

# Barbershop Notes

Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers (Inc.)

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## *Hey Hon.....what's on TV tonight?*

**HELLO** again fellow barbershoppers! Pretty exciting stuff on TV these days ????? Maybe not! I think I have a better idea. The upcoming months are filled with a large variety of events that should keep even the most jaded barbershopper interested. I think this is especially important in the "off year" between Conventions. (Having said that, it's definitely not too early to put in a big plug for the next AAMBS Convention to be held in Gold Coast in October next year!)

In the next few weeks Western & Sunshine regions will be holding their Conventions, with the fun, fellowship, and competition that take place. Then in August/September Gary Wulf, renowned SPEBSQSA coach and educator will spend three weeks exclusively in the Eastern Region, providing his services to the choruses and quartets of the region. At the end of August, Saturday Evening Post will make a stop in Sunshine Region en route to their participation in Voices Down Under in Perth. The visit will include an intensive schedule of coaching and educating, and a performance for all barbershoppers and the public. Then in early September, Perth Harmony Chorus is hosting an ambitious cultural exchange called Voices Down Under. Think of it as a huge Convention and Harmony College, but without the competition. Emphasis will be on barbershoppers from a variety of nations coming to Australia to share the joy of barbershopping with the men and women Down Under, in performance, in classes, and in socialising. For this

event, the International champion Sweet Adelines Gold Medal quartet **Fanatix** will perform, teach, and coach... and so will the International Finalist quartet **Saturday Evening Post**. Then, with hardly enough time to catch our breath, the Pan Pacific Convention will take place in Christchurch, followed by a Harmony College.

How many of you have half-heartedly gone to an event, but afterward said, "Wow I'm glad I made the effort to go to that!" If you have, then don't let these super barbershop happenings slip past you. Your fellow barbershoppers are investing literally hundreds of man-hours to provide events just for you. Why not give them a hand, or at the very least check your calendar and plan to join your fellow barbershoppers as a participant.

On behalf of the entire barbershopping fraternity in Australia I wish our outstanding quartet **Fast Forward** all the best as they represent us at the International Collegiate Convention. I know we'll all be cheering for the lads as they "wow" 'em in Louisville.

Your AAMBS Councillors, Executive Officer, and Regional Chairmen, met in Perth last month for an intensive three day session to seek ways to improve any and all areas of our collective barbershop experience. The outcome was a series of "action items" which should go a long way toward implementing many of the suggestions received from the membership. There are a lot of exciting initiatives on the near horizon which will be announced as they are completed.

*In Harmony, Mike Donnelly*

## **National Council Positions**

OUR CURRENT NATIONAL **Vice-President Membership** and **Secretary** are required, by our Constitution, to resign at the end of this year. In addition, the position of **Vice-President Music** must be declared vacant (although in this case, the present incumbent Ian Mulholland, may stand for a second term.) These positions are vital to our organisation, and must be refilled by election at our Annual General Meeting, to be held in the November-December period. So **THINK ABOUT IT NOW!** Formal calls for nominations will be issued later, but now is the time to consider taking up the challenge. Council would love to hear from anyone interested in any of these positions. Get in touch with any of us for more detail, or just to have a chat about the idea of joining us.

### **Potential Secretaries read on.**

The Secretary (David Brown) and Executive Officer (Margaret Brown) have discharged their duties as a combined team for several years now. Margaret has indicated that when David retires from Council, she will also be resigning. In that event, and guided by their joint experience, Council has decided not to maintain the Executive Officer position past the end of this year, and the Secretary and Executive Officer duties will be combined. The new Secretary will be provided with a budget for clerical assistance as he sees fit, up to a limit of around \$150 per week. Telephone, stationery, postal expenses etc. are paid by AAMBS. If required, Margaret has kindly offered to continue to produce Barbershop Notes, and both David and Margaret will provide support, advice and assistance to the new incumbent.

The Secretary's position carries a very significant and variable workload, and David advises that although ideal for a retired person with plenty of 'get-up-and-go', it is not a job for the fully employed. Computer use skills are an absolute must!

*AAMBS National Council*

# Clippers Concert

**PHEW!** Excuse me for appearing out of breath but the “Clippers” have just concluded their 2004 opening concert, “HARMONY, JAZZ’N’STRINGS” at their headquarters, The Old Qld.Museum.

What a night! Four guest artist’s from the “Jazz Factory,” who WOWED us again, with their own brand of traditional jazz, through to Leo McFadden, a classical (and I do mean classical) jazz guitarist, Leo captivated the full house with his wonderful, sensitive, playing. Squeezed in between the above acts was “Tetrabass” a double bass ensemble made up of three delightful young ladies and one handsome young man, who created such a beautiful, haunting sound, which must be quite unique, sensational.

We also included in the show, believe it or not, a bit of BARBERSHOP. The Sweet Adeline’s were superbly represented by “Pitch Black” a relatively new quartet, who are in the midst of their preparation for the Sweet Ad’s convention down in Sth. Australia. If only blokes could present their songs as well as the ladies, our competition points would surely escalate.

The ‘Clippers’ and the four quartets from within the chorus – “Sound Investment”- “Good Fourtune”- “Phonix” (who enjoyed the experience singing a song accompanied by Leo McFadden) and finally “Who’s Counting” sang their little hearts out and received tumultuous applause from the appreciative audience.

There are too many people to thank individually for the tremendous success of the evening, so let me just thank

everyone involved for the wonderful enthusiastic TEAM effort, which drew so many positive comments from our audience.

After saying that I must mention the input of our ladies, magnificent, what would we do without them? They put up with all the learning of parts at home (who’d want to be a baritones wife) and then take on all the tasks, at events such as last Saturday’s, with enthusiasm and a wide smile on their faces, I say it again, what would we do without them.

Our preparation for the upcoming Sunshine Region competition is proceeding to plan with the whole chorus busily striving to improve and to hopefully is right on the day.

The chorus has been in a rebuilding mode of late, introducing new members on to the risers at regular intervals once they have qualified. The number on the risers currently is 43, with the target of 60 by years end not beyond the realms of possibility. The greater numbers appears to generate a fuller, more controlled sound, allowing our MD the opportunity to be more inventive in his dynamic requirements.

All in all it’s great to be a “Clipper” at this time.

*Stay happy*

*John Shelton.*

(NOTE FROM THE EDITOR – The wife of a bari. My husband practises in the garage. I didn’t verbally suggest this but maybe my facial expressions did!)

## Greetings from Adelaide

**THE** first part of this year has been very quiet for us as far as sing outs are concerned, which has given us the Opportunity to concentrate on getting some new songs into our repertoire.

On the 4th of this month we had a visit from Don and his wife, Sheona from the Bayside chorus, during a break in their round Australia caravan trip, we enjoyed having him in our bass section for the evening. We were contemplating sending a raiding group to sabotage his van, keeping him here for a while, but decided that it would not be in the right spirit.

Our veteran member Paul Kaye recently celebrated his 83rd birthday and invited as many members and their wives to join him to celebrate with a dinner at a local Community Club. An enjoyable time was had by all, with plenty of singing around the table, as one does; which must have sounded reasonable as the club gave us a booking in the coming months.

Our Music Committee is in the process of formulating a plan to send out letters to Colleges and High Schools, for expressions of interest in entering quartets in a competition, we already have one major Grammar School interested, so that’s a start.

*Ken Withers.*

*Master Key Pitch Pipes  
now available from AAMBS*

**These are the much loved F-F  
Chromatic pitch pipes made by  
W.M Kratt Co.**

**AAMBS has secured a supply  
of these top quality pipes, and  
is selling them to members at  
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**Call Margaret, on 0500 547  
111, or email at [exec@aambs.  
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payment.**

**The cost: \$27 per unit,  
plus postage.**

## From the Desk of the Vice President, Conventions

IN LATE MARCH, I spent a couple of days on the Gold Coast, meeting with the 2005 Convention Committee and reviewing the venues that will be used for the Convention and I am very pleased to say that from everything that I saw and heard, we are in for a very special and exciting Convention.

Your host club for the Convention, The Gold Coast Harmony Club Inc, (better known as The Banana Blenders) are doing everything they possible can to ensure that this will be the best AAMBS Convention ever, while at the same time, making every effort possible to keep the delegate cost to absolute minimum possible. I was very impressed with their organisation, under the chairmanship of Mike Ludwig, and the great level of expertise that they bring to the Convention Committee. I was also impressed with the venues that will be used for all of the competitions, public show and the opening and closing functions, all of which I was able to view except for the new Gold Coast Convention Centre which was still under construction but I was able to view the interior plan which appears well suited for our purposes. Finally, all of these venue are in very close proximatey to an incredible wide range of accomodations that should suit all members requirements.

But wait.....there's more! In additional to all of the above, the 2005 Convention will introduce a new, and innovative, chorus competition that will, I'm sure, create a renewed excitement and interest in this competition. While the details are still being worked out, I can tell you that this new chorus competition format will enable all chorus to have a fair go at bringing home a trophy. Stay tuned to Barbershop Notes and information provided from the AAMBS Executive for further details.

Finally, negotiations are currently underway to bring the current International Quartet Champions, "Power Play" to our 2005 Convention and while we don't have their name on the dotted line, all indications are, they will be part of our festivities on the Gold Coast and part of Harmony College to follow.

As always, if any of you have any thoughts, ideas, suggestions, or comments that you feel would help us to improve our conventions, I would welcome their receipt and assure you that all such suggestions are considered and as happened, often included in our planning for future conventions.

*Yours in harmony,  
Bob Fritz*

## Greetings from the Gold Coast

As we head in to the cooler months, we should reflect on how much joy we can give to the elderly, in the community, with song. Every Mother's Day we go out into the community to do just that. Our chorus members go to many homes and nursing homes to serenade mothers as well as fathers who look on with awe and wonderment at such entertainment for their benefit. Many a tear has flowed, and that is from the singers who go away with uplifted hearts from a job well done.

We have no time to get cold with preparations for the Sunshine Regionals and celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the competition. This year promises to be a special one for the region and we wish them well.

Our new uptune is proceeding nicely and should be ready to perform to the public by the time the farewell concert comes around in October. We are so looking forward to Christchurch.

For many it will be their first international competition. For the greater majority it will be yet another. Besides all that it will be the culmination of a years long hard work to refine our skills after last years win in Perth. We are looking forward to seeing some of our mates in New Zealand.

Saturday Evening Post are coming to our shores and we are sharing the Bill with them. If you are coming our way, it will be August the 28th and you may care to halve our costs by buying a ticket. It promises to be a great show.

June the 20th sees Fast Forward jetting off to Louisville in the USA for the collegiate competition. The boys are hoping to medal this time and are working very hard towards their goal. They are our best quartet and the oldest is only 21. Just think what they could be when they grow up.

*Until next time.  
Harold Howson The Blenders.*

# News from Sydney Harmony

• Photos from Max Ward



WE ARE SPENDING the first part of this year on improving the quality of our singing. One innovation is the introduction of the VVLQ (Very Very Large Quartet) concept. We have split the chorus into five VVLQs, of about 14 members each, to give our singers the experience of singing in small groups, to teach them to blend, and to prevent anyone from hiding. A VVLQ is less stressful than a quartet but more demanding than the full chorus. Every week, two VVLQs are asked to perform one repertoire song each in front of the chorus, and their performances are critiqued by the rest of the members.

Gary Stavrou, a bass who is also a symphony conductor, gave a class over four weeks on reading music. The class was very well attended, and many members are furthering their education at the website <http://www.musictheory.net/>.

A third part of our improvement program is a series of singing and presentation skills that will be assessed over time. As these sets of skills are passed, each will be noted on the singer's name badge (which the singer will print out himself from our website <http://www.sydneyharmony.com.au>.) This quality recognition programme is part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

Our next major performance is the Sydney Performing Arts Challenge the last week of July. In order to win this prestigious competition and the \$5,000 prize money, we are putting in place a special assessment process that allows only the singers who are truly prepared to perform with us. We have never achieved perfection in notes and words before, and it may require asking some members who have

not done the work to support us from the audience rather than from the risers. We hope, however, that everyone will do the work. The leader of our Music Team is now Mike Hailey.

Twenty-one chorus members attended a one-day planning and development session conducted by our Manager of Marketing and Development and organizational psychologist Bill Purdue. The day was very helpful in setting priorities and in refining the mission of Sydney Harmony.

We recently had our "in house harmonics" quartet competition. This year saw 9 entries and the winning quartet was "The Masked Raiders". This annual competition was set up by our Director 4 years ago to help place a greater emphasis on quartet singing in a more relaxed environment.

Steve Ferrick, who was instrumental in the creation of Sydney Harmony from two smaller choruses and who has been our musical coach for the five years of our existence, is moving back to the States. We had a tribute night for Steve, with laudatory comments from Musical Director Jim Catt, John Elmgreen, and Guy Gibson, after which Steve was presented with a scrapbook and a Certificate of Life Membership in Sydney Harmony. We will deeply miss Steve's, friendship, musicality and encouragement and would like to wish him and his lovely wife Kate the very best in their new home.

*In harmony,  
Ladd Wheeler  
President, Sydney Harmony*

# Hello from the Sunshine Coast

ANYONE WHO'S even glanced at the internet will know the world is awash with conspiracy theories these days. Most, of course, can be explained by coincidence, or just plain wishful thinking. But then you get days like the first Sunday in April, when we of the Sunshine Statesmen had arranged another regional road show - and you start to wonder...

We'd hired a neat little community hall in beachside Caloundra for the concert. And then we found out about the competition. Not just another choral group planning to sing on the same day.. that happens quite often. But the biggest, best-known and most prestigious choir in the region, the mighty Caloundra Chorale. And not just performing nearby, but right across the street, in the huge Caloundra Cultural Centre – on the same day, at exactly the same time, with the 100-member Australian Army band as their support act!

But tempting as it was to imagine dark forces working against us, we knew it was just one of those things. And on the plus side, our “David and Goliath” situation even earned us some valuable publicity in the local daily.

So the show went ahead, with a somewhat smaller audience than we'd anticipated. And it turned out very well. The audience reaction was very positive. So even if we didn't make any money we felt achievement in our secondary goal, of spreading the barbershop word more widely across the Sunshine Coast region.

Our next barbershop road show will be on June 20, also in a seaside town: that of Coolum, south of Noosa. If any fellow barbershoppers are in the area that day we'd love to see them. The details are on our website, [www.geocities.com/sunshinestatesmen](http://www.geocities.com/sunshinestatesmen).



*M.D. Brian Fordham and the Barbertones - on the road for Mother's Day"*

And we *did* boost club funds with our annual Mother's Day singouts, in the face of strong competition for this year's Mother's Day dollar. At least three local choirs put on appropriately sentimental shows for the day. But we still got enough demand for the roving barbershoppers to put two quartets on the road. And they reportedly enjoyed the experience, whilst simultaneously gladdening Treasurer Rae's heart (he has got one, despite rumours to the contrary!).

In the meantime there's preparation for the Christ-church convention. By the time you read these notes, we'll have had our long anticipated workshop with New Zealand barbershop educator, Gary Taylor. All we've got to do after that is remember what he teaches us.. but, hey, if it was too easy it wouldn't be worth doing! Best wishes to all our fellow barbershoppers.

*Ray Franklin, Sunshine Statesmen*

## MEN IN HARMONY (Western Australia)

FOR THE PAST six months the membership of Men in Harmony has remained steady at around 45-48; a few members have moved on and some new ones have joined us. Three members turn 80 this year. The first to do so, John de Groot, captured the spirit of these highly experienced singers by telling us young blokes at a party held in his honour that he hoped we would all be joining him on the risers for his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

During April, Men in Harmony performed at the Festival of Choirs held in Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia. In May we attended a World of Harmony Concert conducted by our West Coast Chordsmen colleagues. Along with a number of quartets from our chorus we will participate in the Western Region Convention on Saturday 26 June. A Men in Harmony quiz night is scheduled for July 18. And we look forward to being part of the Voices Down Under cultural exchange at the Burswood Convention Centre in September. All this and more adds up to a lot of singing and socialising for us, consistent with our philosophy that “life wasn't meant to be hard.”

*Rod Chadbourne, VP Communication*

# FREEFALL

FREEFALL have had an exciting time during the last few months learning new songs and getting old ones honed for our new CD due out in June. We are also soon to release our new website which is due around May 2004.

We are really focussed on attending and representing ourselves and AAMBS at Salt Lake City in 2005. We have put together a financial plan so that this can be achieved and have a number of other activities for which we would appreciate your support.

Our main fundraiser will be profits from our forthcoming CD, however we have also applied for local grants and will also run a National raffle of which you can be a part! We feel that these ideas make it easy for people to help us and they also get something for their buck, so this can be seen as win, win for all.

After an amazing performance at the Basement in Sydney, we were asked to perform at a new club venue in Sydney City called "Kabarett Voltaire". This intimate jazz club was a first for FREEFALL and the boys went down very well with the locals; two audience members even remembered us from some busking we did at Bondi Beach 2 years ago! FREEFALL performed again at this venue with renowned vocalist Lisa Schouw at the end of April to packed houses over 3 nights.

So what's coming up .....?FREEFALL have a couple of Anglicare gigs and a concert for the Baptists later on this year so the calendar is starting to fill up. One of the highlights and privileges for FREEFALL this year is to have been invited back to perform during the Ladies Convention, at Adelaide in June (we always thought that the ladies had good taste!). We have some great new



*FREEFALL posing after a crowd pleasing performance at Sydney's legendary Basement Jazz Club*

tunes that we hope will rock the house, well at least the hall, or maybe the room, whatever, we know we are in for a great reception as our last performance at the Sweet Adeline's Convention remains as one of our best receptions to date.

Of course we are still available for all your show needs and can entertain for up to 1 hour (and that's just the singing). Seriously, we have a fully developed repertoire and can even adapt some songs quite easily for that special function. So why not consider FREEFALL as the headline act for your next show.

We look forward to catching up with some of you at the ladies convention in June. If you'd like to keep in touch with what is happening with FREEFALL then please feel free to email Tony Sykes our tenor ([sykes@hotkey.net.au](mailto:sykes@hotkey.net.au)) who will place you on our mailing list.

Our very best to you all,

FREEFALL

*Jim, Tony, Guy and Sam*

[www.harmonize.com/freefall](http://www.harmonize.com/freefall)

## *Regrets . . .*

It is with much regret that FREEFALL have decided they cannot fulfil their earned right to represent AAMBS at the 2004 International. It's simply a financial decision, FREEFALL are not in a financial position to do what they would dearly love to do. We had planned to compete both in 2004 and 2005, however this is not now possible for us in 2004.

We have given our commitment to represent you, AAMBS, Sydney Harmony and ourselves in 2005 in Salt Lake City as long as we are able to generate the funds to support such a trip. We are working on several initiatives to ensure that this happens and hope that the AAMBS membership will get behind us in our efforts to represent you and ourselves in the greatest vocal contest in the world.

FREEFALL would like to congratulate Chordial Exchange on their fantastic achievements in representing Australia so far and wish Fast Forward the very best of luck in the Collegiate contest at International in Louisville this year.

*'Sing'cerely, Jim, Tony, Guy and Sam*

# CLOSE HARMONY – DOWN UNDER

MANY OF YOU will remember Tom Woodall - Singing judge at last year's Convention, and faculty member at the following Harmony College. Here follows an article he wrote for his local paper in December 2003

It all began with a very unexpected email message dated January 26, 2003. The note began, "Would you like to spend a week in Perth, Australia for the purposes of judging the national Australian Barbershop Quartet and Chorus Contests and to teach in the Harmony College that follows?" As one who had judged hundreds of District contests throughout the United States and Canada, and four International competitions, I had never before been given the opportunity to travel some 15,000 miles from home to judge, teach, and enjoy the hobby I've loved for nearly 45 years.

Immediately, I accepted the invitation and began to encourage Marge, my wife and most loyal barbershop supporter, to make the trip with me. She wasn't too excited about the 15 hours in an airplane above the Pacific Ocean. The Australian Association for Men's Barbershop Singers (AAMBS) agreed to cover all my travel, meals and lodging expenses from Los Angeles to Perth and return.

As the months progressed, through email and web sites, we decided to add nearly a week in Sydney prior to the week of responsibilities in Perth and afterwards, spend several more days in Queenstown, New Zealand. The trip, which lasted 21 days, proved to be one of the most exciting ventures we have ever undertaken.

The 28 hours of travel time from Indianapolis was completed with the flight from LA to Sydney. After a day of recovery, we found ourselves climbing the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, and attending a play at the world famous Opera House. It wasn't surprising that story line of "The Club" dealt with Rugby. The World Cup Rugby Championships were contested in Australia throughout October. We petted kangaroos and koala bears on a tour into the Blue Mountains and three days later, the 3,000 mile flight from Sydney to Perth on Virgin Blue Airlines took us over the famous "outback". We had no desire to check it out, except from 30,000 feet above the ground.

Because the AAMBS has only been in existence for about 15 years, and because of the vast size and sparsely populated areas, the Australians rely heavily on American judges to adjudicate their biannual contests. Two other men, one judging Music and the other Presentation, joined me on the panel. They are long time barbershoppers from Vancouver, Washington and Dayton, Ohio respectively.



I have judged with them on many occasions in my 35 year tenure as a certified judge in the Society for the Preservation of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA). In addition to the certification training schools held every three years, much of my experience has come as a quartet singer and musical director of the Coles County Barbershop Singers who have been in existence since 1970 and still meet each Tuesday evening at the Central Community Church in Mattoon, Illinois.

In Perth, we were housed in a most lavish five star hotel called the Burswood Resort. In addition to the connecting 2,000 seat concert hall, there were several dining venues, a golf course, hiking trails, swimming pools, and a large casino. Because most of the singers resided on the east coast, it is safe to estimate that the competition weekend (travel, lodging etc.) cost each of them nearly \$1,500, unless of course they chose to drive across the outback.

**DAY ONE - COMPETITION** The first contest session was for Seniors Quartets. To qualify, each man must be at least 55 years of age and the quartet must have a total age of at least 240 years. Several of the groups selected interesting names; Twilight Shadows, Who's Counting, and Bifocal Majority were a few of the clever titles. Thirteen foursomes competed and the contest was again won by Chordial Exchange, a group that placed 6th in the International Seniors Quartet Championships held in Albuquerque, NM last February. As with many of the competing groups, some of the members were not native Australians. The tenor and the lead singer of the bronze medallists, Global Achord, were born and raised in Japan and England respectively.

Immediately following the Seniors competition, three high school groups (two quartets and one ensemble) excited the audience with their clear beautiful young voices. As in the USA, Australian barbershop singers are

• *Continued next page*

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aware of the need to encourage young people in this rather unique a cappella singing venture; therefore they use every opportunity to showcase up and coming groups.

That evening, a crowd of nearly 700 people enjoyed a banquet meal at the Burswood and a performance by the Wheelhouse Quartet, an American Group from Delaware and the DC area. They placed 9th in the International Open competition last July in Montreal, Canada. Their tight blend and ringing chords brought numerous standing ovations from these “down under” barbershop singers.

**DAY TWO - COMPETITION** Twenty six quartets took part in the open competition. Most of the singers traveled nearly 3,000 miles (one way) in order to compete. The groups sang only two songs in this semi-final round and no talking is allowed. The quartets spend many hours in practice and rehearsing with coaches so as to hone their contest “packages”. Judging the Singing category as I do, requires that one be totally focused on the performance, beginning with the first utterance of the first competitor. In order to score well the chords must have good intonation, the various parts must be balanced for proper volume, the word sounds must match, and the tones must be of good quality, freely produced, resonant, and well supported.

I must admit that my concentration was shaken when the Master of Ceremonies announced, “Let's welcome our first quartet...from Hobart, Tasmania”. Though I now know that Tasmania is a small island and an Australian State, I was rather curious to see what they would look like and how they would sound. They sang rather well and of course they looked no different than any other quartet. It was rather sobering to think that I was hearing men enjoy four part harmony, some 15,000 miles removed from the community in which I've “harmonized” for so many years.

As in American competitions, quartets whose three judge point total after the Semi-final round places them in the top ten, move on to the finals where two more songs are sung. The finals were held in the evening of the second day. Considering that the judges and audience listened to 72 songs, it was a rather tiring day. In addition to listening, writing notes and assigning scores (1 - 100 points per song), judges spent an additional ten minutes with each of the 26 foursomes. These evaluation sessions are designed to identify some of the major problem areas and to provide suggestions that might help the ensemble improve.

The winning quartet was named Freefall and they were members of the Sydney Harmony Chapter. They sang very well and provided me with a unique experience. Never before had I judged a quartet containing a blind man. Sam Taylor, an outstanding bass singer, placed his hand on the shoulder of a fellow singer who proceeded to lead him out to center stage. Once there, he knew

exactly what to do. Apparently, he arranges many of the songs the quartet sings.

**DAY THREE - COMPETITION** The chorus competition involved 13 choral groups from throughout the country, five of which had fewer than 20 singers. The contest was won by the Banana Blenders, a group of 64 men from the Gold Coast Chapter in Queensland. The director's name was Rose McGee, one of three women directors in the contest. Their two song total was 459 points with the 80 man Sydney Harmony Chorus finishing just 20 points behind. Had either of these groups been competing in the recent Illinois contest, they would have placed second and third respectively. Had the Coles County Chorus been competing in the Australian nationals, they would have placed 7th.

### **HARMONY COLLEGE**

For months I had prepared a brief case full of materials that would assist me in teaching and sharing in several class sessions over the three day school. I was assigned the Vocal Production Class and two sessions of “Tune It or Die” (barbershop singers attach great importance to singing in tune). I prepared special video and audio tapes, in addition to hand out materials and numerous transparencies to be used with an overhead projector and even purchased 100 “Coles County Barbershop Singers” ball point pens to distribute as gifts to the men. Though I felt prepared for the classes, Marge and I were totally unprepared for the venue.

Fairbridge Village is a 160 acre tract of land some 60 miles south of Perth and located in a rural area near Pinjarra. Dirt roads and old cabins/houses are scattered across the grounds and Eucalyptus trees are abundant as are several species of flowers we'd never seen before. Kangaroo roam on the edge of the grounds and colorful parrots reside in most trees.

Beginning in 1920, the facilities housed the Fairbridge Farm School and the occupants were orphaned children who were shipped to Western Australia from the streets of London and outlying areas in the United Kingdom. The children were 8 to 10 years of age upon arrival and it was reasoned that their lives would be far better if they went to school and learned farming skills in this rural area, just a few miles from the Indian Ocean. Besides, Western Australia had great need for farm hands.

Though most of the buildings have had some degree of remodeling, they certainly weren't the Burswood. There was indoor plumbing, but the only warmth one could create was with a portable electric heater. The single wooden slat beds weren't particularly comfortable, but at the end of a 16 hour day, one could still get some rest.

The 80 men in attendance chose from several possible class offerings during the three day school. Music theory, arranging, choral directing, and visual presentation

plans were but a few of the choices. I had some 40 men in my classes and the Vocal Production sessions were most interesting. The enthusiasm of these amateur Australian singers was remarkable. My biggest task was to encourage them to relax and attempt to make a more controlled, musical sound. Harnessing the energy of the singers was a concern, but striving to unify word sounds was a formidable task. I found the “r” sound was almost nonexistent. They would say, “I’ll meet you heh” (here) or sing “Get Me to the Chuch (Church) On Time”. Words with “aye” vowel sounds, like play and mate, came out as plahee, and maheet. Actually, the singing was more “Americanized” than the speaking.

Adding to the unity problem is the fact that many of the singers are from such diverse ethnic backgrounds. One quartet had a lead singer who recently moved to Australia from Florida. His bass was from Germany and the baritone from Scotland. Only the tenor was a native Australian. Other singers had immigrated from Holland, South Africa, England, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and New Zealand. Trying to teach a classic American 12 vowel sound package was an interesting task.

One of my early concerns about what songs they might know, turned out to be a non-issue. They were familiar with most all the old classics, often written in and around the turn of the 20th century. Everyone knew “Wait Til the Sun Shines Nellie” and “My Wild Irish

Rose” in addition to most all of the popular songs sung by American barbershoppers.

Harmony College allowed me to interact with most of the men. The excellent meals, impromptu singing sessions, and the joke telling - ice cream parties at the end of the day will always be remembered. I found the men to be especially gracious and kind, not only to me but to one another.

I must admit enjoying some of the Australian expressions. When walking in a narrow hallway with a low ceiling, a warning sign announced “Mind Your Head”. While talking with one gentleman, I noticed a spider had crawled upon his collar. Having heard horror stories about certain Australian spiders, I quickly knocked the varmint to the floor. In an emotionless plea, he said “Buggar ‘em” (I figured he meant to kill him...and I did). When one of the men announced that he finally could sing the notes in a rather difficult passage, his buddies hollered “Good on ya”.

Though the ringing chords are only a memory, hopefully I’ll remain in contact with most of the 50 men who gave me their email addresses. There is no doubt that some of them will be in Louisville, KY on July 1 - 4, 2004 to view the SPEBSQSA International competition. I’m looking forward to attending those sessions and perhaps having the opportunity to greet one of my new Australian friends with a hearty “G’Day Mate”.

## *Vocal Evolution*

### **HELLO FRIENDS IN HARMONY**

I trust you are all having a fruitful year enjoying our wonderful hobby. We at VE are busy learning a bunch of new songs to use in our very first annual show at the end of July. The new songs, together with some of our existing repertoire, will all be woven into an amusing tale and we’re getting excited as it all starts to come together. If you’re in Perth on the 31 July be sure to come along to the Playhouse Theatre for a great afternoon or night.

After the show it will be full steam ahead for the Pan Pac convention in Christchurch at the end of October and we look forward to catch-

ing up with as many of you as can possibly make it there.

Are you coming over to the West for the Voices Down Under celebration in September? (if you haven’t heard about it check out the link on the Perth Harmony Chorus Website (<http://www.perthharmony.com.au>) - It’s for guys and gals - Top US quartets Fanatix and Saturday Evening Post are part of the contingent coming for a feast of singing, education and fun!

*Roy Schofield*  
*Secretary*  
*Vocal Evolution*

## ILLAWARRA CHORDIALITY GOOD OL' SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY!

I can't think of a much more exciting moment than when we all come together at the National Convention Mass Singout.....guys from all over the Country, singing together, having never practiced together, but rehearsed just the same.

Recently we received a call from a visiting Canadian, Rick Oliver. Rick was in Australia on a travelling eight week holiday , and he phoned from Gerringong, where he had been staying with friends, to ask if "he could spend an evening with our 'Chapter'" (He had looked us up via the internet) We informed him that our Chorus was very small, to which he responded that his 'Chapter', from near Ottawa, was only

16 strong. Arrangements were made for Rick to attend our rehearsal and we spent a very special evening with this excellent lead. We don't realise how Ocker we are until have to explain our culture to visitors. When we sang Waltzing Matilda to Rick, we had to tell him the meaning of words like "swagman, billabong, jumbuck, billy" and so on. This wonderful Canadian later sent us a card from Tasmania expressing his enjoyment of our fellowship and singing.

from another Rick, Rick Beale, President.

*(FROM THE EDITOR - The enthusiasm of this small club never ceases to amaze me. Well done guys!)*

## WESTCOAST CHORDSMEN

SINGING BARBERSHOP harmony with a chorus such as the Westcoast Chordsmen offers all members a rich variety of satisfying experiences. Our club has a very full program of both short term and long term commitments. Preparing ourselves for these commitments provides a real focus for each of our regular Friday evening rehearsals.

Our most recent public performance was something of an experiment – sharing the program with a small orchestra. We performed our World of Harmony at Churchlands on 2 May with the Perth Accordion Orchestra. The full house, the standing ovation and the many compliments from audience members all indicated that the afternoon was an outstanding success. The Accordion Orchestra's music and ours seemed to complement each other very well and the finale was a fitting conclusion to the show.

We are also rehearsing a repertoire of our songs to be recorded for our new CD. Singing in a recording studio is a little different from singing on stage in front of a live audience. For a recording, we concentrate essentially on producing our best musical

effect. We have scheduled three recording sessions to record a total of twenty of our songs. In our first session, in the last week of April, we recorded our first six songs, a highly successful effort. In the next recording session later this month, we plan to record a further seven songs. The third and final session, sometime in June, will be devoted to recording the final seven songs. We are looking forward to the final production of the CD.

The annual convention for the Western Region of AAMBS has been set for Sat 26 June. In addition to the quartets competing in the annual competitions, the Westcoast Chordsmen is one of the four men's choruses providing additional entertainment for the evening.

Finally, the Westcoast Chordsmen has been invited to Adelaide next year to sing with South Australian chorus members. We are looking forward to the trip and another opportunity of promoting our craft.

*Pender Pedler  
Westcoast Chordsmen*

### ***Chorus and Quartet Contact Information***

*The quartets listed here are not associated with any AAMBS chorus. Many other quartets may be contacted through the choruses.*

<b>State</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Chorus/Quartet Name</b>	<b>Practice Location</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>	<b>'Phone</b>
ACT	Canberra	The Canberra Chordsmen	Baptist Church Lower Hall (room 5), Groom St, Hughes	Mon 7.45pm	02 6278 6093
NSW	Bowral	The Highlandaires	Salvation Army Hall, Bowral	Thurs 7.00pm	02 4871 1369
	Central Coast	Central Coast Barbershop Chorus	St Patrick's School Hall, Victoria St, East Gosford	Mon 7.30pm	02 4329 4455
	Grafton	Old Hat Harmony	South Grafton Aero Club, Vere St., Sth Grafton	Thurs 7.00pm	02 6642 2101
	Hunter Region	Four Crying Out Loud (quartet)	Call	Call	02 4950 1930
	Northern Sydney	Surfside Serenaders (quartet)	Call	Call	02 9451 9837
	Penrith	Riverland Ramblers	Uniting Church Hall , 15 Evan St , Penrith	Mon 7.00pm	02 4751 4778
	Rylstone	The Rylstoners (quartet)	Call	Call	02 6379 1020
	Sydney	Hills Harmony	19 Chapel Lane, Baulkham Hills	Thur 7.45pm	02 9871 7715
		Sydney Harmony	Drummoyne RSL Club, 162 Victoria Rd, Drummoyne	Mon. 7.30pm	02 9719 1252
		Sydneysiders Express	Uniting Church, Lakeside Ave, Eastwood	Thurs 7.45pm	02 9988 3411
	Wollongong	Illawarra Chordiality	Baptist Church Hall, 69 Smith St, Wollongong	Thurs 7.30pm	02 4296 4597
QLD	Brisbane	Broadwater Connection	St John's Church, 10 Greenwood St, Wishart	Thurs 7:15pm	07 3843 2824
		The River City Clippers	Old Museum Concert Hall, cnr Bowen Bridge Rd & Gregory Tce, Berston	Wed 7.30pm	0418 188117
	Cairns	Coral Coasters Barbershop Singers	RSL Club, The Esplanade, Cairns	Thurs 7.30pm	07 4053 1971
	Gold Coast	The Blenders and The Smoothies	Youth Orchestra Building, Community Drive, Ashmore, And Cooparoo College, Cnr. Stanley St East & Cavendish Rd, Cooparoo	Mon 7.00pm	07 5527 7546
	Gympie	The Cooloola Chordbusters	Gympie Central State School, Lawrence St, Gympie	Mon 7.30pm	07 5482 9685
	Redlands	Bayside Barbershop Singers	Cleveland State High School, Russell St., Cleveland	Tues 7.00pm	07 3822 1317
	Sunshine Coast	The Sunshine Statesmen	Buderim Uniting Church Hall, Gloucester Rd., Buderim	Wed 7.30pm	07 5444 2098
	Toowoomba	Darling Downsmen	Art Society Rooms, 1 Godsall St, Toowoomba	Tues 7.30pm	07 4635 1392
	Townsville	The Quadrphonics	The Chapel, The Marian School, Corcoran St, Currajong, QLD	Wed 7.30pm	07 4773 6058
SA	Adelaide	Festival Statesmen	Ashford Special School, 87 Anzac Hwy, Ashford	Tue 7.30pm	08 8294 2151
	Christie's Beach	Fleurieu Choristers	66 Davis Ave, Christies Beach	Fri 10.00am	08 8386 3293
TAS	Hobart	Close Shave (quartet)	Call	Call	03 6227 9195
		The Wellingtones	Albuera St Primary School , Albuera St , Hobart	Tues 7.15pm	03 6231 0193
VIC	Geelong	Bay City Conchords	St Andrews Uniting Church, Sydney Pde., Geelong	Wed 7.15pm	03 5281 1771
	Melbourne	The Melbournaires and Mosaic	Uniting Church , 152 Andersons Creek Rd , East Doncaster	Mon 7.30pm	03 9898 6014
WA	Perth	Men In Harmony	Revue Cinema, Waratah Ave., Dalkeith	Tues 7.00pm	08 9296 7662
		Southside Harmony Chorus	Attadale Baptist Church Hall, 38 Swan Rd., Attadale	Thurs 1:30pm	08 9330 2630
		Vocal Evolution	Summerlakes Christian Church, 29 Action Rd., Malaga	Mon 7.00pm	08 9378 9772
		Westcoast Chordsmen	Churchlands Senior High School , 21 Lucca St , Churchland, WA	Fri 7.30pm	08 9385 7118

## AAMBS' CONTACT INFORMATION

Please make contact with AAMBS through the Executive Officer at our permanent addresses and phone number –

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## THE AAMBS COUNCIL

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**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO THE NEXT ISSUE OF BARBERSHOP NOTES IS  
FRIDAY, JULY 16th, 2004**