



**"HARMONY  
IN MOTION"**

# *The Chordsmen Chronicle*

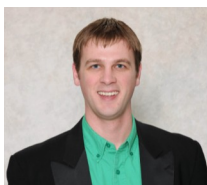


www.FunCenterChordsmen.com

Volume 41 Issue 8~ August 2016

## Directly Speaking Looking to the future

By: Trevor Garrabrant ~ Music Director



As many of you read in the last chronicle, the board is working on creating a strategic action plan. This plan, when complete, will be great for the Chordsmen!!

In the process of scripting the plan, we will get to set goals and give ourselves a direction. And we will execute it to the best of our abilities. And let's be honest, if we don't have direction, then where are we going?

So as we get ready to dive into this process as a board, during a day long work session in September, we need input, thoughts, ideas, and creativity from everyone in the chorus.

This is going to be a big team effort. Rest assured we are not looking at making any monumental changes to the Chordsmen. We are just looking to set goals and give us a direction and a destination.

If you feel the way I do right now, the chorus seems like we are possibly on the verge of being in a state of stagnation (I'm pretty sure I made that word up). Let's keep climbing this barbershop mountain, instead of standing on a peak looking to head back down.



One of the biggest keys to this plan being a success is

how we start. As many of you know, I am a runner. I am nowhere near an elite runner, and have no desires to be one. But I still set goals for myself to improve as a runner.

I have long-term goals and daily goals, very similar to what the board will be planning in September. For my daily goals I am usually looking to meet a certain pace per mile for that day's work out. During these workouts I have found out the beginning of the run is key for meeting the goal.

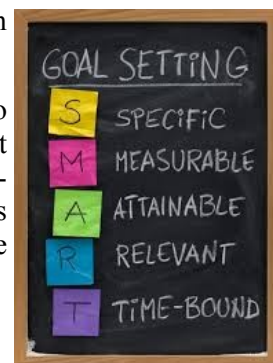
If my first mile is slower than my target pace, then the rest of the run is spent working harder to try to literally make up for lost time. If I go out and attack the first mile of the run, my target pace is much easier to attain or even beat.

This has to be our mindset, to attack this Strategic Plan and set goals with a yard stick to measure success. And these goals must be suitable and attainable for the Chordsmen.

After that long analogy, what I am trying to say is, we should all buy in and give 100% to setting up and supporting our Strategic Operations plan.

Let's not have to make up for lost time. If we start well with this plan, our success will be much easier to attain. I encourage you to talk to our board members to give input and ideas.

I encourage you to do your part to make this plan one that helps the Chordsmen continue to grow, prosper and be recognized for the great men's singing organization that it is. 🎵



## Trinity United Methodist Church second in summer church sings

By: RF Miller ~ VP Marketing and PR



Summer is normally when most of the churches let their choirs have a few months off. That's why the summer church sings are a part of the Fun Center Chordsmen schedule.

Each year the members put the name of their church in a hat. Three church names are drawn and scheduled for a Sunday morning performance.

The call time on Sunday morning July 17 was at 8:45 AM for a 9:30 service. The first song early in the service was "Ride the Chariot" with the solo being performed by **Trevor Garrabrant** and **Chris Rumas** and directed by **Dave Kracker**.

"Amazing Grace" directed by **Jim Frye** was the selection requested for the offertory. The service concluded with **Trevor Garrabrant** directing the chorus in "The Irish Blessing"



Many in the congregation indicated they were truly blessed by our presence and performance. 🎵



## *From the Board walk*

By: Lee Cook ~ Secretary

**Treasurer's Report (Financial Recap 6/10/2016 – 7/8/2016)** Was received.

### **VP Music & Performance (Trevor)**

Music team meeting August 1, 2016 @ 6pm.  
Following things to be discussed.

Talk about moves ideas for 2017 show music.

Look at new yuletide book the Barber-shop Harmony Society just released.

Look at a few note changes for section leaders on "Sweet Hour Of Prayer"

### **VP Marketing & PR (RF Miller)**

Published July Chronicle

Updated the FCC Website Guide and sent to master FCC email list.

Continued work on the "boilerplate" for the Fun Center Chordsmen Strategic Action Plan.

Five of the seven major sections of an action plan are complete.

Dates and responsibilities of each action item will be agreed upon at the board work session in September.

### **Chorus Manager:** Dan Noe

Summer church sing Sunday, July 17 at Trinity United Methodist Church on Grace street in Mansfield

August 13 Ashland Veterans appreciation sing at Ashland Airport. \$300 gig.

Summer church sing Sunday, August 21 at McElroy Road Church of Christ in Mansfield.

### **VP YIH: Dave Kracker**

See Dave's article on page 4 for his report to the board. 🎵

# *Bravada does the trifecta*

By: RF Miller ~ Bravada—Bari

The library normally is a place of quiet for reading, education and learning, except when the library is celebrating its one hundredth birthday. Such was the case with the New London Ohio library on Friday evening, July 15. Cookies, cup cakes, ice cream and entertainment was the order of the day.



In early April, Bravada was booked to provide a portion of the entertainment for the Century Celebration. We were to

wander outside among the expected large crowd and stop and sing, and repeat the process for 30 to 40 minutes.

As we sang at the second location, we noticed a young woman nearby reading a very thick book and seated in a chair.

As we moved to the third area to sing, we notice that this same young lady had moved her chair closer and was no longer reading the book.



Every time we moved to a new location, she moved as well. Her name was Anna and she

said she loved a cappella singing and doesn't have much of a chance to hear it. Everywhere that Bravada went, Anna was sure to follow. We asked her "where do we sing next Anna?" She said "anywhere the sun is not in my eyes."

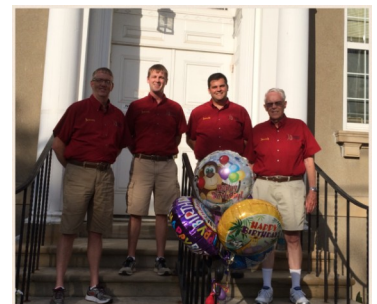


Trevor was really excited to sing for such a dedicated follower!

The editor of the New London newspaper was in attendance and wanted a picture

on the steps of the Library.

All in all, this was a fun gig. It started with a little adult liquid refreshment at Trevor's house followed by a warm up session.



Then it was hit the road for the 35 minute drive to New London. We sang from 6:50 PM to 7:30. We hadn't had dinner so on the return trip, we stopped at the Olivesburg General Store for one of their famous sandwiches. WOW! A huge sandwich. No room for ice cream.

So the trifecta is complete....adult beverage, singing and eating together. Does it get much better than that? 🎵



# Craft Corner

## The Think System does work

By: Jim Debussman  
Former Society Music Specialist  
Reprinted with permission from the  
Johnnycake Ridgerunner bulletin

One interesting aspect is that when one “thinks” a pitch, the vocal folds automatically shape themselves to that pitch. While it might not be possible for The Music Man’s Professor Harold Hill’s unschooled trumpet player to “think” the correct valve to push for a given note, the human voice box responds directly and correctly to whatever signal the brain sends out.



Professor Harold Hill

In other words, whether singing out loud or just thinking about it, one’s vocal folds shape themselves precisely to whatever is going on in the mind. Thus applying the “think system” to a barbershop song during quiet moments can improve and reinforce pitch accuracy.

One word of caution: when barbershoppers “think” through their given part in a song there is an underlying awareness of the complete chords. Without periodic reference to the sheet music or a learning tape as a double check, it’s possible occasionally to “think” one’s part into some incorrect notes within the chords.

Additional “thinking” at this point will simply reinforce these errors. This is surprisingly true of songs in the repertoire to which parts were memorized long before. It’s a good idea to pull out the sheet music occasionally and check yourself.

Good posture and diaphragmatic breathing are vitally important to quality vocal production. Visualizing these aspects while using the “think system” will help them become almost automatic when actually singing. This can enhance a rehearsal if everyone does it. 🎵

## Monday night attendance is good. Can we make it better?

By: Ed Farrar ~ VP Chapter Development

Attendance during our weekly chapter meetings have been fairly good compared to the total number of members.

According to our attendance records the following members had perfect attendance for the months of May and June.



- Basses:
  - Mike Craze, Dan Noe, Ron Rosser.
- Baritones:
  - RF Miller, Chris Rumas, Dan Strader.
- Leads:
  - Lee Cook, Ray Gantzler, Bruce VanHestern, and Lorin Weaver.
- Tenors:
  - Jim Frye, Gayle Ray and Tom Webb.

Those who have a perfect attendance for the entire year are all within the lead section. They are **Lee Cook, Ray Gantzler, Bruce VanHestern, and Lorin Weaver**.

Thanks to all of these members who have such good attendance records. 🎵

*I'll talk to anyone about anything,  
but sooner or later I'll tell him I sing.  
I'll invite him to visit on Monday night  
and if he likes what he hears, he just might,  
become a member and maybe he'll bring,  
another good man who likes to sing.*

## 2016 Youth in Harmony Report

By: Dave Kracker ~ VP YIH

### Classroom Presentations:

Unfortunately, we had just one request for these this year, that being from the Ashland Middle School, Karen Ebert teacher. Home Edition did this presentation on May 27<sup>th</sup> with Tom Webb filling in for Jim Frye.

All choral teachers were offered classroom presentations in my opening letter to them as always, but in the past two years, I have not made follow up calls as I found these did not yield any takers. Also in the past two years, I have discontinued sending the Harmony Camp packets to school who have never shown any interest in the camp over the past 10+ years. The total number of schools contacted has been reduced to 25 vs 36.

### Harmony Camp Scholarships:

We reached a record high 24 scholarships in 2016 for a total of \$4,800. The count was as follows:

- Mansfield Sr. High 6
- Shelby HS 4
- Ashland HS 3
- Ashland MS 1 (first ever)
- Crestview 3
- Madison HS 1 (this student had to cancel due to family health problems – scholarship was used by an out-of-county student.)
- Homeschooled 2
- Mansfield Christian 1
- Ontario 1 (first ever)
- Post HS - 1 (Mansfield Sr. High graduate)

## Chordsmen sponsor 24 vocal music students to Harmony Camp

Harmony Camp is a four day “barbershop school” for both young men and young women of high school age who are vocal music students.

The Fun Center Chordsmen have a history of financially helping area students attend Harmony Camp. This year they sponsored 24 students each receiving a \$200 Chordsmen Scholarship.

For the past several years, the Fun Center Chordsmen have been one of the four top chapters to sponsor students to Harmony Camp.



\$4,800 was paid out to send these students to the thrill of a life time. For some it was their first experience being surrounded with a cappella singing for four straight days. And they say they can't wait to go back next year. Then again, a lot of the campers this year are returnees who have been before.

This chapter believes that the future of barbershop singing rests in the hands and hearts of the youth of today. **Dave Kracker**, VP of Youth in Harmony for the Mansfield, Ohio chapter works diligently each year to find students with “a song in their hearts” looking for a way to express it.

Thanks Dave, for many years of service to the areas vocal music students. 🎵



## *Focus on Good Company*

By: Tom Webb ~ Tenor—Good Company

It is said that growing older is a case of diminishing returns. Ever hear someone say “Well I used to be 5’10” but now I’m about 5’9” tall? Yep, things certainly do change as we get older including our voices and our stamina. When you listen to the younger top tier quartets you can only imagine what it must be like to hit notes with such clarity and purpose with no warbles or hiccups whatsoever. No clearing of throats or growling of voice, just clear, clean, crisp and sharp notes, and chords that knock your socks off.



Sitting at Internationals last year and listening to Instant Classic, Forefront and Main Street, I thought to myself, why can’t we (Good Company) sing like that. The reality is, at one time we might have been able to do that, when we were younger. But we’re not younger anymore, and our voices have aged along with everything else.

Something else has changed too, something not often considered when talking about aging and singing: focus. Seriously, focus is probably the biggest stumbling block to our consistently delivering a quality performance. How is that possible? It’s pretty simple really.

We’ve discovered that we are too easily distracted by all the things going on in our lives and all the “stuff” around us. You might have heard me mention the antique red Mustang that passed in front of us at the Congo the other night when we were

performing there. I just about forgot where I was when it passed by towards the end of our song. Darn near lost my focus completely.

Ask any of the guys in our quartet and I believe they will tell you that they have trouble focusing during rehearsals and performances. And when you lose focus anything can happen; forgotten words, notes, pitch etc. We’ve even had times where we forgot what song we were getting ready to sing. We now carry little books at each performance with reminders of the song order, the pitches and first words. They have become part of our “schtick” partly because of the difficulty each of us has in focusing, and partly because our memories are not what they used to be.



So, what do we do about this problem of focus? We’ve discovered that we need to take care of ourselves physically and mentally, eating better and getting sufficient rest which help in shutting out the distractions that cause us to lose focus. Regular practice helps immensely proving the old “use it or lose it” adage.

In singing there are too many little subtle nuances that add to our performances that lack of focus will destroy if we let it. Forget to work on vowel matching, voice matching, sync and interp and you’ve got the recipe for a pretty mediocre performance. Yet each one of those requires some focus, as does breathing right, finishing phrases correctly and singing on top of notes rather than underneath them

So where was I? Oh yeah, talking about focus. Growing older isn’t for wimps, but it doesn’t necessarily have to be a struggle. What you focus on tells a lot about who you are and where you are in life? Focus on what you can’t do and you will be one unhappy guy. Focus on what you can do and who knows what you can accomplish. It works in quartet singing, believe us. When we’re focused on the right stuff we’re not bad. In fact we’re pretty Good Company. 🎵



## *What does it take to increase membership?*

By: RF Miller

Since 1938, that question has been on the lips of most members of every chapter. Or at least it should be.

So what does it take to increase membership? Answer. There is no magical method to increase membership. And there is no one individual that bears total responsibility for the lack of membership growth. The old expressing that Membership begins with ME" is certainly true.

Remember how you were introduced to the Fun Center Chordsmen? I'm willing to bet that you didn't just walk through the door. You had some idea of the group by talking to someone in the chapter and probably receiving an invitation to visit. Now we're getting closer to the truth.

In Marketing, it has been proven time and time again that the best method of advertising is "word of mouth."

OK, I have the RF Method of increasing membership to share with you.

But first you must realize something I learned many years ago in the sales field. To be successful in the sales of anything, (after all that's what we're doing, selling the idea of men singing and joining us) you must understand that you will receive many negative responses. More negative than positive. Does that bother you? It shouldn't.

According to my BHS membership card. I'm starting my 17th year of membership. When I first found out about the Man of Note recognition, I set a goal for myself of finding one man each year, who likes to sing and is committed enough to join the chorus. Yes, I'm behind in my goal. I should have 16 MON and only have 12. But I'm still working on it.

I try to speak to at least two men a week and extend an invitation to visit the Chordsmen. Based on that, in the 16 years I've been a member, I've spoken to 1,664 men, most of whom I didn't know. And only 12 have become members. That's less than a one percent return. Doesn't speak too well of my sales ability does it? Lots more said NO than said YES. But at least the name of the Fun Center Chordsmen is now in their vocabulary.

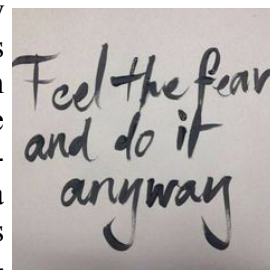
About now you're saying "look RF, I don't feel comfortable approaching someone I don't know." That's another way of saying "I'm scared of speaking to someone I don't know." Or "I'm not a salesman."

Well guess what? To increase our membership and to accomplish great things you have to get out of your comfort zone and do it anyway.



If you were to speak to a stranger and ask them "Do you like to sing?" what do you think would be their answer? What ever it might be, they won't bite you.

Ask any member and you will probably find out that they first attended by personal invitation. So is the answer to the question becoming more clear? If we want to increase membership and continue to have a strong and growing chorus and chapter, then our comfort zone must become a thing of the past.



So now we know the most effective way to increase membership is to ask men if they like to sing and invite them to visit. Don't leave that job up to others. If every member were to earn a Man of Note pin in the next 12 months, that would double the size of our chapter pretty quickly.

Let's do this thing!



# Point to Ponder

## DWYSYWD

*An Editorial*

Every where you look you see articles concerning your health and fitness level. The major theme is that you must be fit to be at your very best. You need to strengthen your body by exercising regularly.



There is an old expression that states, "the chain is only as strong as its weakest link." Let's modify that just slightly to fit our chorus. "The chorus is only as good

as the weakest voice part."

What's the point to ponder here?

If every member of the chorus, except one, knew their words, music and interpretation 'cold,' the chorus would be only as good as that one exception. Because the one who makes mistakes stands out and is heard. For a strong chorus, every member, that's every member, must commit to be fit as a singer.

How do you keep from being the weakest singer? That means working between Monday night rehearsals. As has been said before, the Monday night rehearsals are for "fine tuning," not learning notes and words.

Trevor has been our director since April 2015. That's 15 months. Have we progressed and gotten better? I should say we have. Are we content with where we are now? I should say not. But historically, he has, on more



than one occasion, said "that's your homework." Meaning it's up to you to learn the notes.

It's up to each of us to make the commitment to learn the notes and words outside of the Monday night rehearsal time. Then Trev can spend the time on interpretation and fine tuning. As he has said many times, "work every note." Never lose focus.

What kind of person doesn't want to give his or her best? Why would anyone want to deliver a second-rate performance?

The answer to those questions lies in the heart of each member of the chorus. If you don't want to give your best and if you really want to deliver a second-rate performance, may I suggest that you find another hobby?

Each member owes it to the rest of the chorus to commit to being the best singer he can be. Once this commitment is made, then the next step is to DWYSYWD. Make sense?

That means Do What You Say You Will Do! Another way of stating it is, be willing to not only talk the talk but walk the walk. Lip service is cheap. Production takes work, but the results will be something in which we can all take pride.

Trevor wants us to rise to the next level. He can help us get there, but he can't lift the entire chorus. Each one must lift his own 2 foot square. We can, we will, we must. 🎵





## 2016 Chapter Leadership

**President ~**

Jim Frye

**Exec. VP ~**

Stan Popp

**Music Director ~**

Trevor Garrabrant

**Assistant Directors ~**

Jim Frye

Dave Kracker

**Chorus Coach ~**

Vacant

**VP Music & Performance ~**

Trevor Garrabrant

**VP Chapter Development ~**

Ed Farrar

**VP Marketing & PR ~**

R.F. Miller

**VP YIH ~**

Dave Kracker

**Secretary ~**

Lee Cook

**Treasurer ~**

Lorin Weaver

**Immediate Past President ~****Board Members at Large:**

Bob Gibson

Terry Loughman

Mike Craze

Mitch Gale

*The Chordsmen Chronicle is the official bulletin of the Fun Center Chordsmen.*

*Editor: R. F. Miller (RFMiller1@gmail.com)*

***“It’s great to be a  
barbershopper in  
\*Mansburg, Ohio”  
(\*Mansfield)***

## 2016 Man of Note honor roll

New Member	Sponsor	# of MON
Jim Foley	R.F. Miller	12

*Plenty of room for your name*



## *Chordsmen Quartets*

*(alpha order & year founded)*



### Bravada (2001)

Jim Frye (T)

Trevor Garrabrant (L)

Dan Crow (B)

R.F. Miller (Br) (419) 884-2441 (contact)

### Chordially Yours (2004)

Gayle Ray (T)

Mitch Gale (L)

Stan Popp (B) (419) 756-0098 (contact)

Frank DeWitt (Br)

### Good Company (2008)

Tom Webb (T)

Lee Hull (L)

Mike Craze (B)

Chris Rumas (Br) (419) 886-3163 (contact)

### Home Edition (1991)

Jim Frye (T) (419)-989-9895 (contact)

Jerry Starrett (L)

Bill Herdman (B)

Dave Kracker (Br)

**BARBERSHOPPING  
CAN BE FUN!**