



THE GENESCENE



Volume 5, Issue 2

The Chorus of the Genesee

February, 2010

Letter From “The New Guy”



A Letter From “The New Guy” *Mike Richards*

It has been seven months since I joined the Chorus of the Genesee. I must say it has been some of the most enjoyable seven months of my life. I recently had another member say to me “I just don’t know why when you came into Harmony House for the first time you didn’t just turn around and walk out.” I know this person did not mean this in a bad way. He just wanted to know what kept me there. His thoughts were that most of the chorus is old enough to be my father and some my grandfather. I have never been one to shy away from new surroundings just because of my first impressions. I like to give everything the benefit of the doubt and make my own decisions. I am so glad I stayed.

A little more background about me. The last time I sang was back in high school from 1978 - 1982. I was in a barbershop quartet in *The Music Man*. Those were some of the most memorable moments of my life. We were so good we got the biggest applause from the audience every night of the play.

So jump forward to the CoG golf tournament 2009. My cousin’s good friend is John Martello, Chuck’s son. John asked if we would like to play in a tournament his dad was putting together. I agreed and the next thing I new I was singing *Lida Rose* with Bob Statt, Al Weitz, and a couple others I don’t recall. It brought me back to that time in high school and I remembered how much I loved that style of singing.

I was invited to Harmony House and two weeks later I was singing with all of you. Everyone was so very friendly. I think Scott got me singing tags that first night. Thanks, Scott. I remember going home that first night thinking how much fun that all was. I also realized that there was not a foul word uttered. There were no arguments. Everyone just got along. I knew after that first night that I wanted to join this chorus. I was seemingly put into the express lane as I was asked to sing in the upcoming contest, a mere five weeks away. I must say I was a bit worried, but everyone reassured me it would be alright, and it was. As I said before, I don’t easily shy away from a challenge. So here we are. Seven months gone by and now I have been asked to run the Barberpole Cat Program. See my article about the program. I am looking forward to that new challenge. Oh, by the way, I have joined up with three gentlemen and it looks like we have a quartet! Look for us coming to a stage near you. Thank you all for the memories so far. I am looking forward to many more. *Mike Richards*

Calendar of Events

February 23, Tuesday: 7 P.M., Guest Night at Harmony House.

February 25, Thursday: 6:30 P.M., CoG Community Chorus, Westgate Nursing Home.

February 27, Saturday: Ontario Division **Dare to Sing Forum**, Harmony House, 1- 4 P.M., led by Pete Carentz, SLD President.

March 13, Saturday: 6:00, CoG St. Patrick's Day Dinner. Party.

March 16, Tuesday: 7:00 P.M., CoG Music Team Meeting.

March 17, Wednesday: 12:00 noon, CoG Performance at Perinton Community Center.

March 25, Thursday, 7:00 P.M., Extra CoG Contest Rehearsal.

April 1, Thursday: 7:00 P.M., Extra CoG Contest Rehearsal

April 10, Saturday: 10:00 A.M., SLD Chorus Contest at Palmyra-Macedon High School.

April 16, Friday: 7:00pm, Extra Show Rehearsal at East Ridge High School.

April 17, Saturday: 2:00pm, Show run through at East Ridge High School.

Music at Citizenship Ceremonies

Bill Rohlin



High Hopes singing at a recent citizenship ceremony.

Having patriotic music at the ceremonies is the brainchild and labor of love of Karen Webber. Karen was attending her early ceremonies and realized how boring they were and had the thought that music would be the remedy. She has been arranging for musical performances at the ceremonies ever since, more than ten years. There are a dozen or so each year between the County Courthouse and the Federal Building. In addition to *High Hopes*, *Fever Pitch* is also getting involved. There are other community groups and individuals, including *Sweet Ads*, who fill out the list.

It turns out that our ceremonies here in Rochester, are the only ones in the nation featuring music. I'm in the process of trying to get barbershop involved on a much larger scale. After asking some questions I found out that not all states have a formal ceremony with a sitting judge in attendance. Some have a simple, informal swearing in front of the county clerk. I'm trying to find out which states hold the formal ceremonies so local barbershoppers can get involved. It's slow goin' but at least East Aurora is contacting their county clerk in an attempt to get the ball rolling there.

Bill Rohlin

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?...

Chuck Pickhardt



...five little words, easy to remember, easy to say, and bound to succeed.

Each of us is frequently in contact with potential new CoG members. In our business, social, religious and other meeting places, guys who enjoy music and singing pass across our field of vision every day. The problem is, we're not aware of their interest, and they

don't know about CoG. The solution is simple. If you know someone well enough to chat, it is the easiest thing in the world to simply throw out the question, "Say, do you like to sing?" Whether the answer is *no* or *yes*, the other guy is bound to respond, "Why do you ask?"

There's your opening to describe CoG and invite a positive responder to a guest night or regular rehearsal. If he says *yes*, the next step is critical. Understand that going to any type of meeting for the first time is a little bit nerve-racking. Help your guest along by bringing him with you to Harmony House, introducing him to some members, and making sure he is comfortably seated in his chosen vocal part with a CoG member to guide him along. Then, make sure if possible to have your guest stay for a drink, learn a tag, and just have an enjoyable time.

Once a prospective member has visited for the first time, and his interest or lack has been determined, the whole process gets much easier. We have steps in place to communicate with prospects about second and third visits and the whole issue of how one can apply for membership.

In coming months, you will hear more and more about member-building. But, remember, it all starts with the simple question "Do you like to sing?"

Chuck Pickhardt



St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Joe Bradbury

Here is some information on the St. Patrick's Day Celebration that will be held at Harmony House on March 13th.

Menu:

Corned beef & Cabbage

Oven Browned Potatoes
Buttered and Brown Sugared Baby Carrots
Dinner Rolls
Ice Cream with Green Crème de Menthe

A program of Barbershop Entertainment will follow on the man floor after dinner.

Chuck Dittmar has graciously agreed to handle the overall coordinatorship. (I'll bet he was never called that before.)

Jack Ernisse has agreed to handle the tickets as well as procure and secure the cabbage.

Marty Olschewske will take care of the program upstairs after dinner....singers/entertainment/emcee/whatever.

Marty is also the liaison with the Ladies from **Rochester Rhapsody** who will be doing the serving/ table care etc. (I understand he knows Ruth pretty well.)

Bill Rohlin has created posters and tickets. Bill- Jack Ernisse will probably be looking for them Tues. Night...you know how efficient he is!)

Eileen Legler will tend bar so Bill Rohlin can enjoy the dinner and singing with his quartet.

The kitchen crew consists of **Joe Bradbury, Bob Statt, Little Bobby and Lee Shepter** (Lee will not be available for serving Saturday night due to previously made plans but will be part of the cooking crew on Friday and again on Sat. Morning.)

Date: Saturday, March 13.

Cost: \$8.50

Time: Cocktails6:00 P.M.

Dinner7:00 P.M.

See you there. *Joe Bradbury*

Notes From Smilin' Jack

Jack Ernisse



Tickets/reservations for the St. Patrick's dinner will be available starting Tuesday, February 23, immediately following rehearsal in the dining room. Tickets are \$8.50 per person and \$17.00 per couple.

You can make a reservation and pay for it at the door as in the past. **Look for the guy in the green hat. That will be me.** You can also phone me at 225-3688 and leave word on my answering system or send email to jdernisse@frontiernet.net

The next Community Chorus Program is scheduled for Thursday, February 25th at the Westgate Nursing Home on Beahan Road in the town of Gates. Information and maps are available on the risers in the rehearsal room.

Doris and I are well into the planning of the Barbershopper's Shop for the spring convention to be held at the Woodcliff Hotel. My committee has already placed an order for merchandise totaling over \$5,000. I'm sorry to report that I will not have CD's or DVD's of the 2009 Int'l Convention. I have been informed that Nashville is completely sold out at this time. The sell out occurred shortly after the convention ended. I'm hoping that my luck might change.

Due to chorus and director's schedules, The next scheduled Community Chorus will probably not be until sometime in May.

Jack Ernisse

CoG Annual Show Coming Soon!

Jim Rawcliffe, Show Chairman



"Music, Music, and You!" That's the title and theme of our annual show, now just a few weeks away.

The show will feature audience

participation via two of our members who will be in the audience with hand-held mics. This promises to be a fun time for our audience, with several prizes to be awarded.

Breakout, 2007 SLD Quartet Champs will be our featured guest quartet.

Tickets can be ordered from Jason Weitz, ticket chairman, or by calling (585) 265-9540 (Harmony House) or (585) 737-8783. Tickets are \$15 each, for all patrons.

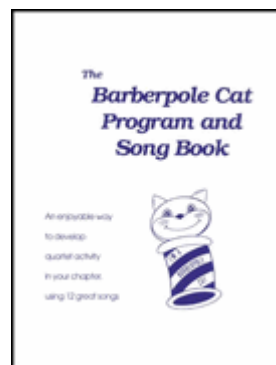
The show will be at Eastridge High School, on East Ridge Rd. in Irondequoit, Saturday, April 17, at 7:30 PM. That's a few weeks earlier than usual, but avoids our normal conflict with Mother's Day weekend. However, we don't have much time left, so please start working on your ticket and ad sales now.

We've set an optimistic goal of more than \$7000 profit from the show, considerably more than we've made the past two years. We can do it if *everyone* pitches in with ticket and ad sales. With every member selling at least 10 tickets and \$100 worth of ads, we'll easily make our goal. Please do your part.

Jim Rawcliffe

Barberpole Cat Program

Mike Richards



Hello everyone. I am very excited to be your next coordinator of the Barberpole Cat Program (BCP). Chuck Pickhardt has done a

wonderful job up to now and I want to continue with his progress and make it even better, if that's possible.

I would like to invite all who have started the program to learn those songs and to test out. Don't be in fear of failing to pass the test. "The only real failure in life is the failure to try." (Dr. Joyce Brothers). This process is designed to not only introduce you to quartet singing, but also so you can learn from some of the best we have.

I learned many things from my run through the program. I know many of you know these songs we sing in the program. A lot of you know many versions of the songs we sing. It may be a challenge for you to step back and sing the songs in the version in the BCP book. I challenge all of you who have never completed the program to start and see how you do. If for nothing else it is a way for all of us to sing with other members of the chorus we may not usually sing with. It is also a bit more intimate setting as there are usually only 6-8 people in the room.

For those of you in the program, let others know how much fun it is and what you get from the program. For those new members considering it, ***What are you waiting for?*** Just e-mail me or see me at practice Tuesday nights and we'll get you signed up.

Mike Richards

My Best Friend In The World!

Bob Coant



Photo I took of Chuck, Mary Ann and their two daughters Katie and Lorie at the end of yesterdays benefit.

I know we've all used this phrase before but this is one that is as true as life itself. Chuck Wert has been my best friend for almost thirty years, 25 of them singing in *Cornerstone* alone. My goodness, *Cornerstone* lasted longer than most marriages!

I know that you are probably all wondering and concerned how Chuck is doing. His official diagnosis is Stage 3 advanced lung cancer. This whole thing started out as some mild leg pain which was diagnosed as having gout. His circulation was very poor and he had a touch of cellulites and gout. He was hospitalized in Mexico when he and Mary Ann were on vacation and this continued for several weeks. It was just more frustrating than anything because it flared up, then got better, then flared up, etc., etc.

After many weeks, Chuck began to think there's more to it than just cellulites and gout because the pain got worse. He spent a week in University Hospital (Syracuse) where they took many tests including blood work, CAT scans and leg scans. They were then looking for a spot that appeared on his kidney which they thought was cancerous. That turned out negative but spots on the lungs and lymph nodes on the chest area showed up. Now we knew this was more serious. Last week the official diagnosis was revealed and Chuck now knows what he is dealing with. We are awaiting the results of the PET scan done last Wednesday to reveal the severity of the cancer. I will report as soon as we know and will probably know by the time this article gets to you.

Yesterday, we held an incredibly successful benefit for Chuck. He has very limited health insurance which really covers very little. His 2 daily injections of Lovinox costs him \$5100 per month and insurance doesn't cover it! The spaghetti dinner went very well and all the food was donated along with many raffle items. I just spoke with Mary Ann and she says when all the silent auction money comes in, we should clear about \$6,000. This is fantastic but as you can see, that will cover just a little over a month of medicine.

We held a talent show that was included in the \$8 spaghetti dinner which lasted over 2 hours long. I am guessing but I would say there were between 300-400 people that attended the benefit. Many chapters were in attendance as well as SLD President, Pete Carentz. Chuck has been so overwhelmed by all of the cards, letters, e-mails and financial donations he has received. Most of the notes say something like: "I remember when *Cornerstone* helped our chapter and now it's time YOU received some help." Chuck was extremely tired when the benefit was over but he stayed for the entire event and we even got Chuck to sing a song with *Cornerstone* (with daughter Katie on tenor) sing "It's A Brand New Day."

He would love to hear from you all so I personally ask you to drop him a line or give him a call. I have included the his contact info below. Not a finer man walked this earth than Chuck Wert which is why he is my best friend in the world. I would consider this a personal favor.

I love you all and I love Chuck Wert.
Bobby Coant

Chuck Wert
223 S. Meadow Street
Watertown, NY 13601
315-486-7896
mawert1@hotmail.com

Let's Get Visual!

Scott Ventura, assistant visual guy pro tempore.



Gentlemen, the Spring contest is upon us! I laid out my overall plan for visual at February 16th rehearsal: good fundamentals. If we don't start by building a strong foundation, we won't be able build anything worthwhile on top of it. **Fundamentals, executed consistently, will help us with every song and every performance.**

For barbershop, **the face is the foundation on which everything else rests.** If the face isn't expressive, moving the body and the hands looks artificial. Similarly, it looks very strange if the arms are moving but the body is still. Focus your energy on your face and, provided you're using good posture, you can put the rest of your body on autopilot.

So if the faces are so important, what should we do with them? *The Way You Look* and *Orange Colored Sky* are both happy songs. We heard from a presentation judge that for songs like these, **our faces should never fall below "pleasant"**, even on lyrics like "awfully low" and "when the world is cold." Within each mood, we'll need to show some contrast from phrase to phrase and within phrases so we don't look like statues.

We'll be trying a new technique at the March 2nd rehearsal to let you see what your face was doing during a performance. To get ready for that, start thinking about what your face can do to convey the emotions we'll need for the contest package. **Try them out in front of a mirror** to see what works. Strive to **have two or more different expressions for each mood** so you can bounce between them.

- **When the curtain opens**, we'll hit them with a mix of "I can't wait to sing!" and "you're going to love this performance!" A little nodding will make it look like you're bubbling over with joy. Keeping the elbows just a little bit back will make you look ready to go.
- **"The Way You Look"** is an intimate song, so find expressions that say "I'm so glad to be with you" and "you bring a smile to my face." In its original context, the song was sung to a woman who was in the next room. We're singing about the way she looks in our minds, so mix in some dreaminess and nostalgia. Have some more intense versions ready for the words that we

already emphasize musically.

- **After the first song**, we'll be standing proud of the performance we just delivered. We just finished a soft and tender song, so take your time ramping up from the up-close feel of a heart-to-heart talk to a wide-open feeling as big as the sky!
- **"Orange Colored Sky"** starts out nonchalant, so we'll need a happy-go-lucky expression or two. Very quickly, the lyrics are filled with surprises, so get lots of surprised expressions ready. We'll need the happier side, like "I just won the lottery!" and the "Warning! Danger!" side.
- For accepting the applause **after the second song**, we'll bring out the swagger. We want to show the crowd that we're thrilled with the show we gave them.

If we make expressive performance the norm and not the exception, we'll be rewarded in many ways: better sound, higher scores and happier audiences are just the beginning. Now is the time to start making a habit of it!

Scott Ventura

Chorus Craft

I have started using the society video, *Building A Better Chorus* for a bi-weekly craft session. I will show each part of the video. Last Tuesday's session was on Singer's Posture. Then I will teach and reinforce each lesson throughout the rehearsals. I plan on repeating each video section twice a month to allow all members to see them.

Al Weitz

Songs for Barbership Show Include:

- Cabaret (Eb)
 - It Had To Be You (G)
 - Make Em Laugh (D)
 - The Way You Look Tonight (E)
 - Put Your Head On My Shoulders (F)
 - Orange Colored Sky (Bb)
 - Wonderful World (Ab)
 - America The Beautiful with Overlay (B) (new)
 - You'll Never Go Wrong With A Song
Let Me Call You Sweetheart (CoG Bottle Band
led by Joe Bradbury)
-

Singing Valentines Program

Jason Weitz

The Singing Valentines Program went very well this year. The number one reason for this was that I was prepared and really organized this year. We sold 32 sing valentines and also had one phone call valentine.

The quartets this year were *Fever Pitch*, *High Hopes*, *Pier 4*, and *Heartline*, a brand new quartet made up of Ed Rummmer, Brett Huther, Mike Richards, and Chuck Pickhardt. Keep it going guys because that is how some of our current and older quartets started out singing together.

The board room was comfortable and warm for everyone coming in and out to get their assignments and to also rehearse their songs before they went on their Singing Valentines journey.

Thanks to everyone who helped me this year to make the fundraiser a fun weekend for all.

If you have any ideas on how we can get this program off and running better next year, please let me know.

Jason Weitz

SLAM SLD Youth Chorus Performance in Tampa, Florida.

Jason Weitz



The Seneca Land A-cappella Men represented our district very well at the 2010 Barbershop Harmony Society's Mid-Winter Contest Weekend in sunny Tampa, Florida at the end of January.

On Thursday, the week we left for Florida, CoG graciously hosted our group at Harmony House. Thanks for that opportunity.

Obviously, my flight to Tampa started in a Rochester whiteout. I was so glad to arrive in sunny Tampa. The weather was beautiful, temperatures in the 70's.

We went on stage with 24 men, Richard Lewellen was our director. We opened with *The Bare Necessities*, then sang *Bright Was The Night*, and finished with *After You've Gone*. At the end, the whole audience was standing on their feet applauding us for a job well done. After the curtain closed, we all started to hug and high five each other for a great performance

I wish all of you could have seen the energy that came off of that stage. I would like to thank my father for taking the time to drive two hours north from Fort Myers during his vacation to see me perform on the international stage, a proud father who got me into this wonderful hobby.

We finished in 6th place out of 11 choruses. The competition was very good, with all of the top 7 choruses scoring a 75 or above.

The Friday and Saturday night shows were both very entertaining with the top five 2009 International Medalists performing. After the Friday Night Show I sang a song called *Lazy Bones* with the *Ringmasters*. On Saturday night, I also

got the chance to sing *Danny Boy* with *State Line Grocery* that is retiring in the spring. Both of these quartets were our 4th Place International Medalist Champions from 2009.



As you can see, I had a wonderful time. Thanks to the chorus for sponsoring me to go and enjoy another wonderful

time with my friends on the International Stage just like I have done 6 times with the Chorus of the Genesee. I am proud to represent this chorus at international every time I go.

Jason Weitz

Fever Pitch Notes

Al Weitz

Fever Pitch has been very busy recently with over 20 performances due to an informational one page mailing we sent to over 180 community organizations and senior living centers.

. Our goals for 2010 have been established, and I am happy to announce that we are already registered to attend the 2010 Harmony University Quartet Experience at Harmony University in St. Joseph's, Missouri on August 1-8. It will be a full week of intense coaching with the sole purpose of placing us in the top 3 level for the fall contest. In the meantime we will be utilizing our local coaches, Don Stothard for singing and Amy Deperna for Visual Performance, performing jobs to raise money to cover our costs for Harmony University.

WE ARE FAMILY

Al Weitz, Director, CoG

2010 is already one sixth over and many new and exciting plans are underway or starting to develop. It was said in a meeting I attended just last week, "Chapter members need to feel that we are progressing or working towards a common goal." For the members that are on these committees, boards, or teams, we know what we are trying to do. Yes, sometimes the right hand might not know what the left hand is doing, yet we are all working on a common goal; ***to build up and grow this chapter, back up to a level of a constant rising chapter, musically and membershiply with a quality of sound that we are genuinely proud of.***

Pride, you say? YES, GENNY PRIDE!! Have we seasoned members forgot what GENNY PRIDE used to feel like? So what's exactly happening and where and how are we doing this?

First of all, as you might have heard, our projected 2 year membership campaign led by our new membership VP Chuck Pickhardt has many great ideas and plans that need everyone's participation. Entitled "***Do You Like To Sing?***" it's that simple. You just ask anyone that you meet for the first time in 2010, that question. Just think what if you were never asked or approached, by whomever. Your life would have been truly different. Yes, we are life changers. How do you know if that person you ask might just need another "family" to lean against, to sing with, to socialize with, to learn with....?

Our chapter is not just a chorus, not just a chapter, BUT A FAMILY! and our family NEEDS new blood, with new contacts, and with new ideas. Thus our guest nights will be planned to inform our guests about our "Total Family." From singing in the chairs to singing on the risers, from singing in the chairs to sing-

ing in a quartet, from.... to barberpole cat songs, from.... to singing tags downstairs, from.... to singing holiday performances and caroling.

We love to criticize or critique fellow members who may be on another committee doing their part to achieve this same goal. Please let's minimize this petty talking behind people's back, or discussing your opinion of a fellow chapter member to another chapter member. Though harmful as it seems, it eventually gets back to that person, and it only really hurts the person's reputation that was criticizing in the first place. Now we all are guilty of this, including myself and it has to STOP! in order for our "Family" to get together as a whole and rebuild! On the other side of the coin, as you say, if you mindfully have a criticism of someone and how they are performing or not performing a task, speak to that person alone and offer your suggestions and help! It might be truly appreciated.

If you ever have any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning our barbershop family, please feel free to contact me by phone at 585 247-1519, by email at adwcog@frontiernet.net or in person any Tuesday night at Harmony House. I'm usually there by 6pm and leave for work by 11:15pm.

See you on Tuesday Nights!

Al Weitz

Director, Rochester's Premier A cappella Group
Chorus Of The Genesee

