



THE GENESCENE



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The Chorus of the Genesee

December, 2006

Have a Holly, Jolly Christmas

Allan's Prerogative



A dearth of contributions this month. Not sure why. Perhaps it's the holiday. Thank God for my regulars, Dave Kester and Bob Lewis. I can always count on them for interesting articles.

A few thoughts from your editor:

- As you know, we have a new song, *Looking At The World Thru Rose Colored Glasses*. At a recent rehearsal, Keith indicated that he expects all of us to be "off the music" by the time we return from the holiday break in early January. That's Tuesday, January 2nd. He urged us to spend ten minutes a day looking at the music while we listen to the tape.
- Did anything of significance really change as a result of all those emails and articles that swirled around CoG following the fall contest? If it did, I'm not aware of it. It appears that we have decided to proceed with the status quo.
- I miss Bob Marquez at rehearsal the past few weeks. Can't someone convince him to return to the fold? We can't afford to lose such a veteran talented singer and good guy.
- I hate to bring it up, but I draw your attention to an article I wrote for the May, 2006, *Genescene* entitled "The Aging of CoG." In that article I reported that 12 men in CoG are over 80, and 20 men are between the ages of 75 and 80. If my math is correct, that means that, in only five years, **32 men in CoG will be over 80**. If you examine that group you realize that the men in it comprise the very **heart** of this chorus. Does that pose a problem for CoG? Can we survive with a significantly smaller chorus? Can we afford to maintain Harmony House? Are there things we can do now to prepare for the inevitable? Or is this just another example of a situation similar to global warming that we choose to ignore until it may be too late?

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Deadline:
Jan. 29

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Calendar of Events

- **December 5**, Tuesday: Wegmans, Pittsford Plaza. Report at 6, sing at 6:30. Dinner following.
- **December 12**, Tuesday: Eastview Mall, in front of The Bon Ton, arrive at 6:30, sing at 7 P.M.
- **December 13**, Wednesday: Strong Hospital. Report at 11:00 A.M. in main lobby, on Elmwood Ave. Al Weitz will meet you. Sing in cafeteria at noon. Park in the parking garage and Al will give you a parking ticket when you arrive. Lunch provided after we sing.
- **December 16**, Saturday: Holiday Dinner. Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 7 P.M. Jack and Doris Ernisse still taking reservations. Call 225-3688.
- **December 19**, Tuesday: Soup and caroling at Harmony House. Report at 6:30, sing at 7 P.M.

The uniform for all singing events is: black chorus sweater, white chorus turtleneck, everything else black.

The **Chorus of the Genesee** meets each Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at Harmony House, 58 Main Street, Webster, NY. Visitors may call the *Barbershop Hotline* at (585) 265-9540.

2006 Chapter Officers

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How To Keep Your Voice In Singing Shape

(This article was contributed by Jim Read. Thanks, Jim.)

Dr. Clark Rosen and speech pathologist Thomas Murry of the University of Pittsburg Voice Center offer the following tips on keeping the timbre in your pipes:

- Avoid caffeine, which can dry out your throat. The vocal chords, or folds, vibrate hundreds of time a second and need to be kept wet and lubricated.
- Avoid clearing your throat which slams your vocal folds together. "Clearing your throat is an exceptionally violent event to your vocal folds," Murry said, "worse than coughing or loud singing."
- Milk increases mucus production and thus may force a person to clear his throat often. Drinking plenty of water minimizes this problem.
- In case of a cold, follow you mother's advice: rest, eat well, and drink plenty of water. Decongestant medications are fine, but don't use antihistamines, which dry out your throat and make it more difficult for the body to rid itself of cold viruses. Limit talking. Singers should reduce their normal warm-up before a performance.
- Regurgitation of acid and peptic juices from the stomach into the esophagus can cause heartburn-like inflammation, called gastro-esophageal reflux disease that in turn affects the voice. Avoid spicy foods and diet fads. Eat a balanced diet.
- Squinting can affect the voice by distorting the face and tensing neck muscles. Eyeglasses or contacts thus can improve the voice.

More Thoughts from the Bobservation Post

Bob Lewis

I'm sure most of you didn't see the monkeys on the roof of Harmony House the other day. It was a sight to behold. Men (grown men) leaning over the roof line, repairing trim and installing new gutters. As we drove by I remarked to Marcia, "Boy, one strong wind and down they come." I haven't seen the results, it is usually too dark outside when I pass Harmony House, but I am sure the new gutters will be a wonderful asset to the house.

Were you at rehearsal during the BOTY meeting last October? Not too many were left at the bar when the selection was made by the past BOTY recipients. It is wonderful to look around and see just how many of our members have been given this award. My sincere congratulations to all the recipients of the BOTY, and thanks for a job well done.

There have been two Community Chorus sing-outs in the last few weeks. Both were very well received by the audience but, we really need more singers to attend. I think a separate rehearsal of the Community Chorus would help improve that chorus, add confidence to both the directors and the chorus members, and over-all improve the chorus's performance.

Pot-luck dinner was this past Tuesday (2nd Tuesday of the month). The attendance was great. Many familiar faces and some we haven't seen in a long time. Hello again to Jim and Gretchen Reed and to Jack and Eleanore Zonneville. Good to have you aboard.

Congratulations to Mary Jane and Brian Moore. Birthdays are always nice to celebrate, and asking the whole chorus to help was a wonderful idea. We know how old Brian is (60) and Mary Jane (well I won't go there), but thanks again.

Did you know we have a resident Santa Clause? Bill Rohlin will spent the next 5 weeks in Texas, in a huge (what else would it be in Texas?) mall, acting the part and making kids happy. What a wonderful opportunity, to meet other folks and enjoy the anticipation and excitement of the little ones. Wow!!!

Did you order your new shoes? Penny sent in an order this past week (first week in November). I don't know if she can add more to the order, but if you want new, comfortable shoes for our uniform, now is the time to order.

Shrimp is here. See Howe Low for more information. This is one of our BIG money makers. Sell - Sell - Sell. It is delicious shrimp and with the holidays almost upon us, what a magnificent opportunity to make people happy and make some money for the chapter at the same time.

Rumor has it that Harmony House has a new hot water heater. Thanks to those who helped clean-up and install the new heater.

Did you notice the ditch being dug next to Harmony House? I understand it will help with the gutter run-off and hopefully eliminate damp walls, unsightly trenches next to the foundation, and prevent mold from getting into Harmony House. Using the large plastic piping will certainly channel the water away from the foundation. Great job, guys!

I sincerely hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. With all that is going on in the world, we certainly have a lot to be thankful for. Be thankful for what you have and don't hesitate to help (and give to) our neighbors (both close and far).

Golf is a game invented by the same people who think music comes out of a bagpipe. ~ Author Unknown



Musical Minutiae

Dave Kester

This is the story of the “one hit wonder” that wasn’t. Now you’re wondering if it wasn’t a hit or if it wasn’t a wonder. I don’t know either, so don’t ask me.



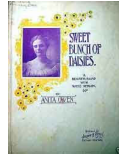
Back in the good old days before we were born (well, most of us that is) there was a song writer by the name of Anita Owen who wrote a song that everybody liked because of its simple sentiment. The great guru of American Popular music, Sigmund Spaeth, called it “[a] freak hit of 1894.” Now Sigmund or Siggy as his friends called him knew his stuff about music, in particular American music. Old time barbershoppers will remember him as the author of *Barber Shop Ballads* (and How to Sing them), published in 1940 and he knew because he did sing them. Yeah, he was one of us.

Now this so-called freak hit of 1894 was *Sweet Bunch of Daisies*. Ever hear of it? Me neither. It was popularized by Phyllis Allen, who got her show business start in vaudeville. Her purported large physique and excellent timing made her a natural for film comedies. She appeared in many of Mack Sennett’s slapstick films and also appeared in several of Charlie Chaplain’s movies. I guess she was also a singer of sorts.

Anyway, according to Siggy, this song, published by a newcomer from Detroit named Jerome H. Remick, really caught on. Siggy wrote, “Its tune was based on the old yodel pattern [whatever that was] and the words were charmingly polite.” Now does he mean polite by 1894 standards or 1940s standards? I’ll bet there was a big difference. Siggy goes on to say its composer Anita “never wrote another song of any consequence.”

It’s probably good that I’m writing this after

Siggy’s death (1965) since what I’m about to reveal might be embarrassing to him. He really was a good guy, so I don’t want to besmirch his name, BUT (you knew that was coming didn’t you), later on Siggy wrote, “Still more appealing from the sentimental standpoint was Anita Owen’s one and only hit song, *Daisies Won’t Tell*, better known by the opening phrase of its chorus, *Sweet Bunch of Daisies*.”



My research reveals that sometime between 1900 and 1907 Miss Anita (as they say in the South) wrote a sequel titled *Only One Daisy Left*. The following year she wrote *Daisies Won’t Tell*, a companion piece to *Sweet Bunch of Daisies* which has distinctly different lyrics from the 1894 song and is in waltz time. Now you might argue that these songs were of no consequence because they were just variations on a theme, therefore Siggy was right all along, BUT (there’s that bad word again) he was wrong in identifying them as the same song.

All of these songs played very well among bluegrass lovers. Eddy Arnold was particularly enamored of it so he recorded it as a tribute to his mother in 1972. Don’t know if her name was Daisy, so don’t ask me.

In 1916 Miss Anita published a new song titled *Sing Me That Song Again* which is certainly significant to us since we list it amongst our COG Active Repertoire. It should also have been to one Sigmund Spaeth, whom you and I know as Siggy and others refer to as Dr. Spaeth. He was already making a living as a respected musicologist at that time, so he should have known.



All kidding aside, you really should read some of Spaeth’s books on Barbershop and if you would like to borrow my treasured copy of *Barber Shop Ballads* (and How to Sing Them), you certainly may.