



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 5 September 2002

CHORUS PREPARES FOR DISTRICT

After placing 8th in the Portland International, the **Sound of the Rockies Chorus** is going through the cycle again for the 2003 International in Montreal. The first step is the Rocky Mountain District contest in Greeley September 28th. **SOR** will perform 7th in the chorus contest, hoping to become the RMD champions this year. The **Saltaires** from Wasatch Front, Utah, are the defending chorus champions and only scored 22 points behind **SOR** in Portland. The **SOR** music team knows this is no easy effort.

Efforts began on August 15th with Dr. Greg Lyne. Greg is the Society Director of Music Education and Services and has directed **West Towns Chorus** and the **Masters of Harmony** to international championships. Although his flight arrived late on Thursday evening, the chorus stayed late to take advantage of his expertise. Dr. Lyne concentrated on adding brilliance to the chorus sound. He described the roles that each part should have for the chorus – the leads as personality, basses as a smoothly singing foundation, tenors as sparkling flutes, and baritones to add dignity. He gave us several other techniques to refine our sound.

The next day, **SOR** went to Silver Creek Lodge in Granby for a retreat with David Harrington. David won quartet gold with **Second Edition** in 1989 and does arranging and coaching for choruses such as the **Vocal Majority**. He worked with us on Friday evening and Saturday to develop more emotional and story-telling performance. On Saturday, his wife Holly listened to our singing and emphasized

the need for more emotion. David picked out individual words for which we should use a different tone quality to give more color. By the end of the day, David commented that **SOR** was a very hard-working group and learned quickly. He could hear a dramatic difference by the end of the retreat. He felt that we would do quite well at district because we were singing better than we did at Portland. Darin Drown mentioned to him that **SOR** had become a vastly-improved chorus in just the past year.

The retreat and other coaching efforts during our weekly rehearsals are an effort to improve the chorus performance to the level of district champion and a possible international medal in Montreal next July.

CD ON SALE AT DISTRICT

The chorus CD which **SOR** recorded in mid-July will be available at the RMD Fall Convention and Contest on September 27-28. Those who have heard the CD have commented on the quality of the sound. Twelve of the **SOR**'s repertoire songs, including the two international contest songs, are featured on the CD, which will sell for \$15. **SOR** members and the Mile High Belles will sell CDs during the weekend as well as at all coming events, such as the Christmas shows. The CD is a fundraising tool for the chorus, but barbershop fans will enjoy it for the great sound of a championship chorus. For those who are unable to make it to Greeley or can't wait until December, information

on ordering CDs will be on the chorus web site at www.soundoftherockies.com.

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

VENUE SEARCH STILL UNDERWAY

SOR still has not found a permanent venue for rehearsals, despite intensive efforts by Terry Dodd and his search committee. It seems that choruses throughout the Denver area are having a hard time finding rehearsal venues, and **SOR's** large size makes this more difficult for us. We have used a number of venues over the past several weeks, but a

permanent site has yet to be found. Members who are on the milehighist e-mail will be notified of upcoming rehearsal locations, as well as weekly announcements at rehearsals. We have used several good sites, such as the PPA Center at 21st and Decatur and the Jewish Community Center. The major problem is that these sites are not available on a weekly basis for a long period of time. We will try to get the word out in every manner as to the location of upcoming rehearsals.

DISTRICT CONTEST ENTRIES

SOR will be one of 17 choruses competing in the Union Colony Civic Center in Greeley. The Denver **Mountainaires** will perform as mike testers at the beginning of the chorus contest. **SOR** will sing in 7th order, just behind the **Saltaires**, 2001 district champions. The chorus contest will begin at noon on Saturday and continue until late afternoon, when the winners will be announced. The winning chorus will perform during the quartet finals Saturday evening. **SOR** will have an afterglow at the Best Western Hotel following the quartet finals.

Denver Mile High will also be represented by a number of quartets in the semifinals on Friday evening. 29 quartets will compete that evening, including **Storm Front**, **Kowalski Twins**, **Inside Story**, and **Elevation**. Denver Mile High members will also sing with members of other chapters in **Quick Pick**, **Sound Idea**, and **Jukebox Swing**. One of our newer chapter members is James Taylor, a former **Saltaire**. He will compete with three of his Wasatch Front buddies in a quartet called **SoundLogik**. The finalist quartets will compete on Saturday evening. This contest should provide an incredible weekend in Greeley.



Brent Page describes a map of Greeley

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 Portland this year and Montreal in 2003. During 2002, **SOR** has competed in Portland, Oregon, and will compete again in Greeley this weekend. Coaches have been retained to assist us in reaching our highest performance level. We hope to represent RMD next July in Montreal. This membership campaign will help fund **SOR's** travel and other expenses, as well as assist members who may not have funds to enter and travel to contests – particularly our numerous younger members. A new effort with Arapahoe Community College provides college credit for singers in **SOR** and Sweet Adeline's **Skyline Chorus** – 2001 champions - beginning this semester and may provide more younger members to both choruses. 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**.

INTERPRETING COACHES

Darin Drown, Director

One coach says one thing, and seemingly, the next says another. Who do you believe? Who is correct?

If you have ever been in a quartet coaching school, or any situation where you work with several coaches during an intensive couple of days, the combined information you receive can be downright confusing, if not frustrating.

Growing up in this Society has given me the opportunity to work with many types of coaches in various situations from beginning quartets and choruses to seasoned groups. These experiences have taught me some valuable lessons.

First, I believe that EVERY coach has something positive to offer, something very valuable. Many times a coach will say one thing which hasn't been said by anyone else. Often, 95 percent of what he says might seem like garbage, but that unique 5 percent may turn out to be a cornerstone of your preparation as a singer.

Second, and most important, most coaches need some interpretation. Any good director establishes a language or “code” with their chorus. When a coach comes in, he uses his own “code.” The director’s job is to translate the coach’s language to something that is usable for the chorus. The director may choose to use the exact words or phrases of the coach or make it more easily deciphered in the chorus’s language.

As we found in our retreat weekend, coaching styles can be vastly different. However, both coaches – Greg Lyne and David Harrington – were wonderful. Greg is a life-long educator, who teaches very well. David is an outstanding performer with incredible creativity and fresh ideas. I found them both to be extremely beneficial to our development.

Please allow me to translate for you personally whenever you are confused about what a coach brings to us. I don’t want anyone to be frustrated about something we are trying to do, or worse, have interpreted something incorrectly which is hurting your singing.

As always, thanks for all you do!

MUCH MORE TO DO

Mike Wadsley, President

What a wonderful summer this has been! We have shown the world what barbershopping in Denver is all about, cut one heck of a recording, and had a great time in the process. Now is the time to look forward to what more we can achieve. It is easy for us to sit back and enjoy the good times, but there is much more work yet to be done.

Besides the new songs coming our way, we’ve got a fall and holiday show combination that promises to provide our home crowd the same high-class entertainment everyone has come to expect from **Sound of the Rockies**. To accomplish this feat over and over again, we need your assistance with the details. There are many projects that are being tackled in addition to shows and CDs. There are phone calls to make, meetings to attend, money to

be made, and tickets to be sold, hands to shake, and babies to kiss... OK, so that might be a bit much, but you get the idea. Be prepared to help out in any way you can when asked, or if you see something that needs doing, don’t be afraid to offer your assistance.

We have already proven to ourselves that great things are possible. From my perspective, things can only get better!

BARBERSHOPPERS OF THE MONTH

Tom Graesser presented two more awards in recent weeks to our Barbershoppers of the Month for 2002.

Rick Faubion – born in Imperial, Nebraska, Rick carries his hobby much farther than most, as he named his own trucking company Chordbuster trucking. He has seven years of barbershopping experience which was initiated by a huge fight with his lovely wife, Paige. He was working in a warehouse in Colby, Kansas, of which the owner was director of both a men’s and women’s chorus. Rick was a team roper and felt that singing would not fit into the macho image of team roping. She offered him a challenge, saying “I’ll team rope if you’ll sing.” Rick had not yet learned the two most important words in a marriage – “yes, dear.” Paige won the challenge, and Rick began to sing. We are clearly the recipients of her tenacity and his musical ability. Rick is very proud of his wife and two lovely daughters, his trucking company, and his chorus. We honor him as our newspaper poster child, as his photogenic face appeared in a *Denver Post* article on the chorus this spring, and for his selfless assistance to George Daniels when he passed away during our spring show.

Denny Malone – born in Chicago, Illinois, Denny has officially retired from many careers including school administration, but he still drives a school bus and tunes pianos. His barbershopping career – as he has spent over three decades going far beyond

what many would consider a hobby – has included many functions and the highest awards. He has directed, coached, and competed at the top level as both a chorus and quartet member. He has won gold medals singing with the **Alexandria Harmonizers** and the **Vocal Majority**, as well as an international quartet championship with the **Side Street Ramblers** in 1983. Few have attained such high honors in the Society, but it appears that Denny is not through yet. He is proud of his lovely wife, with whom he had their first date at the Super Bowl in Dallas, Texas, in which the Broncos attempted to play. He is also proud of his three daughters and two granddaughters as well as his 1895 Blutner 85-note piano made in Leipzig, Germany. We honor Denny for his stellar contributions to the music team and his coaching to the chorus when he tunes us as expertly as he tunes a piano, showing us the power of a well turned diphthong and the subtleties necessary to attain the elusive medals.

COLLEGE CREDIT FOR SINGING

Beginning this semester, Arapahoe Community College is offering a one-credit class, MUS 151, which requires that each student sing with the **ACC Chorus** on Wednesday evenings from 5:00 to 6:30. The credit is conferred if the student also sings with the **Sound of the Rockies** or the **Skyline Chorus**. The **Skyline Chorus**, a chapter of Sweet Adelines, rehearses each Tuesday evening at the Temple Events Center at 1595 Pearl Street, near the state capitol. Participants will learn to improve visual expression, breathing, musical interpretation, singing techniques, and voice blending. Each performer will be assisted in qualifying to sing in at least one on-stage performance before an audience during the semester. The **ACC Chorus** is working on Vivaldi's "Gloria." This educational credit is the result of a project initiated by our librarian and 2001 Barbershopper of the Year, Jerry O'Halloran. Can you imagine this hobby helping towards a college degree? This effort should bring in some more talented young members.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

As much as we have publicized our singing in Portland and Greeley, **SOR** and chapter quartets have been lending their voices to many local efforts. **SOR** has two major events in the area during the coming months. A Rotary International fundraiser will feature the chorus on Saturday, October 26, at the Cherry Hills Community Church at 3900 East Grace Boulevard in south Denver. The chorus will perform at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. Information on tickets will be available from local Rotary Clubs and on our web site.

A major performance will be on December 15th, which is a Sunday afternoon and not a Monday evening – I was looking at the wrong year on my calendar for the last **Soundings**. **SOR** will perform the national anthem for the Broncos – Kansas City Chiefs football game. I have no idea whether free tickets for friends and family will be available, but as Broncos home games have been sold out, I would doubt it.

Other local performances include the **Kowalski Twins**, who will perform at the Boettcher Center lobby at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 29th. This is part of the Colorado Performing Arts Festival at the Denver Performing Arts Complex at Speer and Arapahoe. We have had numerous quartets perform at local fundraisers, such as the annual golf tournament of the Southwest Denver Kiwanis Club in June. Fred Wiese and the **24 Karat Ring** quartet performed the national anthem for the tournament in the photo below. **SOR** also gained some inexpensive publicity by sponsoring a hole in the tournament. **SOR** is gaining quite a reputation in the Denver area as well as the Society.

24 Karat Ring sings the national anthem

HARMONY COLLEGE

In August, I made my sixth trip to St. Joseph, MO, for another session of Harmony College. I consider a week at Harmony College each year to be a real asset to serious barbershop singing.

Once again, I attended Vocal Techniques, instructed by Warren Hettinga, a retired college voice instructor. He listened to my singing and told me that my strength is in my lower range. He advised me to return to bass, which I sang when I started with the Society in 1987. Getting such an evaluation and advice from one of the Society's best is the strength of Harmony College.

My other classes this year included Creative Interpretation by David Leeder in which we learned the aspects of song writing, arranging, and interpretation which appealed to our audience. In Show Production – Concept to Curtain, Elie Savoie taught us about production and administration of barbershop shows and some of the pitfalls to avoid. In Introduction to Performance Power, Gail Jencik showed videotapes of professional performances and discussed what features we could use in our amateur productions. All of these classes gave us new ideas we could use in our barbershop productions.

One new class this year for me was History of Barbershop, taught by David Wright, well-known arranger and composer. David provided very complete handouts and shared numerous recordings and videos with us. He took us back to the Gregorian chant of the 11th and 12th centuries and showed us how monks chanted Latin phrases in unison and created harmony and overtones. From there, the music we sing developed over the

centuries. This is a fascinating subject which I will share with you in the next few issues of *Soundings*.

Of course, highlights of the week included an evening with Freddie King. I have seen Freddie's comedy act every year and still laugh hysterically at his stories and his false teeth. Joe Liles' evening of gospel singing is still an inspirational activity for many of us, including his on-stage arrangement of "Amazing Grace" at the conclusion of the fest.

Harmony College is a delightful week of singing, fellowship, and learning from the masters of our Society. If you have not taken advantage of this opportunity, I recommend that you try it.

HISTORY OF BARBERSHOP

The beginnings of barbershop singing go back far before many of us can imagine. Our style of music is known for its harmony and particularly for its sound, known as "ringing of the chords." A tone produced by a voice or instrument is accompanied by a series of pitches in addition to the fundamental one most easily heard. The relative strength of these pitches is called "overtones," "harmonics," or "partials." These create the distinctive sound of an instrument or voice that allows us to recognize it. In barbershop singing, a concept called "consonance" describes tones which are pleasing to the ear when sounded together. We rarely hear actual pitches beyond those which are sung, but the overall mixture of sound creates an impression that is distinct – a buzz in the air, a pleasing mixture, and on occasion, an audible high pitch.

When Gregorian monks began chanting praises to God in Latin during the 11th century, they began in unison. When they found that chanting at different pitches created an unusual but pleasing sound, they began using the first harmony, chanting in octaves. During the 12th century, these monks discovered the next interval, the fifth. They were ear singing in an early a capella style – medieval woodshedding.

By the 14th century, the third had been discovered but was somewhat controversial. It was heard as dissonant and irreverent and was even banned from church music by a pope. By the 16th century, music used major and minor triads (three note chords). In the 18th and 19th centuries, composers were writing chords using the root, third, fifth, and flatted or dominant seventh – the barbershop seventh chord.

During the 16th-18th centuries in England, barbers and their shops became known as places for spontaneous singing. Such shops would have a lute or cittern (forerunner of the guitar) hanging on the wall for use by waiting customers or the barber himself. Evidence of this comes from the writings of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) and John Milton (1608-1674), the writer of “Paradise Lost.” Barbers became more involved with medical treatments at this time, and the tradition died out in England. But barbershop singing, as with other English customs, was carried over to the colonies and developed primarily in the South. By the 19th century, a tradition of quartets singing in four-part harmony had developed, although it is impossible to say where or when. By 1843, a New England quartet called the Hutchinson Family was singing to antislavery and temperance gatherings in New York and Pennsylvania. One of the sons later sang in a group called the Dearborn Quartet. By the 1850’s, a popular male quartet called the Continental Vocalists sang in variety shows and published a song book in 1855. By this time, quartet singing had moved away from purely religious or morality purposes and had developed into a popular form of entertainment. These early songs, such as “Annie Laurie” (1838) and “Long, Long Ago” (1843), were difficult to harmonize and often not very interesting when harmonized. Black singers were the early improvisers of pleasing harmony, often part of the minstrel shows of the mid 1800’s. We will look at the development of harmony and quartet singing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the next issue.

September 27-29 – **RMD** Convention and Contests, Union Colony Civic Center, Greeley, CO

Friday, 7-10:30 – Quartet Semifinals

Saturday, 12-3:30 – Chorus Contest

Saturday, 7-10:30 – Quartet Finals

October 26 – Rotary International Fundraiser, Cherry Hills Community Church, 2 pm and 7 pm

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

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 Midwinter Convention, Albuquerque, NM

February 14, 2003 – Singing Valentine Campaign

April 12-13, 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, MO

January 25-February 1, 2004 – SPEBSQSA Midwinter Convention, Biloxi, MS

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

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