



MILE HIGH MONTHLY

SOUNDINGS



FROM THE SOUND OF THE ROCKIES

Mile High Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America
Volume 3 Number 6 October 2002

CHORUS FIRST IN DISTRICT

The **Sound of the Rockies Chorus** went to Greeley on September 28th to win the Rocky Mountain District contest – and they did! 107 men on stage in the Union Colony Civic Center poured their emotions into the two contest songs – “There Goes My Heart/Broken Hearted Medley” and “Waitin’ For The Robert E. Lee.” The final score put **SOR** 19 points ahead of the defending RMD champions, the **Saltaires** of Wasatch Front, Utah. **SOR**’s total scores of 1532 and 85.1 percent average would have put us in 7th place at Portland.

The judges commented that their scores, especially leading scores in presentation, reflected **SOR**’s emotional performance – singing from the heart. Much of our efforts over the past three months have been dedicated to more emotion in performances. The win qualifies **SOR** as the district representative to the 2003 International in Montreal. With their high score, the **Saltaires** will probably get a wild card entry to Montreal, as **SOR** went to Portland this year. As the district competitions recently ended, however, scores are higher than Portland. **SOR**’s district score ranks us 8th place among the other district winners, still higher than 11th place in 2001.

The **Saltaires** placed 2nd with 1513 and 84.1. **Duke City Chorus** of Bernalillo County, New Mexico, placed 3rd with 1349 and 74.9, earning them Plateau II champions. **Valentine City Chorus** of Loveland was 4th, **Longs Peak Chorus** of Longmont was 5th, and the **New MexiChords** of

Albuquerque placed 6th. Plateau III champion is the **Idaho Gateway Chorus** of Pocatello, in 7th place. Plateau IV champion is the **Centennial State Chorus** of Sterling, Colorado, who placed 8th. 16 choruses competed at Greeley, ranging in size from 16 to **SOR**’s 107. Of 16 district champions, **SOR** is the second largest, compared to 147 men in the **Vocal Majority** from Dallas, Texas, who won the Southwestern District contest and will compete in Montreal next year, seeking their 10th chorus championship.

STORM FRONT TOP QUARTET

28 quartets, including five from **SOR** and two others with **SOR** members, competed in the quartet contest on September 27th and 28th. **Storm Front** led the semi-finals on Friday by 172 points and finished on Saturday 368 points ahead of **Maxim** from Wasatch Front, Utah, who placed 2nd. 3rd place went to **Sound Logik** from Wasatch Front with James Taylor from **SOR** as a member. **Inside Story**, featuring Pete Donohue III, Curtis Terry, Gray Jackson, and Dale Vaughn, finished 6th. 12th place was won by **Jukebox Swing**, which included **SOR** member Chuck Morris.

Quite an accomplishment was made by a novice quartet from **SOR** named **Elevation**. Finishing 13th in their first competition, Sean Dale, Bryan Plummer, Travis Tabares, and Mark DaGosta – all students at Overland High School – made quite an impression in their first contest. They even outscored the **Kowalski Twins**, who placed 14th.

KT has yet to find judges who share their sense of humor.

**OFFICERS AND MUSIC TEAM 2002
MILE HIGH CHAPTER**

President	Mike Wadsley
Immediate Past President	Bob Hartwig
Musical Director	Darin Drown
Assistant Director/Choreography	Jim Clark
Secretary	Dick Stark
Treasurer	Terry Morrison
VP Membership Services	Mitch Johnson
VP Music/Performance	Sidney Libsack
VP Events	Myron Swisher
VP Public Relations/Marketing	Dan Clark
Member at Large	Brent Page
Section Leaders	
Tenors	Dave Ellis
Leads	Chris Vaughn
Baritones	Jim Weaver
Bass Co-Leaders	Mark Zenk Chris Richards
Music Committee Advisor	George Davidson
Quartet Development	Dennis Cook
Music Librarian	Jerry O'Halloran
Learning Tapes	George Smith
Learning CDs	Dave Ellis
Uniforms	Dave Orr, Jim Weaver
Show Producer	George Davidson
Roster Manager/WebMaster	Chris Pomasl

SOUNDINGS

John Manion, Editor

Website Edition: www.soundoftherockies.com

Top Quartet (cont.)

Sound Idea, including Terry Suwyn, Tom Graesser, Claude Barnes, and Gerry Lippert, finished 27th. **Quick Pick** had been scheduled to compete, but Ron Kientz suffered an illness and was unable to sing during the weekend.

Chapter quartets made quite a hit in Greeley at the contest, especially considering all the work that each had put in to performing with the chorus. The

Denver Mile High Chapter was well represented at Greeley and will be looking forward to Montreal next July with **SOR** and **Storm Front** competing.

**ROTARY CONCERT
A SUCCESS**

SOR performed in the Rotary International benefit on October 26th in the Cherry Hills Community Church. This was a fund-raising campaign by local Rotary clubs to support an international effort to eradicate polio worldwide. The afternoon and evening concerts featured **SOR**, the **Kowalski Twins**, and high school quartet **Elevation**. The second half of the concerts included **Ms. Behavin'**, the Sweet Adeline regional champion quartet soon to be competing in the SA International in Nashville and **Storm Front**. **SOR** completed the concert with the contest set which won them the RMD championship in Greeley and the armed forces medley. Many comments were received after the performances on how well **SOR** performed.

This function was part of a worldwide campaign by Rotary International to raise \$275 million to eradicate polio in 10 remaining third world countries by 2005, making the world polio-free. Rotary also showed a video of their efforts to fight polio throughout the world, as many Rotarians have volunteered to go to these countries to help carry out oral vaccination against polio.

**REHEARSAL VENUE
ESTABLISHED**

SOR has finally found a permanent rehearsal venue in the Temple Events Center at 1595 Pearl Street near downtown Denver. This facility has quite a large performance area, separate rooms for section rehearsals, a storage area, and adjacent parking. The Sweet Adelines' **Skyline Chorus** also uses this facility for rehearsals on Tuesday evenings. One of the major benefits will be a reduction in hauling risers out of the trailer before rehearsals.

The permanency of this site was established by a crew moving the welcome wagon and boxes of chapter materials from the University Church of Christ to the Temple Center.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Darin Drown, Director

January 7, 2000 – I still remember that first rehearsal at Plymouth Congregational Church. We had taken the plunge and tried to do a merger. We had been told that mergers are rarely successful. Even some people at International headquarters had recommended against going through with it. But there was a buzz in the air that very first night. Part of it was the newness of it all. Part of it was anxiety about the merger. But the vast majority of that buzz was that deep down, we all knew that there was something special about this new chorus and new chapter.

We have certainly climbed a sharp incline in these past two and a half years, and honestly, I have enjoyed every minute of it. But where are we headed?

To me, this is the most exciting part! As with any prognosticating (editor – which musical term is that?), there is a degree of the future that one cannot control. BUT, I have always been a strong believer in the fact that the stronger the VISION of where you want to go, the more likely you are to arrive at your goals. So, let me share a bit of my vision.

I see a very strong administrative leadership in our chapter in the upcoming years. This will translate to a strong financial position for the chorus, a higher degree of involvement from all members, greater camaraderie amongst our brotherhood, and most importantly, an outstanding musical product for our audiences.

Musically, we have been growing in the ability to sing with more technical agility. Looking ahead, this translates into being able to sing more challenging charts. In addition, we will be able to sing more and more musically. And finally, the

level of the choreography we will be able to perform will also be enhanced by our better singing technique.

More specifically, I can hear a sound in my mind on the stage in Montreal which is more resonant, more in-the-mouth, more musical, more dynamic, and especially more vibrant than what we are already capable of.

All of this comes with hard work. But I know from our past two and a half years that that doesn't scare us in the least. We have truly grown into a **Vocal Majority** motto, which is "Working hard is FUN when improvement is evident!" There is no doubt that the incline in this next part of the journey is the steepest yet, but I have so much confidence in you all that I know we will be able to achieve whatever we dream.

NEW OFFICERS SELECTED

On October 24th, chapter members held an election for new officers that may have set a record, taking only 28 seconds. Bob Hartwig presented the slate of nominees to the chapter, and they were quickly voted in by acclamation. Dan Clark (the younger) will be president, Mike Wadsley will be immediate past president, and Dick Stark and Terry Morrison will remain as secretary and treasurer. Bruce Everly will be vice president for membership services. Mark Zenk will be vice president for music/performance, Myron Swisher continues as vice president for events, and Jerry Lippert will be vice president for public relations/marketing. Board members at large will be Mitch Johnson and Denny Malone. The new officers will be installed during the installation and awards banquet to be held on a date to be announced in January.

NOTES FROM THE BELLES

The Mile Hi Belles, the chapter women's auxiliary, met on October 17th and nominated a slate of new officers for 2003. The election of officers will be

held at the next Belles meeting on November 21 at the Temple Events Center during the **SOR** rehearsal. The nominees are Karen Stegman for president, Judy Jensen for first vice president, Chris Elliott for second vice president, Darlene Woods for secretary, and Carol Welch for treasurer. There were no nominations from the floor. For those who are unable to attend the November 21st meeting, votes can be cast by calling Judy Jensen, secretary, at 303-463-6881 prior to the meeting. The next effort by the Belles will be ushering and sales for the Christmas show at Loretto Heights December 13th and 14th. The Belles are also assisting **Skyline Chorus** in the sales of their cookbook "Masterpieces From Our Kitchen," which cost \$15 each or three for \$40.

Membership to Mile Hi Belles is by dues of \$5 each year. This money covers operating expenses such as postage and supplies as well as donations to Harmony Foundation. For spouses and significant others who wish to join the Belles, a check to Sally Taylor, 5926 Bemis St., Littleton, CO 80120 with current address, phone no., and e-mail address for the Belles' roster will complete membership. New members are asked to include the day and month of their birthday and anniversary.

THE SUMMIT CLUB

Director's Circle

Marilyn Swanson

Supporter

Budd Flinn

April Prohaska

The **SOR's Summit Club** was formed earlier this year as a fund-raising effort for our patrons to support our commitments throughout Colorado and on to Montreal in 2003. **SOR** has won the RMD contest and is now preparing to represent the district at the Montreal International next July. We will have many expenses in this journey, not the least of which will be a number of coaches to help us raise our level of performance to that of the top choruses

in the Society. This effort will also assist many of our younger members who may not have the funds to travel to contests. Our 2002 goal is to raise \$20,000 toward these expenses. As **SOR** is a non-profit organization, **Summit Club** contributions may be partially tax-deductible. Six levels of membership are offered:

Member (\$50-\$99) includes a subscription to the **Soundings** newsletter and listings in the **Soundings** and our concert programs.

Supporter (\$100-\$199) includes all of the above and a chorus CD.

Partner (\$200-\$399) includes all of the above and a beautiful gift bearing the **Summit Club** logo.

Director's Circle (\$400-\$1,499) includes all of the above and an invitation for two to a special donor event.

Benefactor (\$1,500-\$2,999) includes all of the above and an invitation to a special dinner with Musical Director Darin Drown.

Guarantor (\$3,000 and above) includes all of the above and shared interest in a **Sound of the Rockies** project commensurate with gift level.

More information is available on the chorus website at www.soundoftherockies.com including a form for interested patrons to use to make a donation and join the **Summit Club**.

CHRISTMAS SHOW READIED

SOR's major effort now is to prepare for our Christmas show on December 13th and 14th at Teikyo Loretto Heights Theater. Members are currently selling program ads, and tickets will be available within the next week. The theme for the show will be "Home For The Holidays." **SOR** is working on three new Christmas arrangements as well as their traditional Christmas music. Tickets will be \$15 general admission and \$25 reserved section for the Friday and Saturday evening performances and \$12 general admission for the Saturday matinee. No specifically reserved seats will be available, but premier seating will be in the

reserved section for the evening shows. Due to the decreased prices, there will be no senior or student discounts. Tickets can be purchased from chapter members or through the chapter's web page at www.soundoftherockies.com. The show will feature **SOR** and chapter quartets such as **Storm Front** and the **Kowalski Twins**. This will be an exciting performance of traditional and new Christmas arrangements.

This will be a big weekend for **SOR**, as we will be singing the national anthem for the Denver Broncos as they play the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, December 15th at Invesco Field at Mile High.

SKYLINE CHORUS OFF TO NASHVILLE

On October 27th, many **SOR** members went to Castle Rock to support the Sweet Adelines' **Skyline Chorus** final preparations for the SA International convention and contests in Nashville. **Skyline** won the 2001 Region 8 contest in Colorado Springs, which gave them the right to compete in Nashville November 5th through 9th. With approximately 150 singers, **Skyline** is one of the largest and best rated Sweet Adeline choruses. Many **SOR** members will be closely following this contest, as they are married to or have other connections to **Skyline** members. For those of us who were at the Sunday rally, the singing and choreography by **Skyline** was truly amazing. Hopes are high that **Skyline** will win medals in Nashville.

The top regional quartet, **Ms. Behavin'**, will also be competing in Nashville for quartet honors. Just like **Storm Front**, **Ms. Behavin'** is a recent addition to the SA world, having been formed within the past year. **Skyline** also fielded the 2nd place quartet in Region 8, **Brillante**, which has been around the barbershop world for about 11 years, although their current baritone was only six years old when the quartet formed.

SOR has been supporting **Skyline** for some time and looks forward to the possibility that we might

have two International champion barbershop-style choruses from the Denver area. For those who want to follow the progress of the **Skyline Chorus** and its excellent quartets, visits to the Sweet Adeline web site at www.sweetadelineintl.org or to the chapter web site at www.skylinechorus.com will provide information on contest scores and upcoming events for the chorus.

BARBERSHOPPER OF THE MONTH

Tom Graesser presented one more award to one of our outstanding barbershoppers who is both a strong member of the chorus and a chapter officer.

Myron Swisher – born in the mysterious East - the state of Virginia - Myron is an engineer and an intellect who uses all of his skills to help us be a better chorus. Although a relative newcomer to the barbershopping world, he brings to the chorus a world of experience. A 4.0 scholar and a skier on the University of Maine ski team, he has his daughters skiing the black ski runs at the age of 4. His fantasy football team, the Killer Barking Dogs, is a winner as is he in all he does. Besides singing, his lovely wife and two daughters are the most important things in his life. He also has a passion as a brewmaster of some of the best homemade beer in the West. This is not the first time he has been so honored, because he is a man of generosity who would all do well to emulate. He has given selflessly of time, organization and expertise to make sure we are well taken care of in all of the right places. We are honoring Myron for the countless hours he has given as the vice president of events – a tough and important role which as a glutton for punishment he will continue holding through 2003.

SUCCESSFUL CD WIDELY AVAILABLE

Our new CD, which was released on September 24th during the RMD contests in Greeley, has become such a hit that it is available from Mainely A

Cappella, one of the largest dealers of a cappella music products. A visit to mac3.a-cappella.com and a click on “New Barbershop Titles” brings up a page on which the **SOR** CD is the second offering. The review of the CD calls it “a terrific debut recording!” and indicates that “this men’s barbershop chorus has a high musical standard set by their directors.” The CD is temporarily out of stock on their web site due to great sales, but they should have additional CDs in the not too distant future. CDs are still available from chapter members and through the chapter web site at www.soundoftherockies.com.

BARBERSHOP HISTORY

In the last issue, we began a series on barbershop history presented by David Wright at Harmony College. We looked at how spontaneous singing arose in 16th through 18th century England barber shops and was then transplanted to the American colonies, where four-part harmony developed in the 19th century. At this time, an American art form called the “minstrel show” evolved. Although the term “minstrel” had been applied to entertainers of all types, Thomas Dartmouth Rose, popularly known as “Jim Crow,” was a Negro impersonator, wearing blackface makeup and imitating the singing and dancing of Negro slaves. He inspired the idea of the “minstrel show,” which was popular from 1850 to 1870. Perhaps the first minstrel company was Daniel Decatur Emmett’s Virginia Minstrels, organized in 1843. This quartet introduced songs like “Old Dan Tucker,” but often the music was sung as a solo with other singers and instruments in the background.

A more famous minstrel troupe was formed in 1846 in New York City by Edwin P. Christy, known as the Christy Minstrels. Christy employed a young talented song writer named Stephen Collins Foster. Foster wrote over 200 songs of the period, including “Old Folks At Home,” “Camptown Races,” and “My Old Kentucky Home.” Unfortunately, he was not a good businessman, as others got the credit and

profits from his songs. These minstrel troupes sang woodshedded harmonies from the melodies of these popular songs, introducing the American tradition of musical improvisation.

Black male non-professional quartets are known to have existed as early as 1873, and in Jacksonville, Florida, a black quartet of singing barbers performed in the 1880s, singing spirituals and Stephen Foster songs. Many of the popular songs of this period were religious, such as “Nearer My God To Thee” (1859), “Abide With Me” (1861), and “What A Friend We Have In Jesus” (1876).

Late in the 19th century, songs were written which continued Stephen Foster’s minstrel style but were more conducive to ear harmonizing or woodshedding. The melodies were very simple and singable, not requiring great vocal range. The melody featured longer notes, allowing harmonic moves or “swipes” while the lead singer sang a “hanger.” These melodies also implied a greater variety of chords, including the 7th chord, which led to the “barbershop 7th.” Such songs included “Sweet Rosie O’Grady” (1896), “You’re The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline” (1903), and “My Wild Irish Rose” (1899).

During the 1890s, minstrel shows gave way to the vaudeville show, a variety show of 10 to 15 acts in a local theater. The use of blackface and Negro impersonations disappeared, but vaudeville quartets were quite popular. Most of these quartets did not record their music on the new Edison cylinders, but their appearance on stage gave the public a live rendition of the popular music of the time. Some of our most famous entertainers started in vaudeville, including W.C. Fields, Al Jolson, and Will Rogers. Some of these quartets employed novelty in their acts, such as the Chung Hua Four, a Chinese vaudeville quartet popular in the early 1900s, singing harmony in Chinese and English. Music for the vaudeville stage also led to the growth of the sheet music publishing business in New York City, popularly known as “Tin Pan Alley.” Song writers such as George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin, Gus Edwards, and Harry and Albert

Von Tilzer produced great quantities of popular songs. Harry Von Tilzer, composer of "Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie," wrote almost 8,000 songs during his career.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Thomas Edison created the recording industry with his invention of the phonograph, a method of recording sound on a tin cylinder. He recorded cylinders featuring groups such as the Edison Male Quartet and the Manhannsett Quartet. The latter quartet recorded from 1891 to 1896 with Edison, making them possibly the first recorded male quartet.

In the early 1900s, amateur male quartets became quite popular and were often sponsored by lodges, churches, police and fire departments and even baseball teams. This accounts for some of the early Society quartets with names like Topeka's State Journal Quartet, Phillips 66 Barflies (formerly the Bartlesville Barflies), and New York Police Quartet.

During the first years of the 20th century, other firms besides Edison began recording music on discs and cylinders. Columbia and Victor Studios recorded quartets, such as the Haydn Quartet, which originally recorded as the Edison Male Quartet. They recorded their songs from 1894 to 1914, featuring William Hooley as bass, John Bieling as tenor, and Harry MacDonough singing lead. Many of the songs they recorded were religious or Stephen Foster songs, carrying on the traditions of the minstrel shows.

Another popular quartet was the Peerless Quartet, who recorded from 1906 to 1928, featuring lead singer Henry Burr. He was the one steadfast member of the quartet and was possibly the most recorded voice in history, as estimates say he recorded as many as 12,000 songs in his career as a soloist or member of a duet, trio or quartet. In 1909, bass William Hooley and tenor John Bieling organized the American Quartet – called the Premier Quartet on Edison cylinders – with baritone Steve Porter of the Peerless Quartet and lead singer Billy Murray. The American Quartet was more upbeat than others, singing ragtime and comedy

numbers with special effects. It was known as the most famous of studio quartets. However, Edison had also invented motion pictures, which seemed to spell the end for vaudeville and quartets.

November 14 – Flu shots at rehearsal by Jan and Fred Mason

November 28 – No rehearsal, Thanksgiving holiday

December 12 – Technical rehearsal for Christmas shows, Teikyo Loretto Heights Theater

December 13-14 – "Home For The Holidays," Annual Christmas Show, Teikyo Loretto Heights Theater, 3001 South Federal Blvd.

December 15 – National anthem for Denver Broncos vs. Kansas City Chiefs, Invesco Field at Mile High

December 26 – No rehearsal, Christmas holiday

January 19-26, 2003 – SPEBSQSA Mid-winter Convention, Albuquerque, New Mexico

February 14, 2003 – Singing Valentine Campaign

April 11-12, 2003 – "In The Mood," Annual Spring Show, Teikyo Loretto Heights Theater

June 29-July 6, 2003 – SPEBSQSA International Convention and Contests, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 27-August 3, 2003 – Harmony/Directors College, Missouri Western State College, St. Joseph, Missouri

January 25-February 1, 2004 – SPEBSQSA Mid-winter Convention, Biloxi, Mississippi

June 27-July 4, 2004 – SPEBSQSA International Convention and Contests, Louisville, Kentucky

July 2-8, 2007 – SPEBSQSA International Convention and Contests, Denver, Colorado