



THE GENESCENE



Volume 2, Issue 1

The Chorus of the Genesee

February, 2007

Chuck Martello, Barbershopper of the Year



Jerry Dunn, B.O.T.Y., 2005, looks on as Chuck Martello, the 2006 Barbershopper of the Year, adds his name to the the list of illustrious former winners.

It was a “no-brainer” this year. Everyone agreed that Chuck Martello was the obvious choice for this year’s B.O.T.Y. honor.

I felt it was appropriate that I ask Chuck to write a few words for this month’s *Genescene*. So, here’s Chuck’s words of wisdom:

Needless to say I was completely surprised that I would receive such an honor from my barbershop brothers especially this year when I went off the Board and gave up my PVP job. The realization surrounding this special event didn't really sink in until Gill Krepps gave me a few pictures of me posing with past B.O.T.Y. recipients downstairs in front of the plaque. The

pictures graphically told me what I already sensed: I was traveling with some pretty good company, and that I will always be proud to be part of CoG's best. I am very grateful and deeply honored that I was selected to be the Chorus of the Genesee's 2006 Barbershopper of the Year. THANK YOU!!!

Now on to other matters. Allan asked me to provide a few thoughts regarding the CoG. First of all be aware that I don't have many answers but I have lots of opinions. Don't we all?

When I was PVP, I once relayed my feelings about the chorus during a break. You were a captive audience so you were forced to listen and most of you were polite. I started out by saying how much I enjoyed being part of the chorus and how I was fortunate, actually blessed, to have met and made friends with such wonderful guys, which by the way still holds true today. I continued on saying that while it was wonderful to grow old together, nothing goes on forever.

Next
Deadline:
Feb. 25

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And this is the basic problem which I feel our chorus faces. We are an aging group and we badly need an infusion of young members not only to keep the chapter vibrant but to help us sing better. I think we all realize this but are at a loss on how to turn the situation around. We try at all levels but success is minimal at best. Much of what we do is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. However, I don't think it's a lost cause and we should continue to try both old and new ideas in an effort to promote our hobby and our chapter.

So what do I suggest? Here are a few areas where I feel we should focus our energies. Most are not new but in need of a new twist and new energy:

1. Find ways to get into more high schools to reach teachers and students. We won't pick up too many new members but we will plant the seeds of barbershop harmony.

2. Expand our scholarship program. Why limit it to just Webster schools? More schools involved means more students, more teachers, and more exposure for us.

3. More PR. What we're doing now is fine but we need to redouble our efforts and develop new strategies.

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.

2007 Chapter Officers

President.....	Bill Wise
VP Chapter Dev.....	Marty Olschewske
VP Music/Perf.....	Ken Bissinger
Program VP.....	Jack Ernisse
Secretary.....	Jack Simpson
Treasurer.....	Bob Mayeu
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Service Chairman.....	Fred Hindom
Bulletin Editor.....	Allan Muskopf
Board of Directors:.....	Brian Moore, Bob Statt, Alan McKenzie, Don Vair, Mike Root, Bob Wiley
Music Director.....	Keith Langdon

4. Reach out to more diverse groups. Music is a common language. Let's share ours with all racial and ethnic groups.

5. Update our repertoire to include more comedy and recognizable songs. People like to laugh and hum to something familiar.

6. Sing at more high-profile events. There are many charity and community events held throughout the year that are well publicized and attended. We do some but should get involved in more.

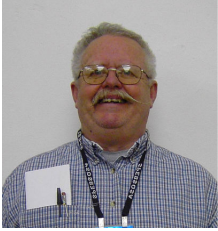
7. Make a CD!! We need a way to showcase our music and our talents and for a host of other uses. I was in a school the other day and the 6th grade chorus was going to make a CD. Why can't the CoG produce one and complete a project that has been talked about for years?

8. More quartet promotion. We've got lots of guys that should be in quartets but are not. Can we think of incentives to get them involved?

9. More random singing. This applies mostly to quartets. During the holidays I was thinking how nice it would be if a quartet would station itself in high traffic areas such as malls, post offices, banks, etc. and just sing (with permission of course). Wasn't there an idea floating around to use a vacant mall store to conduct a rehearsal open to the public? We could even have a barber chair and invite kids of all ages to sit while we sing.

Well I could go on and on but you get the picture. The bottom line is we need to inject new life into our chorus mainly through attracting and retaining younger members. And it will take the efforts of all of us to accomplish this goal. We have a lot to offer. Let's not keep Barbershop and the Chorus of the Genesee the best kept secret in the Rochester area.

*Again, thank you for the wonderful honor of being your B.O.T.Y. **Chuck***



The Prez Sez

Bill Wise

I promised Allan that one of my New Year's resolutions was to "faithfully" write articles for the *Genescene*. Most of us remember when Bill Rohlin was the editor and the difficulty in getting articles to print and the subsequent demise "for a period of time" of that venue.....

Last fall (2006), after the fall convention, Allan hit on some subjects that created no small amount of conversation/dialogue among chorus members. The great thing about dialogue is it gets people talking, thinking, and recognizing everyone's point of concern and what, if anything, can be done to address these issues.

Now, before you think, "Here we go again," let's recognize the fact that a lot of questions were asked and answered, but the real reasoning behind Allan's concerns will not "go away" on their own. We are a complex chorus with complex problems. I've been told that there are other choruses that own their own rehearsal halls. I'd be willing to bet that our "Harmony House" is the oldest chorus owned structure in the society!! In the years since I've been a member (29 years – no big deal) the bulk of Harmony House retro-fitting has occurred in the last 10-12 years. This has been expensive, and at the same time rewarding, and we're not done yet.

Our sources of income are: Chapter assessments, the annual show, paid package shows, fund raisers (shrimp, Valentines, etc.), and revenue from Harmony House rent.

Our main expenses are: mortgage payment, utilities, security, insurance, etc.

The last time I checked, our out-of-pocket expense was about \$70 per day. Most of the time we meet this rental criteria, with a huge thanks to Brian Moore and his house "gang." I would name them, but wouldn't want to leave anybody out. Ac-

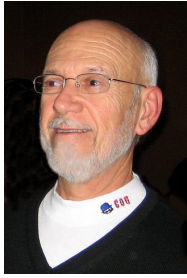
tually, I'm embarrassed that I don't know who they all are. They never say, "I did that." They just do it!! So thank you Brian and your construction workers, our lawn maintenance crew, and last, but not least, our inside maintenance crew who mop floors, empty trash, sweep, clean toilets, vacuum, and act as bartenders in their spare time. Wouldn't it be nice if they had more help? I don't think offering to help once or twice a year would hurt anyone. Please talk to Dick Secrist and volunteer for your one week a year.

The Chapter/Society is faced with declining membership and increasing every day living expenses. By increasing our Chapter membership, we expand our bottom line, both musically and financially. One of my other resolutions is to work on increasing membership with whatever tools I have available to me.

As a start down this path, I've asked Jack Thomas, VP of Publicity and Marketing, to set up a meeting with a PR firm or someone affiliated with professional public relations work to look for new ideas, keeping in mind that PR and marketing are two different fields, but they do interface in some cases. Jack deals with the media (radio and TV), Wegman's, the Town of Webster, and many more organizations. That's a "heady" job for one guy. Maybe you could volunteer your help!

Marty Olschewske is your new membership/Chapter Development VP. I'll be working with Marty on membership, PR, etc. He has "High Hopes" that we can increase membership in 2007 – maybe you can offer to help!

Where is all this going? I'm convinced we need a Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC). A committee made up of people who would be dedicated to making this a better chapter by achieving higher fiscal and musical goals. Everyone's ideas should go on the table. Everything we've done, and any thing we do, was originally someone's idea. We need to see where we are today and know that tomorrow will be better. Maybe you could volunteer..... Bill



Musical Minutiae

Dave Kester

“I feel a song coming on.” How many times in our music-filled lives have we had that thought or even gone so far as to have spoken those words? They’re easy for us to say because so many song writers have given us memorable melodies and lyrics that constantly go through our heads throughout the day, sometimes even when we are sleeping. Lyricist Dorothy Field has said, “I wrote that - the words to ‘I feel a song coming on’ – but I don’t believe a word of it. A song just doesn’t come on. I’ve always had to tease it out, squeeze it out, and anyone that tells you that a song is something that’s an inspiration – I hate that word – or a magic spark, has got to prove that one to me. It’s hard slave labor. Ask anyone who writes – it’s slave labor and I love it.”

Dorothy must have loved it because she spent nearly fifty years of her life in a career that was remarkable on multiple levels. She made it to the top of the songwriting heap as a woman surrounded by men, with such peers as Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. Early on she met the composer and song-plugger, Jimmy McHugh. Through McHugh she got a job as a lyricist at Mills Music, Inc. Fields later referred to herself as “Mills Music’s fifty-dollars-a-night girl,” because she was paid 50 dollars for each lyric she composed. With McHugh she also collaborated on many memorable songs that any barbershopper would immediately recognize. Besides the song introducing this piece written in 1935 for the musical, “Sugar Babies,” there was: *I Can’t Give You Anything But Love* (1928), *On the Sunny Side of the Street* (1930) and *It’s a Most Unusual Day*, (1948).



From 1930 to 1939 Fields worked in Hollywood, first with McHugh and then with Jerome Kern. In 1939 she married David Eli Lahm, a clothing manufacturer. They had two children and it would seem that her career had ended; however, having already worked on screenplays with her brother Herbert in Hollywood, she had developed a reputation as a fine playwright. She had written the books for three Cole Porter hits and a Sigmund Romberg musical. In 1946, Fields ap-

proached Oscar Hammerstein with her idea for a musical based on the life of sharpshooter Annie Oakley. Hammerstein agreed to produce the show, and Kern and Fields were contracted to write the songs. When Kern died before they were able to begin work on the project, Irving Berlin was hired to replace him. Berlin wrote both music and lyrics for “Annie Get Your Gun,” but Dorothy and Herbert Fields contributed an excellent book. The finished product, starring Ethel Merman as Annie, ran 1,147 performances. It remains one of the most popular shows in the repertoire

Dorothy collaborated with many of the best songwriters in the business. Some have already been mentioned; others were: Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, Cy Coleman and Neil Simon.



Fields’ work habits were highly disciplined. Typically, she would spend eight weeks researching, discussing, and making notes on a project, before settling into an 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. daily work routine. She worked at a bridge table in her apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and preferred to write with pencil on a yellow legal pad. She kept notebooks in which she copied passages from Dryden, Shaw, and Thoreau, unusual synonyms for commonly used words, humorous proverbs, rhyming phrases, odd-sounding words and anything else that might come in handy in writing a lyric. Maybe more than anything else, what made her songs great was her dead-on ear for slang and colloquial speech.

During her 48-year career Fields co-wrote more than 400 songs and worked on 15 musicals and at least 26 movies. Her lyrics were noted for their strong characterization, clarity of language and middlebrow humor. She is quoted as saying, “You write what you feel. You write because of that need for expression. You keep it in tune with the times.”

Thoughts from the Bobversation Post

Bob Lewis



Congratulations to the new officers of our chapter. 2007 will have its challenges, both up and down, but I am sure with the new team in place, we will grow and prosper this New Year.

Congratulations to Chuck Martello. It is a well-deserved honor to be Barbershopper of the Year. Chuck, you have worked hard for this chapter and the recognition is long over due.

Kudos to Scott Ventura who won the *Jingle Bell Award*. Bravo (with an infectious laugh, of course) Scotty, you have showed your devotion to the chorus in many ways. Keep up the good work.

Were you there for the Christmas party? If not, you missed a great time. Good food and the hors d'oeuvres were something to behold. From a personal standpoint, the limburger cheese was outstanding (no pun intended). Thanks to all who brought their specialties to the festivities. The attendance was wonderful and I believe a good time was had by all. Of course we missed Bill Rohlin (Santa Claus) behind the bar, but I am sure he was with us in spirit.

On Tuesday someone asked what uniform was required for the performance at the Fairport Baptist Church.. The E-mail from the Music Committee Chairman said, "Bring everything you have." Granted, it did not *individually* list all the items that should be in your garment bag, but everything to me means everything that belongs to the chorus. Maybe it is time to re-institute the numbering of various uniform requirements so that a specific number which describes what is required for that performance can be communicated to all chorus members.

Do you have an E-mail buddy? I suggest that section leaders pair those individuals, who do not have a computer, with someone who does and have that person be responsible for contacting his buddy. He could print the correspondence and give it to him at the next rehearsal or, if it is of a critical nature, he could call that person and tell him the nature of the correspondence so that ALL the chorus is constantly up to date.

We still have SHRIMP!!!! Lets sell those last 90 or so bags and help our chapter prosper. The profit is in the freezer. SELL< SELL< SELL!!! Oh yes, thanks to Howie and his helpers for all the good work and *great* book keeping.

Were you there at the First Baptist Church on the 28th? The chorus did a wonderful job. I'm not sure how many were there, but we certainly filled the front of the church. I personally was pleased to see how many people were in the audience. The weather was not co-operating at all, but the church was better than three-quarters full. I sincerely hope we helped in their endeavor to maintain that wonderful edifice. And with a standing ovation at the end of the concert, what more can we ask for? Kudos to all who were involved in this wonderful experience. We should all be proud!! After all, isn't this what the Chorus of the Genesee is all about?

Pot luck was the 9th of January. Those who were there had a wonderful time. Too bad more of you do not attend. The food was great, the fellowship was wonderful, and the feeling of belonging was felt by all.

Show Notes

Al Weitz

Show Chairman, "The Big Sing"



Spring will soon be upon us and show time is not as far away as you might think. About 16 weeks from now our show will be history. Some members have been working on details and planning since November. I am hoping even more members will get involved. It is our chapter show and we should *all* try to participate in some way.

This show will be different with several new ideas put into promoting, marketing, and "selling" *Our Show!* It is entitled: "*The Big Sing*" with featured guest "*Hot Air Buffoons*," a hilarious comedy quartet from Ohio. The show will be broadcast "live" from the new 1000 seat auditorium at Pittsford Sutherland High School at 7:30 P.M. Yes! 7:30, not 8 P.M. We believe this early time will appeal to the audience since it will end at 10, not 10:30 P.M. Moreover, the earlier time will enable us to start the afterglow earlier.

We are going to sell "reserved seating," not general admission. This will create more work on our part, but our goal is to enhance the theater-like appeal of our show. We are also sending out a district-wide flyer promoting the show and will be looking into promoting the show at our spring convention.

A general show meeting is planned for all chapter members during a future chapter meeting to brainstorm and discuss volunteer opportunities. I look forward to and need your input.

Will someone please get a copy of this Genescene to Dick Secrist. He has missed several back issues. And, if you still are not on the internet, ask a friend to print a hard copy for you. Problem solved.

A Plan to Get Back In The Game

Duke Brooks



We've been out-pointed several times in SLD Chorus Contests - the latest contests, we were beaten by a "select chorus." It seems to me that the reaction from the COG members has been either, "Well, that's ok - we've been to International many times. Let someone else carry the load for a while." Or, "Select choruses should not be allowed - there's no chance of beating them." That's all sour grapes !

My view is that we know what needs to be done to get back in the winner's circle. Sure, it will take much work on our part. If we commit to that effort -- and I mean *really* commit -- then we can get back in the game.

Once the commitment is made, then it's up to the Music Team to come up with a plan to guide the effort.

Can we do this? Can we please stop spending section rehearsal time going over notes and words (which should be done on our own time) and instead work on the craft items that we need to concentrate on, like creating unit sound in each section and in the chorus as a whole? The last contest, Batavia sounded like four voices on stage - not twenty. No matter what the score sheets said, we were just plain out-sung.

I guess I don't worry about visual presentation. We've got loads of talent there. We just need to come up with a simple, sharp plan that can be readily learned and easily executed.

Can we all commit to working hard to pull ourselves up? Can we learn the notes and words to any new song on our own time and not have to spend sectional time on such things? Can we work on trying to sound like each other as much as possible? Let's do it !!

Allan's Prerogative

I can't wait to see the reaction of the audience and the judges when we whip out our pink glasses during our new song.

Has anyone else noted the diminution of singing downstairs following our rehearsals? Wonder why?

I strongly recommend the book *Younger Next Year, A Guide to Living Like 50 Until You're 80 and Beyond*, by Chris Crowley and Henry Lodge. Important book.

When I first joined CoG, Jack Simpson led a group learning polecat songs prior to our regular rehearsal. I learned so much from Jack about singing barbershop. I will try to convince Jack to lead that group again. If you are interested, see me or Jack and I'll see what I can do.

There is a group that meets every Friday morning to put Harmony House back in shape: sweep, mop, clean toilets, set up tables and chairs, empty baskets, etc. Are you aware that some mornings there are only two old guys doing all that work? It's not fair to them. Why don't you see Jerry Dunn and schedule *one week out of the year* that you will help out with the Friday work crew.

Joe Bradbury is the new SLD President, a distinctive honor for a member of CoG. I will try to get Joe to fill us in on what he is planning for the year.

I would like to have a biographic sketch of one member of CoG in each issue of the *Genescene*. I need help. If I had three guys each take an issue, I would only have to do one every four months. Those of you who enjoy writing, see me.

Why don't we add or bring back several familiar up tunes to our repertoire, songs that would grab an audience and get them smiling and humming the tune? *Fiddler*, for example, was a real crowd pleaser.

I have often wondered how ideas get transformed into action in CoG. For example, in this issue of the *Genescene*, several intriguing ideas have been suggested ——— by Chuck Martello, Duke Brooks, Bill Wise, Bob Lewis, and in this column. What happens to those ideas? Are they discussed in board meetings? Do they come up in chapter meetings or the Music Committee? What happens to Chuck's suggestions to expand our scholarship program, double our PR efforts, create a CD, sing at more high-profile events, and upgrade our repertoire? Those all sound like ways to reach out to the public, put CoG on the map, and attract new younger members? And what happened to all the ideas that were generated after our last contest? Do ideas die in the *Genescene* or at the bar after rehearsal? Perhaps we need an "Idea Committee or something like that?"

Chorus Events

(Put info in your calendar)

- March 8, Thursday: Sing the National Anthem at the *Rochester Razor Sharks* basketball game at the War Memorial. Arrive at 6:15 P.M.; sing at 7:05 Enter at the Exchange Street entrance. Two free tickets for chorus members; guest tickets are \$5.25. Deadline is Feb. 20 for ordering tickets.
- March 10, Saturday: Annual St. Patty's Day Dinner at Harmony House. Tickets are \$8. Deadline is Feb. 27 for ordering tickets.
- April 13, 14: Seneca Land Spring Contest at Geneva.
- May 19, Saturday: Spring Show at Pittsford-Sutherland High School. Showtime is 7:30 P.M.

Let the Sun Shine In***Bob Seigel, Sunshine Chairman***

CoG sends warm wishes to those in our "barbershop family" who are dealing with or recuperating from health conditions. These include: Jack Maracle, George Stothard, and Gia Fiorino.

Our deepest sympathy to Ray Schmidt and his family on the passing of Ray's sister.



George Hugel, Joe Kristan, Allan, and Lira dropped in on George Stothard Wednesday afternoon. As you can tell, he was looking bright, cheery, and very handsome. In fact, we all agreed that he looked better than we have seen him for many weeks. He was particularly pleased to see Lira, although Lira was disappointed he had no popcorn for her.

George broke his right shoulder in a fall and will likely be in *Room 214 of the Jewish Home, 2021 Winton Road, South*, for several more weeks getting physical therapy. He has a phone in this room, 424-5383. George was effusive in his heartfelt appreciation of all the support he has received from his brothers in CoG.

