

CHIMO CHIRPS



January 2009, Bulletin # 16

Meetings: Monday nights at Saskatchewan Abilities Council, 2310 Louise Avenue., Saskatoon, SK. 7:30 p.m.

WORKSHOP Report

The Division III Music Workshop Retreat was held at the beginning of November, 2008. The retreat center was a good venue for this event. It is one large convenient building which has meeting rooms, accommodations, with a dining room and performance hall.

Jim Debussman was there from the international staff. Others who organized/ presented/ coached/ instructed were from the Evergreen District. The sessions were excellent from the “get the cobwebs out of your vocal folds” in the morning through performing and tag singing into the night. The session on “breathing” scheduled for all morning turned into much more than breathing and included memory techniques, relaxation methods, vocal production and coaching.

We were enthusiastically welcomed and were urged to participate in Division III Evergreen District events. Our chapter members have rubbed elbows with these guys for years, mostly through the quartet “BRASS” and the Summer Glow” at Cypress Hills.

The last weekend of this coming June will be a great event for them. They have invited us to come to Calgary to compete and participate. The incoming International Barbershop Harmony Society president, Bill Biffle, will be there as a

special guest. Executives from the Evergreen District will be there too. The event promises to be a combination of fine people, fun singing, and all the other things that make up great barbershopping.

By Tom Evans

New Kids on the Block - kids?

In recent times some of the members from our chapter have got together to form an octet. The name comes out of an amalgamation of largely two quartets. They are known as the “42nd and 5th Avenue Octet”. The name also is reminiscent of vaudeville days around that same street corner in New York City.

The voices are made up as follows: Lead – Ralph & Allan; Bass - Jack and Frank Z; Tenor – Lyle and Len; Bari – Tom & Ray. The octet have been singing out at various venues and have made their first donation to charity. They are building their repertoire, but at present it consists mainly of chorus numbers. Weekly practice times take place at Ralph Passmore’s meeting room at Victoria Place Apts., where they frequently have building residents drop in to listen and to applaud – loudly !

Government’s view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving - subsidize it !

Oliver Sacks, MD, the noted neurologist and author, describes the profound bond between music and our brain, and how the simple act of singing can be good medicine, especially as we age.

“Music is only one of the fundamentals that bring us together and to bond with one another. It literally shapes our brains, since musical activity involves many parts of the brain such as the emotional, motor and cognitive areas, even more than we use for our other great achievement – language. Music burrows its way deep into the nervous system, so deep that even when people suffer devastating neurological disease or injury, music is usually the last thing they lose.

As a neurologist, I’ve seen this over and over. For instance, the right kind of music can literally unlock someone frozen by Parkinson’s disease, so that they may be able to dance or sing, even though, in the absence of music, they may be unable to take a step or say a word. For many people with aphasia (a loss of the use of language) most commonly caused by stroke, songs can be the key to retrieving words they cannot otherwise utter. I’ve seen people with extreme forms of amnesia who are unable to remember what happened to them a few minutes ago but are nonetheless able to sing or play long complicated pieces of music. Perhaps most remarkably, people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias can respond to music when nothing else reaches them. Somehow musical memories survive the ravages of the disease, and can often reawaken personal memories and associations that are otherwise lost.

Improvements of mood, behavior, even cognitive function, once set off by music can sometimes persist for hours or even days in people with dementia. Researchers are only beginning to study the secrets of why and how this happens. For now, we simply know that music is a powerful therapy for those with nearly any kind of neurological problem. Music is much more than a

beautiful luxury: It is a fundamental way of expressing our humanity, and it is often our best medicine.

In another case of a gentleman who had a long battle with Alzheimer’s, had no idea what he did for a living or what he did 10 minutes ago. Almost every memory was gone – except for music. He chatted with me amiably until he tired of my questions, so I asked him to sing since I was told that he sang with family from an early age. Well, he started singing ‘Some-where over the rainbow’ and then his two daughters joined in, in perfect harmony, and he continued with many songs complete with expressions and appropriate postures. His musicality, like his civility and equanimity, was completely intact. Indeed, he seemed so ‘normal’ when singing that his disorientation and confusion when he was not singing came as something of a shock. Remembering that he can sing is profoundly reassuring to him.”

On the local scene, some of you may recall a former member of our chapter back in the 80s, by the name of **Al Krahn**, a very fine tenor. Al had a severe stroke and one of our quartets – Hangin’ On – went over to sing to him and behold, he started singing with them. The therapist declared that their music was the best tonic for his recovery.

Only great minds can read this --

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sgtrane mind too.

Thanks Larry

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wed. Jan. 14th, 2009: 7:30 pm Chapter Board Meeting with chapter executive and board members. Meet in Sask Abilities Board Room. All are welcome.

Sat. noon Jan. 24, 2009: Appreciation Luncheon and Awards Event - at Delta Bessborough Hotel. All chapter members, spouses, and friends are invited to this annual event to acknowledge those members who are directly involved in our Chapter.

Saturday, Feb. 28th. All day Chorus Workshop. Pencil-in this date as a "must attend workshop". There will be more announcements on this event as planning is finalized. It's a similar workshop to the one held at Sylvan Lake last November.

Two car loads from the Saskatoon Chordsmen attended this Evergreen District Workshop and were literally blown away by the "breathing workshop" held there. Don't laugh! This really was something special that everyone of us should be given an opportunity to experience. We're trying to get this scheduled as soon as possible - so stay tuned for it.

Friday, May 8th, 2009:- Annual Spring Show at the Circle Drive Alliance Church Auditorium.

It's "Barbershop Harmony Time" with Jet Set our headline quartet from Vancouver BC, the 2007 Evergreen District quartet champions.

In addition, we have invited a special children's choir "Kids Of Note" to our stage. This choir is for children with cognitive challenges and is lead by noted children's entertainer Brenda Baker.

Be sure to mention these special guests when you talk about our Spring Show to friends and family while you sell them show tickets.

SHOW TICKETS are available in packs of 10. Most of you have picked up your show ticket envelopes already, but some have not. Be sure to pick up the package assigned to you. Turn in your money and left-over tickets to Erwin when sold.

First, prepare your list of potential customers – your friends, neighbours and relatives, (you all have at least 10 of the above). Then call them and remind them our Spring Show is coming up in May with an all new

program, a new headline quartet, and a very special guest choir.

SHOW PROGRAM ADS: More than a dozen Chordsmen participate in this annual fund raising activity. It is one of the few fund raisers we have for our show and if you have not participated as yet, why not give it a try.

Just drop in to see some of your former business acquaintances and colleagues, and mention our Barbershop Show coming up in May. Ask them to support our chorus with a small donation to get their Company name listed as program sponsors and supporters. Most will find the \$25.+ category as quite a minor contribution to this cultural event.

Our Show has been an on-going feature in Saskatoon for about 35 years so it's quite a well established event for this city. They may be more than willing to get on the band wagon and become identified with us. If they say no, then they may be willing to purchase a couple of tickets. Give it a try - it won't hurt.

The deadline to return your completed ads forms and donations is Monday, March 16th. Pick up your kit and blanks from Ken or Merv this week.

Saskatoon Chimo Chordsmen

2009 New Chapter Executive & Board

- President Robert Stevenson
- Secretary Allan Merkowsky
- Treasurer Fred Smith
- V.P. Music & Performance Ken Stephenson
- V.P. Ch.Dev./ Membership Chuck Will
- Past President Larry Hanna
- Chorus Manager Erwin Dueck
- Musical Director Levi Borisenko
- Services Chairman Jack Tait
- Sunshine Man Ken Britton
- Historian _____
- Wardrobe _____
- Publicity Bob Stevenson
- Music Librarian Gord McDonald
- Coffee Mate Wayne Davis
- Bulletin Editor Ray Penny
- 2009 Show Chairman Erwin Dueck