

# Harmonotes

The Quarterly Bulletin of the  
Kansas City Heart of America Chorus

CHORUS AND QUARTET SINGING  
IN THE BARBERSHOP STYLE



SECOND-OLDEST CHAPTER IN THE  
BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

VOLUME 18 · ISSUE 1 · APRIL 2018

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Barry Sanders



SANDERS

This is a truly exciting time in the history of HOA! As I write this article, we are busy preparing for a HUGE event down at the Old Muehlebach Hotel Lobby in the Marriott Hotel on April 11<sup>th</sup>, which will honor the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Yes – **Rupert Hall** and **O.C. Cash** met in this very lobby some 80 years ago as they waited for bad weather to pass and sang with two other recruits all night long. Most of you know the story better than I do. And, as they say, the rest is history. Anyway, we are going to be having a big bash that night to celebrate! Along with HOA will be members of ALL of the other 6 metro barbershop choruses: *Central Standard*, *Olathe Trails West*, and *Leavenworth Cody Choraliers*, plus the three metro *Sweet Adelines* choruses (*KC Chorus*, *Vocal Standard*, and *City of Fountains*). We will have 3 champion quartets, highlighted by the revival of our own **Rural Route 4**, including **Don Kahl** who sang tenor with their quartet when they won the gold in 1986, along with two other district champions quartets, *Harmonium* and *BoomTown!* We will have mass sings, a proclamation by Mayor **Sly James**, BHS CEO **Marty Monson**, birthday cake, and much more. If you aren't signed up by now, you don't want to miss it! It's open to the public and we will still be selling wristbands at the door for \$25.

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# HARMONOTES

Harmonotes is published by the board of directors of the Kansas City, Mo., Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, a non-profit organization. Photographs that are not attributed are the work of our photographers at large. Unless accompanied by a byline, all articles have been written by the editor and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the officers and members of the chapter. Space will be made available for opposing points of view.

Chapter meets at 7 p.m. each Tuesday night, at:  
St. Peter's United Church of Christ  
110th & Holmes · Kansas City, Mo. 64131

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All chapter officers and quartets are expected, and chapter members encouraged, to contribute their ideas on a regular basis. The editorial staff reserves the right to deny publication of material deemed inappropriate for *Harmonotes* and to edit all submissions for reasons of space and clarity (grammar, content and spelling). Permission to reprint articles is granted to barbershop editors as long as the author and *Harmonotes* are acknowledged. The utmost care was used in preparation of this newsletter. Should you notice erroneous copy, please let the editor know!

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HOA Board meetings take place at 6pm on the second Monday or Tuesday of the month, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 100 East Red Bridge Road, Kansas City, MO 64131. Chapter members are welcome!

HOA Website: [www.hoachorus.com](http://www.hoachorus.com)  
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Chorus Manager & Webmaster - Vince Perry



(Continued from front page)

The other huge event that we are preparing for is our exciting June show. Following on the theme of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the society, this is also the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *HOA*! Our show on June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Bell Center (Mid-America Nazarene University) will focus on that anniversary theme. *HOA* is learning about 9-10 new songs for this performance – well, some of them are brand-new and some of them are being revived from our repertoire from years past. It's all good! One thing to note here is that *HOA* is inviting all members, even those not currently singing with the performing chorus, to come back and sing *Old Quartet of Mine* with us. We will ask you to attend a couple practices in advance of the show, just to insure that you are back on track with the arm waver's interpretation (**Jim Bagby** will direct this song on the show). Anyway, whether or not you plan to sing with us on this show, we want you to come to the show! It will be a great one!

That's not all that's happening with *HOA*. April 7 will include an all-day coaching session on Saturday featuring "**Doc**" **Spilker** from AOH in St. Charles as our coach. It should be an exciting day. Let's not forget that *HOA* was "most improved Plateau AAA chorus" last Fall in St. Charles and we intend to keep that record intact with becoming "most improved chorus" two years in a row when we return to St. Charles for Fall contest again this year.

Finally, most of you know that we have decided that it's time to move our meeting venue to a different location, after about 15 years in our current practice location. At press time, our venue search committee has narrowed the alternatives down to two "finalist" locations. The plan is to make a recommendation of the best alternative to the *HOA* Board at their meeting this coming Monday night. Assuming the Board approves the recommended "new" venue, we will announce it immediately. It is our hope that we will be moved and singing in our new venue before the end of April!

So --- there you have it – there is a lot going on. I am excited and proud to be part of *HOA* at this time, and look forward to many other exciting events throughout the remainder of 2018. If you are currently not in the PC (performing chorus), we want you back! ♥



# BIG NIGHT FOR AWARDS!

By Bruce Wenner, Chairman, Awards Committee

It was a banner year at the Annual Chapter Banquet for the 2017 Awards. All four awards were presented, a rarity that last occurred in 2012. And, for the first time in *HOA* history, one man received two of the awards in the same year.

That one man was **Bob Velazquez** – Bob earned the Ozzie Award for outstanding musical service to the chapter, and the coveted Barbershopper Of The Year Award. The decisions on the two awards were clear-cut. The only question in our minds was whether one man should get two awards in one year. We decided the answer was yes, provided that one man had earned them. And Bob had clearly earned both awards. Over the years he has contributed his considerable talents as Section Leader, Assistant Director, Music Vice President, and now as Musical Director. We all know what a great job Bob did in saving the Chapter Show when we lost our director only four days before the show date. He came late in life to barbershop, but he has plunged into it to the neck, and we *HOA* members are deeply thankful for it.

The John Cross Award was also an easy decision. **John Braden** had the best attendance record among eligible members, and he pitches in with energy and enthusiasm. Particularly notable has been John's very productive service on the

Music Team, and he is now our new Music Vice President. John was an active *HOA* member – and quartet man (anybody remember John's quartet *Reverie*, with **Marlin Weidler**, the late **Dennis Kinghorn**, and yours truly?) during the '80s and '90s. Then he laid out for a while, but has come back with a bang – including a John Cross-worthy performance.

Finally, the Joe Stern Lifetime Achievement Award went to – who else? – **Vince Perry III**. This makes Vince one of the few triple award winners – he earned the John Cross Award in 1999 and was the Barbershopper Of The Year in 2002. He is best appreciated for his long-time service as *HOA* Chorus Manager. Vince takes care of our every need when we go to contest and performances. He prepares a handout which includes everything from driving directions to convention schedules to housing info to restaurants to word games and crossword puzzles. This handout is affectionately referred to by chorus members as "The Bible." Vince's service to the chapter is all the more remarkable in that he has a three-hour round trip to participate in chapter meetings or other activities.

Kudos to **Jerry Meier** for organizing the banquet, and to the award winners Bob Velazquez, **John Braden**, and **Vince Perry**. ❤️

## 2018 Officer Installation Ceremony • John Erwine 01/13/2018

# “Everyone in Harmony”



Thank you and welcome to this evening's annual banquet and installation ceremony. Let's start as we have so many times, at so many meetings: Carter, would please get us started? [Leads the singing]

*The Old Songs, The Old Songs. . . The good old songs for me  
I love to hear those minor chords. . . and good close harmony*  
[Continuing directly into]  
*Down Our Way, both night and day –  
You know everybody and they all know you,  
And even policemen say, “How do you do?”  
Pals by the score, and Gals galore;  
And that old gang of mine, they sang “Sweet Adeline. . .  
Down our way. . . down our way!”*

This really has been, and is, the start of the journey for so many of us. We start with our love of good close harmony — the music! And move directly to the people and friendships — pals by the score! — that make up our barbershop world. That's our weekly experience of the Barbershop Harmony Society's new Strategic Vision: “**Everyone in Harmony.**”

We sing together to create the sound of barbershop harmony. We sing together to create *personal harmony* among singers. We create harmony *between ourselves as performer, and our audiences.* And sometimes even among members of the audience with one another. These are the local, immediate and direct ways we foster a vision of “Everyone in Harmony.”

It's a powerful vision, and it's great because it reflects who we are already — individuals, with individual differences — creating something bigger together than we are separately. In fact, our differences are what makes harmony. Without our differences, we wouldn't be the *Barbershop Harmony Society*, and we'd be much the poorer for it, for missing the experience that envelopes each of us and assimilates us into the special, magic world we all enter every chapter meeting night.

Let's celebrate together a few things that make this chapter uniquely itself; and for how everyone doing something different, in his own way, makes us richer. Let's celebrate:

- Quartets that work with Harmony Explosion, and **Jerry** for organizing it.
- *New Harmony Handful* for performing at Nursing & Retirement Centers, and Churches when relieving summer choirs.
- **Mike & Bob** for organizing the Salvation Army Caroling Caravan, and all who join in.
- The Annual Show and Holiday Harmony Spectacular organizers.
- All of our committee chairmen and all helpers who give of their time.
- This list goes on and on, with none being inferior to the other.

**Ernie** isn't **Darryl** and **Robert** isn't **Kyle** — and that's great! As a TV ad last year put it — “Be together, not the same.” [Imagine if we were all **John Erwine**? Or if we were all tenors? Ha!]

So as we prepare for 2018, let's be aware of all possibilities — as members, as officers, as friends and family — of making a reality of our vision of “Everyone in Harmony.” It happens right here!

In addition to installing our officers, I want to challenge all chapter members as teammates in this effort. Good leadership requires “willing follower-ship.” So let us, all chapter members pledge ourselves together. Please repeat “I Will” after each of the following 3 commitments:

Do you pledge yourselves? . . .

- To be actively welcoming of all people interested in harmony? [I will]
- To be giving and forgiving as we work together, and sometime succeed and sometimes make mistakes? [I will]
- To be always ready to assume the best of everyone? [I will]

It is now my privilege to install the officers of the Kansas City Chapter, of the Barbershop Harmony Society. It is a distinct privilege, because in acting as your installing officer, I am assuming the office of our late Founder and Permanent Third Assistant Temporary Vice-Chairman, the eminent **O.C. Cash**, and that of our current international president, **Skip Kropp**.

And now the following persons who have been elected to their respective offices, will please come forward as I call your name . . .  
[Refer to names]

Gentlemen: Our Society was founded as a singing Society, but wherever there is a number of persons grouped together, whether large or small, there must be leaders who will orient the group and determine its goals.

You men have been chosen by members of this chapter as worthy leaders, capable of carrying out in their name the responsibilities and ideals which they entrust to you and which our Society upholds. Your loyalty to this Trust, will make it possible for this chapter to strengthen itself, to build on these strengths and to move toward the greater promotion of harmony, both musically and in your relationship with each other, in a spirit of true enjoyment.

Officers, I now ask you . . . Do You Pledge:  
To the cherished purposes for which this Society has been founded; to the faithful observance of its Code of Ethics; to the strengthening and up-building of this chapter, and the promotion of harmony among its members; to the realization that a singing nation is a happy nation; to the conviction that the growth and prosperity of our organization shall be beneficial to the welfare of our community, our country and to the preservation and encouragement of barbershop singing in America? If you do, here and now, pledge you're most earnest efforts to these precepts . . . answer "I do."

Membership: [audience]  
Now, to you, the members of this chapter. I express the hope that this healthy association of men in harmony, will long continue and may you thrill to the caress of a barbershop chord, so long as your senses have the power of perception. I charge you, with the responsibility of sincere and faithful participation, in the activities of your chapter, the activities of your district, and the activities of your Society. Your personal enthusiasm and cooperation with your elected officials will largely determine the strength and usefulness of your chapter and the entire barbershop movement. If so, please now answer "I do."

Members, you have heard the pledges of your officers. Officers, you have heard the pledges of your members. On these pledges, we believe a strong program can be developed and carried out in 2018, and that these efforts will result in a stronger, better chapter to the satisfaction and pleasure of the leadership team, the entire membership, and our communities.

[At this point offices were asked to imagine they are all in a circle, ¼ turn to the right, each extending their left arm, reaching toward the center hub]

Gentlemen as you can see, when you are in this position, all facing forward with left arm extended toward the center hub, you resemble a wheel. As you walk forward, rotating in the same direction, in the shape of that wheel, the rim, or that part that does the work, can function only so long as the spokes, or in this case you men, does his part and works along with the others. The wheel will continue to turn, even though at some point one spoke may fall away.

And I'm sure you will agree, that although its operation will continue, it will be impaired to some noticeable degree. But if several fall away, the wheel will collapse. This is true of a barbershop chapter. You men must work together as a team, helping each other, and in that way you cannot help but succeed.

As you know, a circle or ring is the strongest formation known to man. This is why chains are made the way they are. You all have heard the story of the weakest link. Well, all of you here are a part of this circle. All of you have "a voice" in whether it will be strong — or weak. Let's each of us "together, not the same," exemplify "willing follower-ship" to do all that we can, to make it the strongest "circle" in the Society.

And now, in the name of the International Board of Directors, of the Barbershop Harmony Society, I hereby proclaim the officers of the Kansas City chapter, *Heart of America Chorus*, to be duly installed. ♥

## BARBERSHOP HISTORY QUIZ:

Author: Mark Axelrod, editor of "Blue Chip Chatter," Teaneck, NJ.



1. Name the most famous "close harmony" quartet (The term barbershop was not yet in use, see last month's quiz) of the pre-Civil War era.
2. The golden age of the writing of songs that lend themselves to the barbershop style was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and came from a wonderful place in Manhattan called "Tin Pan Alley." How did the term come about?
3. Where was Tin Pan Alley?
4. Which quartet first recorded a barbershop song; where and when was the recording made?

**(ANSWERS AT BOTTOM OF PAGE 12)**

# 2018 HOA AWARDS BANQUET RECAP

Photos courtesy of Rich Huyck



# 2018 HOA AWARDS BANQUET RECAP

Photos courtesy of Rich Huyck



# HARMONY EXPLOSION! 2018 — FEATURING THE PARADE OF QUARTETS!

Article by Jerry Meier, Photos Courtesy of Rich Huyck and Don Fuson

Harmony Explosion! 2018 was another fun-filled day of entertainment for the students and the audience. I want to say THANK YOU to all of the volunteers from the *Heart of America Chorus*, the *Kansas City Chorus of Sweet Adelines* and the *Olathe Trails West Chorus* (who served lunch to the students and volunteers in a truly professional manner!).

Let's also say thanks to *Pizzazz* and *Harmonium* who entertained the students, taught the chorus songs, judged the quartet performances and awarded the quartet medals.

A record number of student participated at Harmony Explosion! 2018 — nearly 240 students sang in 51 quartets (a 17% increase over last year). Sixteen schools participated this year (which is also a record), representing six middle schools and ten high schools from Augusta, Lawrence, and both sides of the state line in the Kansas City Metro Area!

The Harmony Explosion! format was modified to accommodate the sanctioning requirements of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA). Quartets performed in the morning session to earn Gold or Silver or Bronze medals (which are equivalent to "I" or "II" or "III" ratings) from our Barbershop / Sweet Adeline panel of judges. The afternoon session concluded with a 230pm concert featuring the Boys Chorus, the Girls Chorus, and a "Parade of Quartets" comprised of the Gold-medal Quartets from all divisions from the morning session. *Pizzazz* and *Harmonium* performed one final set each to conclude the concert.

The vocal music educators that supported our Harmony Explosion! 2018 event were:

- **Jan Holthus**, Olathe East and Olathe South High School
- **Susan Scheibler**, Olathe East High School — 10 Quartets
- **Elise Peterson**, Olathe South High School — 6 Quartets
- **Pam Williamson**, Olathe Northwest High School — 8 Quartets
- **Dr. Garrett Epp**, Olathe North High School — 2 Quartets
- **Beth Richey-Sullivan**, Blue Valley Northwest High School — 1 Quartet
- **Robin Christie**, Bishop Miege High School — 2 Quartets
- **Dr. Dwayne Dunn**, Lawrence High School — 3 Quartets
- **Jerrod McNutt**, Augusta High School — 1 Quartet
- **Jason Cole**, Saint James Academy — 1 Quartet
- **Elizabeth Mulkey**, Notre Dame de Sion High School — 10 singers
- **Marcheta Pearson**, California Trail Middle School (Olathe) — 9 Quartets
- **Beth Nelson**, Oregon Trail Middle School (Olathe) — 1 Quartet
- **Cassie Sutherland**, Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley) — 4 Quartets
- **Andrew Rembecki**, Antioch Middle School (Missouri) — 1 Quartet
- **Christine Freeman**, Aubry Bend Middle School (Blue Valley) — 1 Quartet
- **Becky Barr**, Prairie Star Middle School (Blue Valley) — 1 Quartet

The final results were as follows:

## 8th Grade and Under Girls Division

- Gold THE FAB FOUR - Prairie Star (Blue Valley)
- Gold NOTHING BUT TREBLE - California Trail (Olathe)
- Gold LOCO LADIES - California Trail (Olathe)
- Gold HEART OF GOLD - Antioch (Missouri)
- Gold AUBRYPELLA - Aubry Bend (Blue Valley)
- Gold HEART BROKEN HARMONIZERS - California Trail (Olathe)
- Gold BOOGIE BABES - California Trail (Olathe)
- Silver BE NATURALS - California Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Silver THE MELODIES - California Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Silver THE PITCHES - Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley)

- Silver THE TREBLESOME SEVEN - Oregon Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Silver DOUBLE TREBLE - Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley)
- Silver BUGLETTES - Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley)

## 8th Grade and Under Boys Division

- Silver BROS WITH BOWS - California Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Silver ALL ABOUT THE BASS - California Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Bronze CHICKEN TENORS - California Trail Middle School (Olathe)
- Bronze THE SPRITES - Lakewood Middle School (Blue Valley)

## 10th Grade and Under Girls Division

- Gold SAVED BY THE BELLES - Olathe Northwest High School
- Gold SOUTHERN BELLAS - Olathe South High School
- Gold CHORDIALLY YOURS - Olathe East High School
- Gold SASSY SUGARS - Olathe Northwest High School
- Silver TREBLE RUNS - Bishop Miege High School
- Silver LOVELY TREBLES - Bishop Miege High School
- Silver THE TOMORROWS - Olathe Northwest High School

## 10th Grade and Under Boys Division

- Gold TRIPLE DELUXE - Olathe North High School
- Gold PITCH PLEASE - Olathe East High School
- Gold WORKING TITLE - Olathe East High School
- Gold THE GUYS IN TIES - Saint James Academy
- Silver BP - Olathe East High School
- Silver TONAL L-M-N-TS - Lawrence High School
- Silver JOEY & THE MAMA'S BOYS - Olathe Northwest High School
- Silver BIG TREBLE - Olathe Northwest High School
- Silver TAKE FOUR - Olathe East High School

## 12th Grade and Under Girls Division

- Gold FOUR BELLES - Olathe East High School
- Gold BELLA VOCE - Lawrence High School
- Gold MAROON 4 - Olathe East High School
- Gold NOTEWORTHY - Olathe Northwest High School
- Gold HOLD THAT THOUGHT - Olathe East High School
- Silver PERFECT FOURTH - Olathe Northwest High School
- Silver FOUR OF A KIND - Olathe South High School

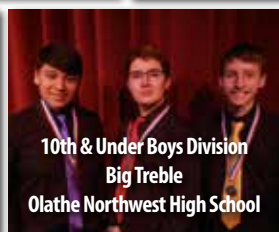
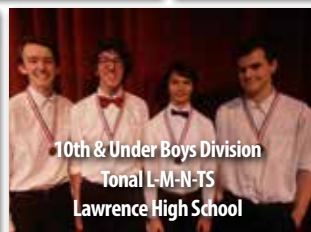
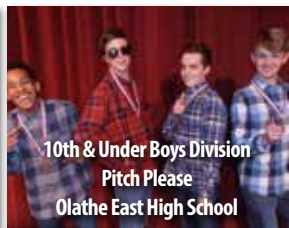
## 12th Grade and Under Boys Division

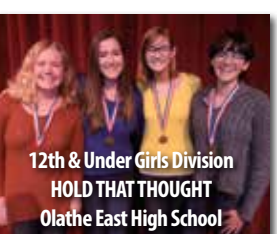
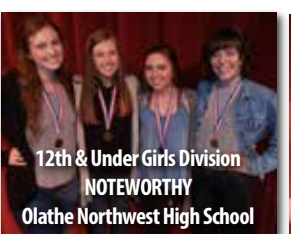
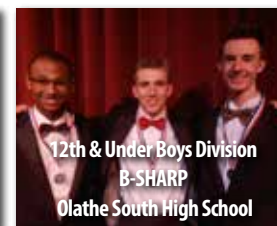
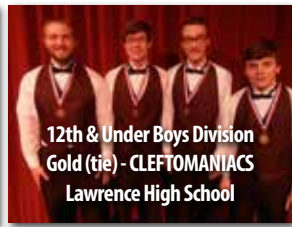
- Gold STAND BY - Blue Valley Northwest High School
- Gold CLEFTOMANIACS - Lawrence High School
- Gold FERMATA NOWHERE - Olathe South High School
- Gold ULTRASONIC - Olathe East High School
- Gold TREBLE MAKERS - Augusta High School
- Gold STAY TUNED - Olathe South High School
- Gold WHEN PIGS FLY - Olathe South High School
- Gold DO RE MIGOS - Olathe Northwest High School
- Silver HIGH INTENSITY - Olathe East High School
- Silver BARBERSHOP CORPSE-TET - Olathe North High School
- Silver B-SHARP - Olathe South High School

Video highlights are posted on YouTube (search the words "Harmony Explosion 2018 Olathe").

Please make plans to join me and a large cast of returning students next year for Harmony Explosion! 2019 on Saturday, Feb. 16 at Olathe East High School. ❤️







## Seven-year Participants at Harmony Explosion! 2018



The Olathe School District migrated to a Middle School / High School format back in 2011: 6th – 8th grade students attended Middle School; 9th – 12th grade students attended High School. At that time, the Junior High Division of Harmony Explosion! included 6th grade to 9th grade students, which caused concern among the younger singers when they were compared to older 9th grade singers. However, a few brave 6th graders sang that year, and in the next year, in their very first Harmony Explosion! event before the Divisions were redefined as 8th Grade and Under; 10th Grade and Under; 12th Grade and Under.

6th Grade Students are recognized each year at Harmony Explosion! and are encouraged to participate in quartets each year of Middle School and High School. If they accept and complete this challenge, they will receive a 7-year Harmony Explosion Medal. This Medal is given only to those select students that have shown the dedication to sing in a quartet in all seven of the Middle School and High School years.

Last year, three medals were given. This year, three more medals were given. The recipients of the 2018 7-year Harmony Explosion Medal are pictured above with **Jerry Meier** (Left to Right): **Grace Johns** (Pioneer Trail MS and Olathe East HS), **Rebecca Kite** (Pioneer Trail MS and Olathe East HS), and **Chase Simmons** (Indian Trail MS and Olathe South HS). ❤️

# NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!



Introducing the newest members of the Chapter!

Photos by Ron McIntire

## RICHARD "DICK" IRWIN • 1950 - 2017

By Ron McIntire



**RICHARD WILLIAM "Dick" Irwin**, 67, was born August 20, 1950, and died unexpectedly October 19, 2017, in Aitkin, Minnesota. He was born in Kansas City, Kansas and lived in various cities, graduating from high school in Colorado in 1968. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S.

Navy where he became an air traffic controller. In Kansas City, he worked as a Computer Programmer/Analyst for DST Systems. Dick and his wife, Sheli, had five children between them.

Dick joined the Barbershop Society in 1994 and sang with two choruses: *North Star Chorus* (Greater St. Paul Minnesota Area Chapter) and the *Great Northern Union* (Hilltop, Minnesota Chapter) before joining the *Heart of America Chorus* in 1998. He sang baritone with *HOA* and was in at least two quartets: *Mint Condition* in Minnesota and *Rewind!* in Kansas City and served as President of the Kansas City Chapter in 2000 and 2001.

Dick enjoyed singing in his church choir, flying model airplanes and was a cat fancier. He was a member of the Mo-Kan Cat Club of Leawood, Kansas and Saintly City Cat Club of St. Paul, Minnesota.

Note: More information can be found in the Personally Speaking article, page 10, March 2000 issue of the *Harmonotes*. ❤️



**Tom Hadley**

**Tom Hadley** lives in Kansas City, MO with his wife Barbara and works as a software developer for AT&T. He has been singing all his life. He was in the concert choir in high school and sang in a quartet in *Music Man*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame* - lots of latin there, *Hello, Dolly* and *South Pacific* among others. In college, he signed up for choir but it was too competitive and more for professional singers so that didn't last. He joined, or at least visited, the Overland Stage chapter about 15 years ago life interfered and he didn't pursue it further. He was in a short-lived barbershop quartet called *Barbers of Seville*, and used to play guitar. He sings lead in the *HOA Chorus*.



**Adam Singleton**

**Adam Singleton** lives in Liberty, MO, he's currently single and works for Commerce Bank in Kansas City. His musical background dates back Jr. and Sr. High School choir and he plays guitar and trumpet. He said he had no idea an organization like HOA existed until Bob Velazquez invited him to rehearsal one night. Adam sings bass in the *HOA Chorus*.

# MEELIS PAUL RAIKULA • 1937 - 2017

By Ron McIntire



**MEELIS PAUL RAIKULA**, 80, a 27-year past member of HOA, was born July 24, 1937 in Petseri, Estonia and died at his home, in Overland Park, Kansas December 31, 2017. He immigrated to the United States from Estonia via Germany in 1949 with his mother and sister, as refugees after World War II.

When I began this article on Paul Raikula, I didn't know much beyond his obituary in the Kansas City Star and the few short

years I knew him when he was an active barbershop singer. My research on Ancestry.com and a poll among the few living and active barbershoppers who knew him, and a visit with his wife, quickly grew into something far more extensive than the 200-word obituary I had planned. His life was more than that of a refugee from war-torn Europe, who came to America, made good, raised a family and left the world better than he found it. Here is his story.

Meelis (May-liss) Raikeula (old spelling) was born in Petseri County, Estonia. On a return to his roots with his wife Ann, in 2000, he recalled that his historical name was not Raikula but Mitnits (a German name). His grandfather chose the new name after World War I when there was a national effort to encourage Estonian pride in their heritage. In Estonia, the name Raikula was spelled "Raikeula", the "e" replaced an umlauted "u" (two dots above the u).

Petseri (Pet-sur-ee) county, population of 10,000 to 12,000 in 1949, is one of a number of counties in Estonia located in the Baltic region of northern Europe. Its history is a complicated and fluid one of assignments of administrative boundaries, occupation by German and Russian armed forces and governments, and a struggle for independence. The official language of Estonia is Estonian, a language related to the Finnish. It's a difficult language with more vowel sounds than English and, like German, many words are often put together to form other words. Young Meelis spoke a child's Estonian language that is different from that of the adults. He never mastered speaking adult Estonian and may have spoken German. Many Estonians speak several languages, including Estonian, Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and some speak English.

By the early part of 1940, the Raikula family had moved to the city of Tartu, where his father was stationed in the Estonian army. During WWII, Estonia was taken over by the German army and it was reported in 1941 that Hitler was considering establishing concentration camps in the country. In 1944, the Soviet forces were moving forward to drive the occupying German army out of Estonia in their advance towards Nazi Germany. Not much is known about experiences of Meelis's father

during the war except that he was conscripted into the German army and sent to fight against the Russians on the Russian front. Meelis and his family fled south to Germany in an attempt to flee the conflict.

On the front, Meelis's father became friends with a German officer who "allowed" him to desert and return to his family. It's not clear how he found them in Germany, but they were eventually reunited. War is never fair and during their time in Germany the family believed that the Americans were shelling the village where they stayed to oust suspected German troops. One shell landed just outside the door of their bomb shelter, and the explosion sent shrapnel and wood smashing through the door killing Meelis's father instantly. His mother, **Minna**, whose name is spelled both Minni and Minna, was hit in both upper legs. His sister, **Kersti**, suffered lesser wounds. Only young Meelis escaped injury and raced to an aid station not far away for help.

During her recovery, Minna, a trained nurse, developed gangrene in her legs and doctors recommended amputation. Minna steadfastly refused and demanded fly larvae to eat away the dead tissue. The treatment worked and her legs healed although it took two years before she could leave the hospital. Children had little schooling then and were often on their own. Asked what he and the other children did for play, Meelis said "... we played in a nearby forest, on tanks damaged in the war, and begged for chocolate from American troops moving through the area."

For the five years until Meelis and his family left for the U.S., they lived in Germany. It was during this period of time and in this environment that young Meelis lived before he came to America.

In 1948, Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act that authorized the admission of 200,000 European displaced persons (they were called DPs) for permanent residence in the United States. Refugees from Estonia and Germany fell into this category and on November 19, 1949, young Meelis, age 12, his mother Minna, age 34, and sister Kersti, age 7, boarded a U.S. Army Transport ship, the General S.D. Sturgis, at Bremerhaven, Germany, (pictured below) and set sail for the United States.



It's not known what Meelis did on board ship but his Mother and sister were sick much of the time

and stayed below deck. He recalled later that he and the other children played on the ship and slept in hammocks on their trip to America. Mast Magazine and Time Magazine documented accounts of life aboard ship in 1948, and there was no reason to believe conditions were any different in 1949. Meals were eaten at standing-height tables and mothers with small children were given seats in the former officer's dining room. Work details were light. Women had assignments in the kitchen and men had

clean-up assignments on deck or in the engine room. But most of the day the passengers spent the time on deck in small groups with family or friends telling stories of what they knew about their new land.

Memories of some of the people who came in 1948 and their stories are a glimpse of the strength and resilience of the people coupled with the hope they must have felt as they left the port at Bremerhaven. One displaced person who came to the U.S. in 1949 when he was six years old recalled later that although he was too young to form strong opinions about the cuisine, he remembered eating the first orange of his life aboard ship. Another remembered, "We watched them come aboard at Bremerhaven, many dressed in cast-off clothes and carrying their pitifully meager belongings. . ." And a crew member on one of the voyages recalled "As we moved up the Weser River towards the sea, the passengers gradually fell silent. They realized they were leaving their mother continent, probably never to return again. As long as land was in sight, the D.P.s stood there on deck watching their past fade into oblivion..." The Sturgis arrived in Boston, Massachusetts November 30.

Meelis and his family stayed in Boston for a short while, then moved to Evanston, Illinois, about 15 miles north of Chicago where they stayed with a sponsor. We don't know which language, German or youthful Estonian, Meelis used most when he arrived in his new country, but his mother insisted he learn English. His lack of English language skills set him back only a year in school. He petitioned for naturalization through the Court of Illinois when he was 18 and he was granted U.S. citizenship April 17, 1956. From age 18 he gradually dropped the "e" from Raikeula and that was the spelling from then on. He graduated from Evanston Township High School in Evanston, Illinois in 1956.

Meelis attended Northwestern University in Evanston, working toward a degree in Mechanical Engineering, supporting himself and earning his tuition waiting tables. He was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and recalls that he was struck by the fraternity rules to always wear a necktie to dinner meals and wait until the house mother was seated before starting to eat. He stopped short of graduation by one semester to marry a young woman in 1960. They had two children, Ron and Karen, then migrated to the Kansas City area sometime around 1970. He eventually settled in Lenexa, Overland Park and then Shawnee Mission, Kansas. He and his wife divorced in 1985.

Meelis, now going by Mel, worked at several jobs for a number of years including one at United Computing Systems as a sales representative. He later founded a small firm called Paul Raikula Consultant - Business Consulting Services in Shawnee Mission, Kansas. Barry Sanders recalls working with him at UCS from the late 1970s to 1984 and was surprised to run into him when he joined the chapter.

Over the years, Meelis became known by his nickname "Mel" and went by Mel in 1981 when he joined the Kansas City Chapter and Heart of America Chorus. He remarried in 1987, and his wife recalls that after they married, he told her he never felt like the name Mel was right for him, and no one could pronounce or remember Meelis. Ironically, his wife, whose name is **Rita Ann**, prefers to use only her middle name. It seemed logical for Mel, who didn't have a middle name because it was not the custom at the time he was born, that he should adopt one. He chose the name of his father, Paul. I recall him announcing his name change to the chapter one night and that was how we knew him from then on. Some thought his father had died a few weeks before and he chose the name to honor his father. In truth, his father died in Germany before young Paul came to America. So, in a way, he did honor his father. His mother, Minna, died unexpectedly in Chicago in 1987.

Paul was an active barbershopper until the late 1980s or early 90s. He became inactive after that and the chapter lost track of him. He kept his membership active until he dropped out in 2008. Paul's friends in the chapter remember him as a laid-back sort of guy, likeable and friendly but not demonstrably outgoing, and as a good bass singer. He had a distinctive voice with a hint of an accent left over from his early life in Estonia. When I think of Paul, I can hear his voice as clearly as if it were yesterday. I noted his accent one evening during a break in chorus rehearsal and asked about his nationality. He simply said he was from Estonia and commented that the country was part of the USSR. The chorus was called back to rehearsal and we never spoke of his history again.

In 2016, Paul's wife ran across **Jim Bagby** at St. Luke's Hospital and learned of *CardioJam*, a small singing group Jim directs at the hospital. She told Paul, wanting to inspire him to get more active for his health, and Jim invited him to sing with the group. *CardioJam* strives to perform twice a year, once during the summer and once at Christmas time. Paul sang with them until late in 2017 when, as they prepared for their Christmas 2017 performance, he advised Jim his health would not permit singing at the performance. He died two weeks later.

Paul was a good man who lived a good life. He was a handy man around the house in his younger years and a hard worker, well liked by his friends and he enjoyed singing with *CardioJam*. When I called Ann for an interview, his unmistakable voice came on the answering machine. It was decidedly older and a bit shaky but clearly the voice I remember from 30 years ago. Those who knew him in both choruses will remember him well.

Paul was preceded in death by his mother, his sister Kersti, and his daughter **Karen**. He is survived by his wife Ann and a son **Ron**, who lives in Boston. He was interred following private graveside services. ❤️

*The photo of Paul Raikula was taken at his 50th year H.S. Class Reunion in 2006. Photographer is unknown.*

# SINGAMABOB POINTING FOR JUNE SHOW

By Keith Schweer



Singamabob is having a good time learning new — and old — music. We're working to develop a repertoire so we can perform in public, but we seem to spend more time visiting and telling stories than rehearsing.

Reminds me of our recent trip to Antarctica, which is where you would expect weather like this. Antarctica is an interesting place not visited by many people. My wife and I had a wonderful time. We saw lots of rugged scenery and wildlife (whales, penguins, seals and lots of birds not seen in the northern hemisphere). Would highly recommend this trip to those of you that are adventurous.

So far, everyone but **Carter** has a solo of some kind in our comedy approach — but he does get to handle the pitchpipe.

**Jim** and **Carter** are busy with the HOA music program. Willard, along with some of his family and others from his church in Cass County, recently went on a two-week trip to help a small town in West Africa with a building project for its church.

We had fun delivering Singing Valentines to 10 people on Feb. 14, and we're looking forward to the chapter show on June 16. ♥

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**WHO:** "The New Horizons Band." An international group featuring community bands with age 50 and above players of wind instruments and percussion.

**WHO ELSE:** The elementary children's band at St. Thomas More Catholic School at 11800 Holmes Road, Kansas City MO.

**WHAT:** The New Horizons Band (including HOA's own **Wally Thornton**) will play individually, the kids individually, and the two bands combined, Total playing time about an hour and a quarter.

**WHERE:** At the school.

**WHEN:** April 30, 2018, at 7 PM.

**HOW MUCH:** As the old song says, **"THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE!"**

## BARBERSHOPPER OF THE MONTH



### Bob Velasquez June 2017

In grateful appreciation for stepping up to take over the directing role of the HOA Chorus at the June 17, 2017 Annual Show with only four days notice. The award was presented by President Barry Sanders Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire.

## BARBERSHOPPER OF THE MONTH



### Barry Sanders April 2018

In grateful appreciation for organizing and supervising the special committee that made the 80th Anniversary celebration of the Barbershop Harmony Society at the Muehlebach Hotel, April 11, 2018, a memorable event for all. The award was presented by Executive Vice President Mike Schumacher . Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire.

**EXTRA MILE AWARD**



**Jim Davis  
June 2017**

In grateful appreciation for your work creating the stage prop for "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" at the 2017 Heart of America Barbershop Show. The award was presented by President Barry Sanders Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire.

**EXTRA MILE AWARD**



**Don Fuson  
April 2018**

In grateful appreciation for promoting and acting as MC for the 80th Anniversary celebration of the Barbershop Harmony Society, April 11, 2018, in Kansas City, MO. The award was presented by Executive Vice President Mike Schumacher. Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire.

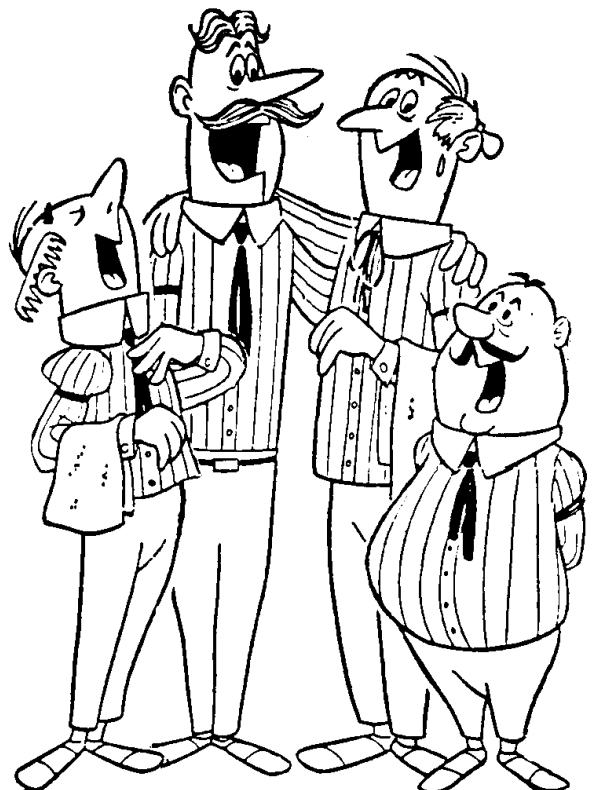
**SPECIAL**

**EXTRA MILE AWARD**



**Rural Route 4  
Jim Bagby, Willard Yoder,  
Calvin Yoder, Don Kahl  
April 2018**

The award was presented by Executive Vice President Mike Schumacher. Photo courtesy of Ron McIntire.



# *NHH Off and Running As It Begins 10th Year* by Denny Briley



Happy April Fool's Day as I sit here and watch it sleet and snow. Welcome to Spring in Kansas. The *New Harmony Handful (NHH)* has been active in the



first quarter of 2018 as we start our 10th year of performances for nursing homes, retirement communities, senior church groups and summer church services, among others. We continue to meet once a month to rehearse and improve our presentations.

Reminds me of our recent trip to Antarctica, which is where you would expect weather like this. Antarctica is an interesting place not visited by many people. My wife and I had a wonderful time. We saw lots of rugged scenery and wildlife (whales, penguins, seals and lots of birds not seen in the northern hemisphere). Would highly recommend this trip to those of you that are adventurous.

Our first meeting of the year is always to review and evaluate our repertoire, remove or add songs and prepare for the coming year. **Jim Bagby** (Ye Olde Arm Waver) continues to strive to get *NHH* to improve and unify our sound.

Since the first of the year, the Handful has presented its program to four groups. And we have three performances scheduled in April, including a party where never-miss member **Bob Howard** will celebrate a birthday that ends in zero. His son-in-law, Tulsa-based HOA member and former assistant director **Charlie Drake**, will join us that day to sing bari. Shortly after that, church choirs begin vacations. If you'd like us to sing for your church during that time, contact **Tony Strub** soon; our summer schedule always fills up fast. *NHH* has not avoided the cold and flu season, as multiple members of the group have been fighting the lingering effects of coughs and congestion. Thankfully, no one has had the dreaded flu that we know. The *Handful* is a group of 21 Kansas City metro area barbershoppers, nearly all senior citizens, who enjoy presenting music in the barbershop style. We normally appear with 14-16 or 17 or 18 singers – thus our name. ❤️



# LITTLE PAL: 1929 TO 2018

By Carl Turlin, 18-year HOA Member

In 1928 and 1929, **Al Jolson** collaborated with the song-writing and publishing team of **B.G. (Buddy) DeSylva, Ray Henderson** and **Lew Brown** to try to repeat the success from his previous tear jerker entitled, *Sonny Boy*. That song had been featured in his 1928 musical screen drama, "Say It with Songs."

In 1929, Jolson's performance of the new song, *Little Pal*, reached No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Magazine music charts. Evidently, it struck a chord with the struggling American public.

That was only 10 years following the first World War and America was sliding into an economic depression. Families were hard-pressed to make, and keep, their salary – if they had one.

My dad, born in 1926, told me stories of cold nights and little food; lots of work for him to do, even as the youngest of three brothers, and attending the one-room school house in his rural southeast Missouri hometown.

No telling how many kids then were what we now call abused, neglected or eligible for what is now known as foster care. I'm guessing that the number is significant, maybe even more than the current levels, given the historical persistence of "spare the rod and spoil the child" – and before the advent of the entire field of child psychology.

In September of 2014, my wife, **Marci**, met and tested a kindergarten as part of her suburban Kansas City school district case load. He scored extremely low, but was a very bright-eyed and active little boy. In November, his foster mother announced to the school staff that she was getting out of the foster care program and homes would need to be secured for the three boys in her care.

Marci was quite taken with the boy, lamenting that he would go to his fourth foster care placement in 11 months, and probably to another school in another district, losing any semblance of educational continuity. We discussed becoming foster parents and agreed to investigate the process. On a Monday morning, we made some calls, were interviewed that evening and I met the boy at school the next morning. That Friday evening, poof, we had a 5-year-old boy living with us.



Three and half years into this adventure, I decided to put some thoughts together about our experience and intersperse them with Jolson's song lyrics, lamenting what happens when a young boy is not with his birth father. Marci and I don't have many details about what his life was like before he was removed from his birth father's custody. He has not had contact with his birth mother since he was 2. What we do know about his life before we adopted him is not good.

**Little Pal, if daddy goes away,  
Promise you'll be good from day to day.  
Do as mother says and never sin.  
Be the man your daddy might have been.**

His birth father was in his early 30s, working as a handyman and builder.

Our son was removed from his birth father's apartment after the fourth hotline call in two months, which cited neglect, emotional, physical and psychological abuse, unsanitary conditions, poisoning and instability.

After the removal, his birth father needed to have clean drug screens for 90 days. During the year-long, foster parent approval process, he did not appear at any of the meetings and did not pass any of the drug screenings. Our son's birth mother abandoned him at age 2 and could not be located in several states.

In December of 2017, according to the Missouri Department of Social Services caseload counter, there were 13,528 foster children cases open. If there are 100 singers on your risers, that's 135 choruses of kids. If there are 50 singers on your risers, that's 270 choruses of kids who are in foster care in our state – only one of 50 states. In fiscal 2016, in Missouri alone, there were 99,735 children involved in hotline calls, according to the same department's report.

## Daddy didn't have an easy start.

His birth father's name brings up a number of offenses on [www.mocaset.net.gov](http://www.mocaset.net.gov)

## So this is the wish that's in my heart. What I couldn't be, Little Pal, I want you to be, Little Pal.

He had zero beginning kindergarten skills when enrolled for school: no numbers, no letters, no shape recognition.

## I'm putting my faith and my hopes all in you, To do all the things that your dad could not do.

In third grade now, he now tests at grade level in every subject except math, which is one full year above grade level.

## I'll pray every night, Little Pal, that you'll turn out right, Little Pal.

Through play therapy, sessions with his child psychiatrist, and lots of consistent love and interaction, he grows daily in empathy, compassion and politeness.

## So 'til we meet again, heaven knows where or when, Don't forget about me, Little Pal. Bless you, Little Pal.

He used to talk about his "real" dad; now he talks about his "first" dad and I get to be "Dad" or "Daddy" and he has a "Momma" or "Mommy."

It's too bad that his birth dad will never share singing in a quartet, playing wiffle ball in the back yard, learning who serves in ping-pong, how to sharpen his pocket knife, split wood, bait a hook, type a user name and password, be the "writer downer" during arithmetic practice, see who can pee the farthest, or make the best fart noises with his armpit.

I think it was my high school literature teacher who told me that before I write an article, I should decide its purpose. I hope my effort here sheds some light on the story of kids in foster care and one who got out of foster care, whether in 1929 or in 2018. ❤️



Adoptive Dad and son became buds pretty quickly.



Our son started singing with us at church



"Look what I found!"



A great catch... and the fish are nice too!



The Family at church



We are Family, especially at a Royals game!

## Harmony Foundation Report

by Jim Porter

Note that we will have our raffle each time we meet in our regular location. All of the proceeds of the raffle not given as prizes or used for expenses of the raffle goes to Harmony Foundation at the end of each year. In return, we are able to have the Foundation designate up to 30% of the funds given to chapter activities such as Harmony Explosion.

As of March 21, after 11 drawings (since first of year):

- The total collected for Harmony Foundation since the last report is \$243.
- The total collected for the calendar year 2018 is also \$243.

**Below:** Jim Porter (left) is pictured with Mike Schumacher who hit the jackpot for \$570 on March 20. Photo courtesy of Vince Perry III. ♥



### Answers to this month's history quiz on Page 5:

1. *The Hutchinson Family Quartet*, founded in or about 1840
2. A journalist named **Monroe Rosenfeld** did a series of articles about NYC's thriving music industry and the district in which it was centered. While walking down the street, the sounds coming out of open windows of pianists banging out newly written tunes sounded to Rosenfeld like the clatter of pots and pans.
3. West 28th Street between Broadway and Fifth Avenue.
4. *The Manhasset Quartet*, at Thomas Edison's Studio on Sept. 27, 1891

# Happy Birthday!

...to the following HOA MEMBERS!

April 7 **Raymond Schwarzkopf**  
April 8 **Jeff Wolff**  
April 10 **Matt Bostick**  
April 11 **Craig Wilcox**  
April 11 **John Erwine**  
April 14 **Bob Howard**  
April 17 **Mike Mathieu**  
April 21 **Dick Krueger**  
April 24 **Marlin Weidler**  
April 25 **Bruce Wenner**

May 4 **Bob Murphy**  
May 7 **Carter Combs**  
May 12 **Keith Owen**  
May 16 **Ted Simon**  
May 21 **Anders Sand**

June 2 **Jeff Veteto**  
June 3 **Ryan Bradley**  
June 4 **Kevin Tritsch**  
June 6 **Phil Youngs**  
June 11 **Don Fuson**  
June 13 **Tony O'Brien**  
June 14 **Tony Strub**  
June 15 **Dave Hokanson**  
June 20 **Bill Bay**  
June 20 **Dave Perry**  
June 25 **Al Fehlauer**  
June 28 **Barry Sanders**  
June 29 **Keith Schweer**

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The Heart of America Chorus membership owes it to our sponsors to be aware of their support. Please use and/or support their products/services whenever possible and make an effort to let them know that we are thankful for this support!



# HEART OF AMERICA CHORUS CALENDAR

**Saturday, June 16**  
**HOA Annual Show • 2 & 7PM • BELL CENTER**

**July 3-7**  
**BHS International Convention • Orlando, FL**

## THE KANSAS CITY CHAPTER OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

...is a singing fraternity whose mission is to learn, teach, and perform the highest-quality, entertaining, a cappella music that embraces the barbershop style through the Heart of America Chorus and its chapter quartets, to bring about a spiritual and emotional response from the performer and the audience.