! It's a time for fellowship, inspiration, and fun that no barbershopper should miss. Start your fundraisers now so you can hop over to Brisbane for this amazing musical event – Sept 28 - Oct 2, 2011.

Membership: What's more important than the continued health and growth of our artform? We put some helpful tips on page one so you wouldn't have to search for it. Bottom line is – don't leave the initiative to someone else. You can make it happen.

Back in the early part of the 20th Century businesses thought it was prestigious to have the longest acronym. To poke fun at this concept our "forefathers" adopted the longest title they could think of - "The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America." In recent years, with the advent of instant email, and conversations, the Society felt a new name was necessary to converse with our potential members. Hence the "Barbershop Harmony Society" name was invented to pin down who they are, in less than 29 syllables. With this in mind our VP Conventions Richard Gardam offers his article for "Rebadging our Association." Give it a read and see what you think. It could be time to modernize while keeping our barbershop harmony traditions alive.

And check out what your fellow choruses and quartets are doing. Just might be some applicable ideas in there too. I know you're all practicing for Regionals so I'll keep this short. Don't let your friends and acquaintances miss out on the fun of barbershopping, and remember to make rehearsal night great for your fellow riser mates.

In Harmony,  
Mike Donnelly  
AAMBS President

---

**AAMBS Councillors at their Face-to-Face Meeting in Melbourne, 5 – 7 February 2010**

Back Row: Tom Smith (VP Membership), Kevin White (Secretary), Mike Donnelly (President), Ian Miller (VP Music)  
Front Row: Barry Joy (Treasurer), Steve Griffin (VP Youth Development), Richard Gardam (VP Conventions)  
Absent: Derek Churchill (VP Marketing)

---

**In this issue :**

- New Members – Assimilate or Lose Them .................................1
- Golden Opportunity ...............................................................2
- Rebadging the Association ....................................................3
- The Quest for Excellence / Know Your Rules ............................4
- Success in an attitude – your attitude .....................................5-6
- Watch for your New Look Newsletter / Deadlines ....................6
- Oceans of Harmony tour, March/April 2010 ...............................7
- SingFest 2010 .................................................................9-12
- **Club Reports** ................................................................9-12
  - Bayside, Miner Chords, The Clippers, Novatones, High Altitude Harmony, The Blender
  - Four Crying Out Loud .........................................................9
  - Vale – Chuck Mitchell from The Vocal Majority ......................12
  - Musical Director Wanted for The Clippers ............................12
- Coming Events ....................................................................13
- How Well do you know your AAMBS Website .......................13
- How to Contact your AAMBS Council members ....................13
Rebadging our Association

Have you ever tried to talk to people about our organization?

I have been on the radio many times and tried – and failed.

Q - “What’s your organization?”
A - “It’s called ‘AAMBS’”
Q - “Oh, what’s that?”
A - “Double A M B S, the Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers”

“Oh, I see” But he doesn’t.

We have the same conversation every time.

What’s the problem? Well, the name is more like a sentence. It is not self explanatory and takes too long to say and then explain. If the radio host doesn’t get it, and he has me up close and personal, then it’s very unlikely that his audience, our potential membership and audience will get it either.

As the name of the organization, the name has served us well, at least for those of us who are interested. Try asking you own local chorus members what AAMBS is all about and my guess is that even they will be uncertain – and they belong to the organization.

I think that it’s time for a change. We need to have a name which is snappy and easy to remember, which quickly tells our audience who we are and what we do. In the end, our name is our brand.

I propose that the organization re-badge itself in the market place. That we change our name and logo to better reflect our style, purpose and image.

At this time there are two names in the mix; Barbershop Harmony Australia & Barbershop Singers Australia. Both are concise and describe us and what we do. Do you like either of these? Do you have something else which we might use?

As for the logo, it is also rather dated. We need something to hang the brand on, something which is simple but elegant and easily recognised. The BHS logo is contemporary and apposite. We need something which is as representative for us.

Express your views. Write to me at conventions@aambs.org.au

A summary of your responses will appear in the next edition of Barbershop Notes.

I will post replies sent to me at the above email address on the convention website at http://www.barbershopconvention.com.au/survey There’s nothing there yet ...

Richard Gardem
VP Conventions
Competition is one of the few ways with which we can judge the overall health of our choruses throughout Australia and it would appear that we are on the right track for a healthy middle age.

In analysing the chorus results over the past 5 conventions (in order 2001 to 2009) the following can be seen:

- The top six choruses have average overall scores of – 69%, 68%, 69%, 67% and 74%.
- The next six choruses average – 49%, 54%, 53%, 54% and 63%.
- The lower six choruses in 2009 averaged 54%.

What could be the reasons for this great improvement in 2009, I hear you ask?

- Younger voices are becoming attracted to young choruses.
- More choruses are using external coaches.
- In the top 12 there were 2 new choruses with, obviously, new directors.
- Also in the top 12 there were 4 new directors with considerable musical and barbershop experience.
- Quartets in the finals have lifted the average score by only 2% although the top few were well above this.
- Courses run at Regional workshops and Harmony College are having an effect (on those who attend).
- Better performance attracts better singers.

How can AAMBS work to continue a growth in both chorus quality and therefore member numbers?

LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP.

Over the next six months we will be working on the development of a series of structured courses that will allow our members to learn, qualify and then move on to the next level in the areas of singing, music reading, leadership, arranging and directing. To date it has been an ad hoc arrangement where an individual makes his own assessment as to his level of competency and we have found that it has been very difficult to keep every individual in a session satisfied with the rate at which they learn. These courses will be able to be taken at both regional workshops and at Harmony College. This will give everyone the opportunity to attend prerequisite courses at a regional workshop to qualify for the more advanced stuff at HC. It is hoped that we can get the structure and content such that the qualifications obtained in Australia will be allowed as prerequisites for course attendance at the BHS Harmony University.

In the meantime FREE one-on-one director coaching is available from AAMBS. Like the top quartets and choruses in the world, there is no director who cannot improve his/her performance by having some personal coaching.

Contact me for details.

Ian Miller
VP Music

Know Your Rules

Every Club President has been forwarded a hard copy of the AAMBS Handbook for Clubs & Quartets so that every member can be fully aware of the range of his obligations and entitlements.

Every Club President is also receiving a copy of the AAMBS Regional Rules affecting his Region and its obligations, for your own protection check them out.

Kevin White
Secretary
Happy fall. I'm writing this while convention season is still going. I hope you took advantage of your district's convention. I recently competed at the Dixie convention in Chattanooga. What a blast! The Music City Chorus, a subset of the Nashville chapter, won the privilege to represent the district in Philadelphia in 2010, where I wager we'll have more than the 57 members who competed at district. So let's talk about what makes a successful chapter/chorus experience.

Chapter/chorus success

Two quick points about the opening paragraph:

- Your chapter and your chorus are not the same. Choruses are a part of your chapter, but your chapter is more than just a chorus, or at least it should be.
- I referred to the successful chapter/chorus experience, which means it's subject to your perceptions. How you interpret what your chapter/chorus does determines whether it is successful or not. So, as I said in my last column, it's up to you, you, you! Now, let's move on.

I've been in successful and in struggling chapters. Some were competitive and some weren't, some were big and some small, some were growing, some not. (Luckily, I haven't been in a shrinking chapter.) Neither competitiveness, size nor growth defined success in any of them. What did? The struggling chapters usually lacked unity of purpose—there was no goal setting, no planning. Many of our struggling chapters are the same: They just do what they've done until the chapter runs down or the members do. Or, they don't know what they're doing because they don't know what they're trying to do.

My own chapter's success

Let's discuss the success my current chapter is enjoying and why. I deserve no credit—I hold no leadership nor influence in my chapter—I'm just trying not to mess up the choreography. Because my attitude helps determine whether it's fun for me, I do have say over my personal experience.

The Music City Chorus (www.musiccitychorus.org) last won a competition in 1977, since then it competed without winning, put on shows, performed at singouts and other people's shows, and generally got along to get along. No great failure, no great success. As soon as they learned headquarters was moving here, something changed. A group of chapter members began setting goals to improve and position themselves to take advantage of every tool the Society had to offer. While staff was still in Kenosha, the chapter was working hard to really get its act together. They were already upgrading their attitude, their ambitions and their singing. By the time headquarters staff arrived, chapter members were ready to ensure we wanted to be part of the Nashville chapter and the Music City Chorus. (It's our hobby too!)

By the time I started attending, staff music specialist Mike O'Neill was already the new chorus director and was getting great support from former director Howard M. Adams, now the Music and Performance VP. We have a website, learning tracks, music folders, section leaders, Groupanteer, riser crew, trailer, section rehearsals, and plans delivered in our Yahoo group mail each week by the music director and/or the music team. Confusing? Sure—but much less confusing than not knowing what's happening or where to go or who to ask. We even have choreography videos on the web to help lessen the physical coordination requirement.

I was impressed from the moment director emeritus Freeman Croat greeted me at the door. I hope each chapter has a stalwart like Freeman. He takes attendance, gets you a name badge, brings water and cookies, helps each visitor feel welcome, and gets you an orientation package—week one about the Society, week two about the chapter, and week three is about what you need to join.

Frustrating at times, but worth it

Is there ever frustration? Sure. Mike gets frustrated with those who won't learn their words, notes, or moves. He's frustrated with members who go home after break because he wants everyone to be as dedicated to excellence as he is. But for him there are rewards as well—when people show up “off the paper” and ready to sing, or when they come to a retreat and pour their hearts and souls into the music and into the camaraderie that is barbershop at its best. He gets a real reward when the chorus averages 84% (the same core group had moved from the '60s to the '70s not long before!), peaking on stage instead of in the warm-up room. Is he a perfect director? No. But he wants to be, and that attitude is infectious.

Chorus members get frustrated at singing two measures and then stopping and singing them again—25 times a night. We come to sing and have fun, and much of what we end up doing on rehearsal night is hard work, sometimes tiring and taxing, but it also pays off. The reward must exceed the work, because the chorus members keep coming back with enthu-
Not just a rehearsal: Fun and quartetting, too
Do we do nothing but rehearse? NO! We have fun each week—we have quartetting each week—with guests encouraged to join in and chapter quartets and often performances from chapter international semi-finalist Lunch Break. Our last district contest had five chapter quartets, plus chapter members in two others. Did the quartets come in first? NO! Did they win? YES! The chapter has not forgotten that the Society is rooted in four guys singing together. And the strength of the chapter’s quartet program is one of the biggest reasons the chapter’s chorus is getting stronger.
So, that’s what we do at chapter meetings—and I sometimes laugh out loud. The other day, the chapter secretary declared he would no longer keep a separate roster because the eBiz roster worked so well. It tickled me that our chapter is so efficient and knows what’s available to them from the Society.
To some extent, this is like saying “To be a millionaire is easy—first start with a million dollars.” But in barbershop, it’s even easier—just decide what you want to be and be it. As for the Music City Chorus of the Nashville Chapter of the Dixie district of the Barbershop Harmony Society, we want to be an A-level chorus and all that we can be. So we’re doing it.
To all Barbershop Harmony Society members, how am I doing?

ewatson@barbershop.org

WATCH FOR YOUR NEW LOOK NEWSLETTER

At the recent 3 day Council Meeting held in Melbourne it was agreed that it is time to create a new, more modern look for your AAMBS Newsletter. Council has deliberated on a new name and format and come up with a new look for future editions, which we hope you will all enjoy.

So, watch out for the May-June issue when it comes your way.

I have been approached by some wives / partners with a complaint that they never see the Association’s Newsletter any more, so we plan to start a “Friends of AAMBS” contact list for these and other interested parties who would like to be on the email list to receive each Newsletter. Please let me have details of anyone you know who would like to be included on this list.

Yours in Harmony,

Nerida White
Editor – Barbershop Notes
**Oceans of Harmony Tour - March/April 2010**

It’s official – the 2009 Pan Pacific and International Youth Quartet Champions, *Musical Island Boy (MIB)* are coming on a Workshopping Tour of Australia in late March 2010.

MIB is the only Australasian quartet to have won an international competition, and they rock!

This fantastic event is open to both young male and female singers under 25 and the workshop will include tuition and tips to master a chosen song. This is a great opportunity to hear a top young quartet doing their thing and learn the secrets of fantastic harmony singing. Venue details will follow soon, in the meantime if you are interested view the draft tour schedule below. Youth choir co-ordinators are invited to contact Steve Griffin for more details.

*Jeff Hunkin (Tenor), Marcellus Washburn (Lead)*

*Matthew Gifford (Bass), William Hunkin (Baritone)*

Click on this link for more information about the Musical Island Boys: [http://www.musicalislandboys.wellington.net.nz/](http://www.musicalislandboys.wellington.net.nz/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 March 2010</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Workshop, Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March 2010</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>Afternoon Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 March</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Evening Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/25 March</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Evening, Social, Morning Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/27 March</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>2 half day workshops on Friday, one morning workshop on Saturday with evening social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/29 March</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Morning workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/30 March</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>2 half day workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March</td>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Venues & Contact Details**

**March**

1. Melbourne, 21st – Leo Beck Centre, 31-37 Harp Street, East Kew, contact Steve Griffin [youth@aambs.org.au](mailto:youth@aambs.org.au) Phone 0411 951 259
2. **Geelong, 22nd - contact Steve Griffin** [youth@aambs.org.au](mailto:youth@aambs.org.au) Phone 0411 951 259
3. Hobart, 23rd – The Hutchins School Sandy Bay, Tasmania – contact Richard Gardam [rwgardam@bigpond.com](mailto:rwgardam@bigpond.com)
4. Adelaide, 24th/25th – St Peter's College, cnr Rugby & Trinity Streets, College Park – contact Jonathon Bligh, [flashback.quartet@gmail.com](mailto:flashback.quartet@gmail.com) Phone 0415 661 991
5. Perth, 26th - Wanneroo SHS, Ash Schofield, [Ashley.schofield@fivesenses.com](mailto:Ashley.schofield@fivesenses.com), Phone 0450 605 645
6. Perth, 27th = Nollamara Tennis Club, Ash Schofield, [Ashley.schofield@fivesenses.com](mailto:Ashley.schofield@fivesenses.com), Phone 0450 605 645
7. Canberra, 28th/29th –Weston Creek Uniting Church Hall, Parkinson Street, Weston ACT Steve Griffin, [youth@aambs.org.au](mailto:youth@aambs.org.au) Phone 0411 951 259
8. Sydney, 29th/30th – Shore College, Blue Street, North Sydney – contact Tim Wilson, [timothyawilson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:timothyawilson@optusnet.com.au) Phone 0412 028 160
9. Gold Coast, 31st – Nerang Bicentennial Hall, Nerang – contact Steve Griffin [youth@aambs.org.au](mailto:youth@aambs.org.au) Phone 0411 951 259

**April**

10. Brisbane, 1st – The Gap State High School, contact John Shelton [sjohnlin@virginbroadband.com.au](mailto:sjohnlin@virginbroadband.com.au) Phone 07 3351 7237

**For further details contact AAAMBS VP Youth Development, Steve Griffin on youth@aambs.org.au Phone 0411 951 259**
SingFest
a cappella vocal harmony

Do you love to sing?
Come & join the fun & festivities of
SingFest 2010
a cappella vocal harmony festival
on the Gold Coast 30 April – 2 May 2010

Plan NOW
for your group
to participate

singfest.com.au
A festival for choral groups, school choirs, vocal bands, quartets...
– in fact any a cappella group

SingFest 2010 promises to be weekend of fun and friendship, harmony and highlights, open to all
a cappella groups.
Focus for the festival is on performance and entertainment with a series of concerts where
each group will entertain a public audience and their peers. Groups will be evaluated on their
performance and awarded points for singing quality, musicality and connection with the audience.

Program Overview:
Friday 30th April
Dedicated to the school choir
competition and the Young
Singers in Harmony program

Saturday 1st May
Concerts by the choral groups.

Sunday 2nd May
Concerts by ensemble groups,
quartets and vocal bands

Workshops held throughout the 3 days on:
• Conducting
• Vocal production
• Arranging
• Choir administration

Prizes are awarded after the concerts sessions are completed.
Choral and ensemble divisions attract prizes totalling $5000

Visit singfest.com.au
for more info

Important:
SingFest concerts and workshops are
held in a school environment, therefore entry tickets
must be displayed at all times while on the grounds.
Lanyards are available in the theatre foyer.

Register Now:
www.singfest.com.au
Registration by:
4th April 2010 - Register early to receive discounted tickets
to other sessions.
Venue:
Nairn Theatre and Music Centre
All Saints Anglican School, Highfield Drive, Merrimac 4226
Date:
30th April - 2nd May 2010
Registration Cost:
Performers - $25 per performer + booking fee
Providing a number of marathon sessions of up to 3 hours younger kids. When 2 of the more vertically challenged of the group had much fun with the himself, some of the bearded members songs. Often mistaken for Santa young - stopping to enjoy the great fantastic with many shoppers – old and evening and Saturday prior to Christmas, including the all important introduction for Santa.

The response from the community is fantastic with many shoppers – old and young - stopping to enjoy the great harmonies and classic Christmas songs. Often mistaken for Santa himself, some of the bearded members of the group had much fun with the younger kids. When 2 of the more vertically challenged members of the group passed a young boy he was heard to say to his mother "Look momma, Santa’s Elves are here!"

Every year the BBS also perform an evening of Carols at the Passage Street Church in Cleveland. This Church is regionally recognised for it's high quality Christmas light and nativity display which attract busloads of visitors. This concert ended a year of public performances including fundraising events for not-for profit organisations and also our annual community Concert.

Last year, the annual concert had a “Generation Gap” theme where the BBS teamed up with a number of the Sheldon College choirs and chorus’s for a fun afternoon of old and new songs (and singers!). The concert concluded with all the singers on stage for a stirring rendition of "I am Australian". The feedback from the visitors and audience was excellent and we look forward to bringing more musical cheer to our Community in 2010.

Peter Lovegrove

Neil Slavin Lead – Four Crying Out Loud

After 19 years as Lead with Four Crying Out Loud, Neil Slavin has decided to wind down his involvement in quarteting. He will continue singing with the quartet until a suitable replacement Lead is found.

The long hours required to practise for performances and an onset of asthma in recent years have prompted Neil’s decision and he is looking forward to spending more of his leisure time in photography and steam train engine restoration before he “runs out of puff” as he puts it.

As Lead with Four Crying Out Loud since its formation in 1990, Neil has entertained audiences with his delightful singing voice and terrible Irish jokes. Few who have heard one of the quartet’s performance will presentations of novelty songs such as, Murphy and The Bricks, Side by Side, In the Still of the Night (impersonating Gladys Knight and the Pips), Ragtime Cowboy Joe and their signature song, Little Gomez.

The quartet was formed in 1990 by David Brown who moved from Canberra to Nelson Bay and advertised for singers in the hope of starting a chorus. Neil answered the advertisement as did Tenor Don Burgoyne and Bass Richard Connor, among others. However, with insufficient interest from the others to start a chorus, they formed Four Crying Out Loud in 1990 and registered with AAMBS on 24th February, 1991.

Four Crying Out Loud is the second longest registered Australian Barbershop Quartet (currently 19 years) and still has three original members. It is also the longest registered with four original members (12 years).

By the time a suitable replacement for Neil is found and the transition is made Four Crying Out Loud will have exceeded nineteen consecutive years registration with AAMBS, still with 3 original members!

They competed in five of the first six National Conventions, their best placing being 17th in 2001. Their best competition performance was in winning the silver medal behind Pride and Joy at the Eastern Region Convention in November 2000.

Although not excelling in competition, they have delighted thousands with their ability to entertain. This is evidenced by their having won the AAMBS Eastern Region Weekend Quartet Trophy for the most entertaining quartet, a record four times

Following David Brown’s move from Port Stephens to the Central Coast in 2002, the quartet had three different Baritones before competing at their 6th National Convention in Hobart last year.

In 2007, the Quartet was performing at the Realtime Concert in Sydney, so to boost the audience numbers, took with them a coach load of 50 from Newcastle and, you guessed it, sang to them at the ‘rest stop’ and taught them all a few easy barbershop songs on the way.

Neil has been more than just a barbershop quartet lead. He was AAMBS delegate for unattached quartets for 3 years. He worked tirelessly to help establish the Newcastle Harmony Club (Novatones) as well as filling the roles of Treasurer and Lead Section Leader. Thankfully he will continue singing lead with Novatones - we hope for many years to come.

He has been, and continues to be, a credit to the Barbershop Fraternity and will always be one of nature’s gentlemen.

Well done Neil! Mike Danks
Miner Chords

Rain, rain and more rain. This is South East Queensland at this time of year and despite the many problems we are all facing, the rain is a blessing to us all. The dams are filling to levels not seen for more than 10 years and the SE is looking like a paradise. One of the downsides is the attendance numbers at rehearsal as Ipswich and surrounds have been hit by localised flooding and often torrential downpours. Nothing as bad as the South West and we soldier on regardless.

Heading down the highway, looking for adventure is a common daily trip for a lot of our members who live in Ipswich and work in Brisbane. It is a great time to put on the headphones and listen to our learning tapes. It is a bit unsettling for the other car drivers as we start singing aloud. It is even worse on the trains, however, a great use of time to learn our part. Most of us are very passionate about our hobby even to the extent where the ‘salt of the earth’ rehaersal a second night. Being a lead, I can understand the need for the basses to catch up to us.

February saw another ‘Visitors Night’ and although not as well attended as our previous open house, we did attract a couple of new men to stand on the risers and brought back some earlier members. We are still hoping to achieve our “50 Men in 2010”. Singing on the risers is more than just attending rehearsal and a number of the Chordsmen walk in the evenings to gain a little fitness. Along with the walking they are choosing a different route each week and doing letter box drops to attract new members. Every little bit helps. In the next month we have planned a Trivia Night, and a sausage sizzle at Bunnings. Both of these events will act as fundraisers and membership drives.

Our Secretary, Mike Wilkinson, has been very busy of late sending emails to all the private schools in our catchment area to encourage them not only to participate in Singfest 2010, but to become part of the wider barbershop movement.

Time rolls on to the great commitment of River Harmony 2011, when barbershoppers from all over Australia and Pacific countries will gather in beautiful Brisbane for the National and Pan Pacific Conventions. All we need to make the occasion the best ever is you.

Keith Druery
Novatones are delighted to announce the appointment of Ian Miller as their new Music Director.

After only three rehearsals prior to our 4 week Learn-To-Sing course which commenced on 4th March, Ian’s knowledge and experience was already instilling an air of confidence and high expectation among members, and everyone seems to have warmed to his firm, but amiable style. Ian has immersed himself in the role with energy and enthusiasm, and we are all very excited about the year ahead.

Our Learn-To-Sing course has attracted 10 potential new members on both nights thus far, and we are confident of filling the gaps in several sections to achieve a more balanced chorus.

In summary, the future of the chorus is looking very promising and we are all quietly confident in making an impressive competition debut at next year’s convention in Brisbane.

We cannot make this announcement without mentioning the tremendous contribution to the Club by Dick Costin. Dick was one of seven experienced barbershoppers who, in July 2008, formed a Steering Committee for the establishment of a barbershop club in Newcastle. Dick offered his services as MD on a temporary basis and worked with great energy and drive not only as MD but also as President, Publicity Officer and Uniforms Officer until our full Management Team was formed in November 2009. Always appreciating that we needed an MD of exceptional credentials to take the chorus to the next level, Dick worked with the Steering Committee initially, then with our Management Committee to this end.

So here we are with Ian at the helm, ready to go into overdrive!

Welcome aboard Ian!
Mike Danks, Secretary

An old saying says, “May you live in interesting times.”

2009 was a great and very interesting year for High Altitude Harmony with membership growth, exciting new activities such as two very successful Singing Restaurants, (the second with a Christmas theme); a wonderful weekend camp and all capped by our first ever National Convention.

The Christmas Breakup was fantastic with the venue and theme being a wonderful restaurant in an old heritage Railway Station. We had all sorts of railway workers, old time gamblers and even some railway highwaymen turn up. To cap it off, while we were all taking a half time break, on the platform, a train pulled though the station. A very poignant moment was the presentation of the Award for Spirit of Barbershopping, which went to Stuart Adey. Stuart has a long history of barbershop singing and was one of the inaugural High Altitude Harmony members and committed his time, business and music talents to HAH. Sadly for us Stuart and his wife Beth have relocated to Lake Macquarie. Whichever chorus gets Stuart, let me tell you that you are very lucky. The chorus sang Shenandoah and when Stuart took the solo second verse it was very emotional.

But then Times began to get really interesting for us.

First, our irreplaceable Musical Director, Mike Ludwig, was given a transfer to Townsville, roughly 1000kms away. WOW!!! Some very quick discussion, meetings and negotiations and we still have Mike as our MD while working closely with members of the Music Team and Andrew Howson from the Gold Coast. Mike is so committed to HAH, that he regularly flies down to Toowoomba for home time, practices and Gigs. It is working so well that our membership continues to grow.

Second, we relocated from our Mt Lofty venue into McDonald House for our first practice in January 2010. It was a great venue, however, following some rain (yes rain in Toowoomba) a building inspection saw the building closed as unsafe. We moved into temporary premises at the University of Southern Queensland for 2 weeks and now find ourselves in the RSL Rooms in the centre of town. Hopefully this will be our final home and the risers from the Blenders will arrive and all will be well.

Despite all this we have continued to gain new members and are making plans for the rest of the year, especially Singfest, being hosted by The Blenders.

A recent long term Vision afternoon, ably run by VP Marketing, Peter Conaghan, reaffirmed our aim to have 50 members by the next National Convention and to continue to make singing enjoyable for our members, by aiming for constant improvement and a qualification process.

Also for the first time, we ran A Snag and Tag afternoon for young men. Eight young men turned up to Mike and Rhonda Harris’s place and in a session lead by Assistant MD Ben Harris, ate snags and sang tags. It was a great way to introduce young men to Barbershopping. A special thanks goes to 4D, a quality youth quartet, who came all the way in the Gold Coast?

Yes - Times have been interesting for HAH so far this year, but bring it on!

In harmony
Les Barker – President

**What’s happening o n the Gold Coast?**

The Blenders have been busy during the last couple of months. New brooms do a good job. A new director, music director and philosophy will hopefully make a great chorus even better. No matter how good a chorus may be, there is always room for improvement!
Todd Wilson has just arrived from Nashville to coach The Blenders and hold a couple of workshops for the Club at the Gold Coast. We are all looking forward to an exciting week. Working hard means identifying and facilitating goals, restructuring the club, practicing the new repertoire and qualifying for your songs. A strict qualification system has been implemented and if one has not qualified with the songs to be sung, he will not be on the risers during a performance.

Channel 7 has invited The Blenders to participate in Australia’s Got Talent. The boys from the Gold Coast have passed the first audition session in Brisbane recently and are now looking forward to the first recording session on 20th March. Cross your fingers that Barbershop singing is appreciated by the judges and the audience and that the Chorus will move into the next round. We don’t know when the first show will be broadcasted on Channel 7 but the Barbershoppers do hope for your support. So please, when it comes to voting time for the public, pick up the phone and dial for The Blenders if you like what they are doing.

An exciting festival will be launched by The Blenders on the Gold Coast this year. SingFest, a combination of choral and ensemble events, it will also include the Barbershop Regional Annual Competition. SingFest details can be found on The Blenders website or on http://www.singfest.com.au/ Brett Logan and his team are doing a terrific job to make things happen. All we need is you – sign up for the SingFest and enjoy a couple of sunny days at the Gold Coast as well.

There are more events to be found on www.theblenders.com.au

Greetings from the Gold Coast, Gunther Illek, PR Co-ordinator

Vale – Chuck Mitchell
1947 – 2010

The Vocal Majority has lost a true friend and mentor with the passing of Chuck Mitchell this past week. Chuck has been the Director of Choreography of the VM for many years and has been very instrumental in helping The Vocal Majority win 11 International Gold Medals.

As Phil McShan said at his memorial service, Chuck had a passion for excellence that was the driving force behind his desire to see the VM become the best it could be. He had a unique style and ability to make VM believe that they could be better than they thought, and he was right. His ability to communicate that good enough was just not good enough was special. He wanted Barbershoppers to strive for perfection, and he would convince every guy that they could achieve it through hard work and dedication.

He always saw the best in every person with whom he came in contact. He touched many lives and we are truly thankful to God for the legacy that Chuck has left behind. He was a loving and faithful husband, father, and grandfather. His passion for people was far reaching, as evidenced by the many friends that were in attendance at his service.

Todd E Roberts, President, The Vocal Majority

Musical Director Wanted

Brisbane River City Clippers is a medium size chorus of about 65 members who meet on Wednesday nights (Tuesdays in the short term) in Brisbane at a near-city venue and who sing at events and competitions, and who do charitable work.

Those wishing to apply for the position of Musical Director of the Clippers should do so in writing to

The Secretary
River City Clippers,
90 Stanmere Street,
Carindale, Queensland, 4152

or by E-mail to frank.tate@bigpond.com

Applications should be accompanied by a CV outlining the applicant’s experience –

- in the Barbershop genre,
- in musical direction of a chorus,
- the establishing and training of quartets
- and in
- the organization and management of parts leaders and other sectional responsibilities.

The successful applicant will have good leadership and communication skills, and be capable of developing a culture of excellence in singing and performing, and in instilling a co-operative culture among members of the chorus.

The Musical Director will report to the President, River City Clippers and be invited to attend monthly executive meetings as an Ex-officio, and will work closely with the VP Music in all aspects of the role related to music.

Remuneration is negotiable and will be discussed with those who make the short list.

Frank Tate
Hon. Secretary
COMING EVENTS

2010

Mar 21 / Apr 1 - Oceans of Harmony Tour -- AAMBS in conjunction with Sweet Adelines is holding Youth Workshops throughout Australia. Details: www.youngsingersinharmony.org.au (see Page 5 for details)

Apr 30 – May 2 – SingFest 2010 A festival of choral groups, school choirs, vocal bands, quartets – in fact any a cappella group conducted by the Sunshine Region. Three days of concerts, performances with prizes, and workshops. Details: www.singfest.com.au

May 2 – AAMBS Council Meeting via Teleconference 7.30pm EST

May 4–9 – Voices in Harmony 2010 – Perth WA. Western Region event including the Western Region Convention

May 7-8 – Western Region Competition – Time and Venue TBA. Schools competition during the day of Friday 7th. Details: Kim Sebbage, Chairman, AAMBS Western Region Board, sebbages@bigpond.net.au, Phone 08 9312 6404; Mobile: 0421 373 371

May 29 – Sunshine Region Competition – 9.30 am – 7.30 pm Details TBA

June 3 – AAMBS Council Meeting via Teleconference 7.30pm EST

Jun 27-Jul 4 – BHS International Convention, Philadelphia PA USA


Oct 22-24 - NZABS Convention, followed by Harmony College. Hamilton NZ

2011

Jan 18-23 – BHS Midwinter Convention, Tuscan, Arizona USA

Jun 27-Jul 4 – BHS International Convention, Kansas City MO USA

Oct 7-9 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Belfast, Ireland

Sept 28–Oct 2 - AAMBS 11th Annual Convention and Pan Pacific Convention, Brisbane Qld – Hosted by The Brisbane River City Clippers Contact: info@panpac2011.org.au

2012

Jul 1-8 – BHS International Convention, Portland, Oregon USA

Oct 7-9 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Dublin, Ireland

2013

Jun 27-Jul 4 – BHS International Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Oct 4-6 – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers’ International Convention. Galway, Ireland

2014

Jun 29-Jul 6 – BHS International Convention, Minneapolis MN USA

2015

Jun 28-Jul 5 – BHS International Convention, Pittsburgh PA USA

2016

Jul 3-10 – BHS International Convention, Nashville, TN USA

How well do you know your AAMBS Website?

Can you find the answers to the following questions:

1) Which Chorus appears on the AAMBS Homepage?
2) When is the next Council Teleconference meeting?
3) How do you contact your Region Chairman?
4) Who was the Gold Medal Seniors’ Quartet in 2005?
5) What is Standing Order No 5?

If you can answer all these questions you win a Gold Star – if you can’t answer any of these questions you are not taking advantage of the mass of information available to you.

Contact details for all members of the AAMBS Council can be found on our website - aambs.org.au