

THE



# Central States Serenade



Central States District, SPEBSQSA—Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming  
December 1958

Volume 4 HALF A MILLION MILES OF MELODY IN MID-AMERICA Number 6

CSA ON THE MOVE

## CHARTER TO LAWRENCE

November 7th our new chapter at Lawrence, Kansas, received its charter. Several hundred persons attended the program in the Central Junior High School auditorium and the enthusiasm was as warm as Kansas in August.

Warren Zwink, Lawrence president, introduced International's Floyd Connett who emceed and led group singing. First on the program was the Lawrence chorus, directed by Clayton Krehbiel.

Then Zwink received the chapter charter from Clarence Peterson, president of the sponsoring Heart of America chapter in Kansas City.

Three Lawrence quartets sang, the FISHY FOUR, JAYHAWK FOUR, and NOTE-WITS. Over from Topeka with a cribful of corn were the HUMBUGS whom we'd like to see more often. And all the way from the Wichita-Newton area came our CSA runners-up, the FOUR CAVALIERS.

The Heart of America chorus, Don Webb directing, and the BMA GAMBOLIERS appeared. For variety Kansas City also brought the FOUR HANDS, a piano act, and the 5' 2's, Sweet Adeline quartet.

So we've chartered our second new chapter this year. Next comes Manhattan and if you can get there for the charter show do so by all means. You'd be surprised how proud you can be, just to be a barbershopper.

### DENVER, ST. JOSEPH IN 1959

Now is the time to mark calendars and three big dates to circle are April 24-25-26. That's when we'll have our District Quartet Preliminaries in the mile-high city of Denver, a real Rosebud of the Rockies (apologies to Harry Sparrow).

Our 1959 District contest will be held in St. Joseph and you can't get much closer to the center of the District. Dates are not completely cleared yet but you'll get them soon.

Springfield has submitted a bid for Springtime in the Ozarks for our 1960 preliminaries.

Right now remember Denver in April

### ROSTER CORRECTION

CSA Secretary Chet Fox and his family have moved into a new home. Please change his address to: 2813 Burnett Road, Topeka, Kansas.

## BUCCANEERS ARE 1958 DISTRICT CHAMPIONS

Springfield's BUCCANEERS won the 1958 District Quartet Championship at Des Moines in October. The honor follows a quick rise which saw them take the alternate spot in the preliminaries last Spring at Cedar Rapids.



In the picture they are, left to right, Morris Toalson, Frank Matherly, Norm Shryer, and George Robinson. Morris, the bass, commutes from Aurora and for several years directed the chapter chorus at Monett. He's the musician of the group, does some of their arrangements, and the whole Toalson family enjoys barbershop.

Frank is an offset pressman and barbershopping is just about his first go at music. He's the tenor and is a past member of the Board of the Heart of the Ozarks chapter.

Norm, the baritone, is contact man for the quartet (2446 Cherry Street). He's editor of the OZARKEY and is now serving a third term as chapter secretary. A charter member at Springfield, he spends his spare time as Assistant Business Manager at SMSC.

George has been singing for a good many years and is the possessor of a fine solo voice when the occasion demands. He's a telephone switchman.

Runnersup were the CAVALIERS of Wichita-Newton, left, while the third spot went to Spencer's FOUR NUBBINS.



Probably no quartet in the district has done more to help other chapters in putting on shot-in-the-arm and charity shows than the CAVALIERS. And we know that everyone in northern Iowa, and the many cities they've journeyed to, are glad to see the FOUR NUBBINS in the spotlight. They're among the real veteran campaigners in the district.

## The CENTRAL STATES SERENADE

For the Central States Association of Chapters, Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America:

Ray Niblo, President  
1406 Watrous  
Des Moines, Iowa

Herb Wall, Past President  
990 North Clay  
Springfield, Missouri

Millard Smith, Vice President  
657 Harrison Street  
Denver 6, Colorado

Pete Peterson, Vice President  
2610 North 13th Street  
Kansas City, Kansas

Chet Fox, Secretary  
3825 West 12th Street  
Topeka, Kansas

Pat Patterson, Treasurer  
4209 South Seneca  
Wichita, Kansas

C. George Biasi, Chief Area Counselor  
1083 West Third Street  
Dubuque, Iowa

Published ten times annually—January, February, March, April, June, July, September, October, November, December.

Business Manager: Nile Abbott, 602 East 31st Avenue, North Kansas City, Missouri

Member: Association of Bulletin Editors

### NEW HOME FOR SAMMY

Sammy Cohen, for years Mr. Barbershop of central Kansas, is now one of the sparks in our soon-to-be-chartered Manhattan chapter.

Sammy wasn't able to get to Des Moines but he sent \$100 from the Chicken Shack till for the Expansion Fund and an equal amount to the District.

### ST. LOUISANS SING FOR HOSPITAL CHILDREN

Christmas week was a big one for our St. Louis #1 chapter. On December 21st they sang for tubercular patients at the Koch Hospital. They followed this with a TV appearance the following evening, sponsored by the Christmas Carol Association for Underprivileged Children.

The chapter is already selling tickets for their March 14th parade headlining the GAY NOTES.

### 1500 ATTEND PARADE IN IOWA

About 1500 attended the Waterloo-Cedar Falls parade, held November 15th. Des Moines' FOUR OF A KIND and Cedar Rapids' HUMBUGS were among the guest quartets. At the afterglow a hot Dutch lunch was served. We've seen glowing reports on the Waterloo-Cedar Falls chorus.

### CHRISTMAS PARTY AT MASON CITY

Mason City barbershoppers celebrated the season with a party on December 9th. We rather imagine it started on time too as Gene Gallogly PITCHES the information that the fellows cooled their heels before a couple of convention appearances.

The chapter had a very nice write-up in the HARMONIZER'S "Music Man" feature.

### SPRINGFIELD SHOWS KINESCOPE

Ozark barbershoppers entertained themselves and their friends December 15th by showing the kinescope of the 1958 International Finals. A nominal charge was made to offset the cost and coffee and doughnuts were served following the film.

9001 Bellevue, Kansas City 14, Missouri

## The Way I See It

(Continuing our series to acquaint members with the judging categories, we go on with Floyd Strong's comments on Stage Presence).

by Floyd Strong

Following are some of the points a Stage Presence Judge is on the watch for--

ENTRANCE FROM THE WINGS--Is the entrance done smoothly, neatly, snappily, or in a dull, slipshod way? Does the entrance show the effects of imaginative, original, beforehand planning and practice, or is it just a way of getting out there? If it's a simple walkon, are the men in step, arms swinging in unison, bearing themselves approximately the same, within physical limitations? Do they look at the audience, smile, and seem to be glad to be about to entertain? Or do they stare down grimly at their predecessor's heels, obviously afraid they'll trip over him?

LINEUP BEFORE THE MIKE--Is there much shuffling of feet, awkward backing and milling like a bunch of racehorses about to make a start, or do the men assume their positions naturally and easily? Does one of them dive deep into his left pants pocket as though about to bring forth a hankie, wave his pitchpipe around, peer at it, find the spot, blow frantically while the others hover round in a confused mass huffing and puffing like so many pigs? Or does one of them have the pipe in his hand as they reach the mike, blow the pipe as unobtrusively as possible while the others, with some semblance of dignity and at least some indication of knowing what they're about, hum softly until the pitch is satisfactorily established. Some quartets don't need a pitchpipe. More power to them!

ACTION DURING SONG--Are they at ease? Bear in mind the Judge is not there to take pity on a four because they are obviously young, inexperienced, or because they become rattled by some untoward incident. Our competing quartets are supposed to be the cream of the crop. We want them to be a credit to themselves, their own Chapter and to the Society. If they lack poise, let them not win any contests until they acquire it. In this particular matter there is no substitute for experience. Do they all stand like sticks, or do they make an attempt to respond to the mood of their song with suitable gestures? If their gestures are timely, fitting, reasonably graceful and natural looking, a pleasing effect should be obtained. If they swing and sway rhythmically, is it begun by all four simultaneously (unless deliberately planned otherwise), do they look good up there while they're doing it--do they all stop at once?

RELAXED? ENJOYING THEMSELVES? SMILES? If a quartet enjoys itself, the audience is almost sure to enjoy the performance. So, it pays to look pleasant. Smile and the world smiles with you! In grading, don't insist that all four have a smile. That's a rare quartet. If two look cheerful, two sour, remember the cheerful men in your scoring. Poise has always played a prominent part in the Stage Presence rules. Poise and relaxation are concomitant. If you relax, you have poise (as long as you don't relax into a slump!). It's the tense muscle, the tight jaw, the clenched hand, which are the opposite of poise.

SINGING TO THE AUDIENCE: LOOKING AT THE AUDIENCE--A good public speaker likes to look into the eyes of his audience, for he can guide his speech by the response. A veteran showman also looks into the eyes of the audience, and performs for them. You can see this in the performance of our Championship quartets. They don't sing to themselves....they don't sing to the ceiling....instead they almost climb over the foot-lights in their attempt to sing to you.

THE EYE CONTACT MUST BE FRANK--A VACANT STARE ISN'T GOOD.

We encourage the flexible technique--the man who sings a phrase to the others in the quartet--then a phrase to the front row right--then to the balcony....and so on. He sings to all of us. Encourage smiles.

(Continued on next page)

## "MR. BARITONE" HONORED

Bert Phelps, who shook hands with Columbus and sent King Ferdinand a copy of "Daddy Get Your Baby out of Jail," was honored recently by the Heart of America Chapter with a "This is your Life" night. Bert has been an active quartet and publicity pusher in Kansas City for 23 years.

In other news from the chapter, members rang bells, collected money, and sang "In the Good Old Summertime" in 8° weather for the Salvation Army.

Bill Holdefor is hospitalized in Rochester, Minnesota, having undergone surgery for the amputation of a leg.

## CHAMBERS' MARATHON OVER

On Tuesday, December 9th, Virgil Chambers directed the AIR-E CAPITAL Chorus in a show at the Kansas Masonic Home. And that ended 14 years during which a good many Wichita audiences have looked at Virgil's back. In October of 1955 his chorus won the district championship.

On the 19th the chapter made its annual Christmas rounds of St. Joseph's Hospital, County Hospital, Union Station, and other points. And following this was the annual Christmas party at the Broadview Hotel.

Bud Bigham offers this reverie, here quoted in part:

"I fell asleep the other nite  
and while I had my snooze,  
I dreamed each member stepped  
right up and promptly paid his  
dues."

## COMPASS POINTS

MAQUOKETA reports that last fall the TIMBER CITY FOUR drove all the way to Wyoming to sing for a Teachers' Meeting, Wyoming, Iowa....How's Milt Berghafner coming along with his efforts toward another St. Louis area chapter in Florissant?....The PRAIRIE CROONERS of Ulysses put on a show in Johnson in November. And the BLEND-AIRES sang on the Hooker, Oklahoma show....Dick Farmer did a splendid job outlining plans for MASON CITY'S High School Quartet Contest for the CSDO's in Des Moines....Although their chapter couldn't make the membership quota this year, the FOUR OLD CROWS are card carriers from the Frank Thorne Memorial Chapter....INDEPENDENCE has quite a complicated setup in drawing for cash prizes at meetings that's a lulu....Will someone at HERMANN drop us a line and tell us vas ist dis SCHNITZELBANK?...

# HARMONY HAWKS REPEAT IN CHORUS CONTEST

Cedar Rapids' HARMONY HAWKS Chorus qualified for their third successive International Chorus Contest as they took first place honors at Des Moines.



At the left Ray Niblo, District President, presents the winners' trophy to Len Bjella, the Hawks' director. And to the right the 35-man chorus draws one focus, and a beaming one.

Three of the perennially strongest choruses in the district--Des Moines, Spencer, and Springfield--lost a close race for second to the PONY EXPRESS MEN of St. Joseph, chartered only this year. Under the very capable direction of Ron Phillips, this chorus has come a long way in a remarkably short time. And you can bet they'll be tough to beat next year with the contest right at home.

## THE WAY I SEE IT (Continued from opposite page)

ANIMATION--PUTTING SONG OVER--A frozen quartet doesn't get its song over as well as a relaxed quartet that moves easily. A certain amount of head turning is necessary and desirable to make each part of the audience feel that the quartet is singing to it. Faces can be animated by keeping those eye brows up even when not actually smiling. Remember, facial expressions are gestures as much as arm or body movements.

FITTING GESTURES--Sometimes a gesture is made by a member of a quartet, or by the whole quartet, that seems to contribute. If a passage has real rhythm, a sway to the side or forward and back is natural and fitting. But it must be practiced until it can be done gracefully. Beware the awkward half gesture--the half hearted attempt.

NOT REPETITIOUS? This requires a lot of judgment. Any animation, when repeated too much, becomes commonplace, boring, and detracts from the performance. It's easy to pass the point of diminishing return.

In animation we like naturalness. It is possible that this could go too far--for a quartet might be naturally as rigid as four sticks, but we are thinking of poised and relaxed naturalness....as contrasted to artificiality or studied or awkward gesture. In the old school of oratory, the speakers were taught to use artificial and formal gestures. Nowadays that's out--and the modern orator is taught to be natural. Why not our singers?

APPLAUSE ACCEPTANCE ON THE BREAK: Has it been well rehearsed? A neat applause acceptance can be very effective. With smiles? It's good showmanship to be appreciative. Why not thank the audience for their applause (if any!) with a smile. They're trying to make you happy....why not oblige them?

Do they ignore the audience's applause, carrying on a "rhubarb" among themselves as to "Who missed that pickup on the key change?" Do they bow gracefully and accept the audience's applause so as to show their appreciation and indicate they've had applause before and know what it's FOR? Do they fumble around with hats, canes, or other properties? Are they at ease? Does their pitchman have his pipe instantly ready to get them off to a smooth second opening?

(Next issue: Concluding with COSTUME, GROOMING, GOOD TASTE, EXIT).

CENTRAL STATES SERENADE

Kansas City 14, Mo.  
9001 Believer

Mike Michel, Editor

Kansas City, Mo.

Kansas City, Mo.  
Permit No. 3655

PAID

U. S. POSTAGE

Sec. 34.66, P. L. & R.

MOANIN' LOW

By John Hill

(Reprinted from the Michigan Troubader)

Seems to me that we should recognize the truth that our society embraces TWO separate aspects of singing barber shop harmony. We should examine each of them thoroughly as they bear on the welfare and progress of the society.

In the beginning, there was only one aspect. Men sang in foursomes for the pure, personal pleasure of creating true musical harmony. This was singing with singer's pleasure as the prime objective.

The second aspect emerged with the organized, entertaining society quartet. Here, the prime objective was the listener's pleasure.

In the beginning, the society grew like wildfire. Men whose formative, schooling and courting (song-impressing) years touched the 1900-1920 era said, "this is for men." And they swarmed together and had a ball. The attendant good-fellowship and the strong mutual interest in and love for Barbershop cemented them together with enduring bonds of friendship and loyalty enjoyed by few fraternal organizations.

The music of the early organized quartets was worked out "by ear." The first written arrangements were merely the reduction to writing of what men had worked out around the kitchen table. And, because each man in the foursome 'found' his own part through instinctive, natural, harmony-feeling urges in developing these "head-arrangements," men susceptible to the appeal of barbershop harmony were captivated by the sound and by their own imagination. "Gosh," they thought, "I can do that, too. The tenor (or whatever) part is just the way I hear it". And he could do it. And he did do it. He came into and became a part of the society.

Competition among the organized quartets was inevitable. The annual contests became an institution and the focal point of the society's conventions, bringing the faithful together for several days of wallowing in a veritable sea of harmony and good-fellowship. Chapters of the society had discovered that they could support themselves financially by presenting proficient society quartets to the paying public and the local annual "Parade of Quartets" had been born. The high-ranking quartets were much sought-after by the chapters in lining up their programs and, naturally, were treated like royalty. The rewards of winning-prestige, red-carpets, foot-lights, money, love of the art, - were adequate to inspire prodigious rehearsal and practice effort with the quartets in their bid for the honors.

The art of quartet singing was dissected and the elements became subjects for minute and painstaking study. Of course, the music or the arrangement guiding the quartet's singing got major attention and musical razzle-dazzle became the order of the day. The arranger appeared on the scene and the "kitchen table" was displaced by the piano bench and staff paper.

That the arranger, his piano and staff paper brought forth discoveries and refinements conducive to improved listening there can be little doubt. However, with the introduction of these new gimmicks we mark the point where the ordinary society member began to consider himself a listener and a patron of the young hotshot quartets as opposed to a participant in quartet singing. The music got too fancy for others than those willing to make the tremendous effort and sacrifices demanded of the serious quartet man. The simple, natural, easy-to-learn, easy-to-sing, created-thru-singing arrangement had become a relic of the past.

As the role of the chapter member changed from 'participant in quartet singing' to 'listener' or patron of the hard working organized quartet, his enthusiasm cooled and the chapters were pressed to retain feverishly sought members; the chapter chorus emerged to save the day. Today, we are essentially a choral society. While we are committed to 'Preserve Barber Shop Quart Singing,' because of the accent on the listening aspect of the music made available to the membership, the actual quartet singing is limited to something like 5 per cent of our membership. Ninety-five per cent of us are patrons of the art. Our administrative people frantically tell us we need more members and that we are in dire straits for more money. It is expensive to put people out in the field to demonstrate the finer points of contest quartet singing and to teach our membership how to appreciate the finer things of barbershop as they listen to our fine quartets.

I'm told that the turnover in society membership approaches 50 per cent annually. While this hardly seems possible, there can be little question that the turnover is large. It would seem to me that our problem is not that of finding new members but rather one of retaining the ones we have and those who will be attracted by the lure of barbershop.

In the beginning, men came and stayed because they could stand up and sing a song with three other guys. I wonder if men have changed very much in 20 years. I don't think so.