



BE MY VALENTINE! Singing Valentines—Rich Carey BE MY VALENTINE!



**Note-Torius** performed twenty-six Singing Valentine's over the Valentine's Day weekend (Feb 12<sup>th</sup> and Feb 14<sup>th</sup>)!!!! Friday proved to be the busiest as we did eight paid gigs and eleven impromptu performances. Our first paid gig was in Palos Hills at 10 am, but

and dance classes.

WTC should consider recording in a dance studio--Wow!

The remaining gigs were at barbershop, a school, in homes, and to a pharmacist at the RML Hospital in Hinsdale.

Sunday was lighter in that we only sang five paid gigs and two impromptu performances. We had, however, a unique one at the Bulls Academy in Lisle. What a disaster: try getting a pitch and then singing when four basketball games are playing simultaneously in a huge gym with wood floors!

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as a warm-up, we sang at a bank, a print shop, and at a Dunkin' Donuts shop at a gas station (where we were given free coffee from the surprised waitress!). Then it was off to Lyons Township HS (at both campuses in Western Springs and La-Grange) to sing to the PE & Health service staff (three total) with additional stops at the counseling office, the Library, health

**ATTENTION TENORS: This Monday** (March 1) we need to meet at **6:50** to go over the starting pitch.

**Everyone:** On March 8 - we will be doing evaluation recordings - I suggest you bring a recorder this week and record once for yourself so you are more prepared on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Test out the recorder, know how to use it, make sure it has fresh batteries, and most important - see how well you know "Sweet Heart of Sigma Chi".

Personal Challenge to Excellence - By Jon Hoekema

What will it take as a chorus to sing consistently at 85%?

It will take a commitment from each of us to improve.

What will it take for you, as a singer in the West Towns Chorus, to sing consistently at 85%?

That means we must understand the importance of ensemble singing.

What are you going to have to commit to yourself to make this happen?

Each of us are in a section - tenor, lead, baritone, bass. We are not a gathered group of soloists, but we are ensemble singers working at creating a unified voice in our part. That means we need to sing in the same way to make the best unit sound.

Think about it before you read on.

Did you think about it or did you just keep reading?

Each of us can no longer sing the way we are

(Continued on page 4)



## Rehearsal Notes—Jon Hoekema

What a great rehearsal last Monday. We are making good progress. Those are the kind of rehearsals that we have to have in order to get to 85%.

We bumped up to the 85% level a few times last night. Keep up the good work.

The sectionals helped immensely. The leads and basses rearranged standing spots to help create the best sound. It made a big difference.

Next week, if you were placed in a new spot this week, please return to your new spot next week.

Here are the comments:

1. Check your notes for Sigma Chi before next Monday night. If you have a keyboard, play as you sing along.

Basses had some wrong notes that need to be worked on.

2. We worked on connecting word sounds. This helps us sing more smoothly and creates an sound that is 85%

3. Pitch – last night we each had an imaginary rope coming out of the top of our heads that we pulled up to keep us on pitch.

Use that or another concept to keep on pitch.

“Never let the rope go or it’ll fall out the bottom” – Joe Kronos

4. When leads have pick-ups, Basses, Baritones and tenors –

Easy off releases on those so it’s not a shock

Also, get your breath there and be ready to come in when the leads hit their word where the three parts are to enter again, otherwise the three parts will be late.

Basses need to work on this especially.

These pick-ups are at

8 – (h)and you  
12 – The  
16 – (h)as the  
24 – then the  
28 – she’s the  
48 – the  
56 – (h)and the  
88 – (h) and the  
96 – My

(thanks to Dick Clark for providing me with this list!)

5. words “Always true” at the end of the verse

Basses – sweet and soft on the upper notes

Bari’s – easy, keep tongue down

6. words in the Verse

“Then the girl of your dreams the sweeter seems,  
She’s the sweetheart of Sigma Chi”

Here it is “your” not “my” in the chorus it is “my”

7. Do not mistake confidence with volume

8. Leads – when holding notes, keep breath support, keep high on the pitch. When energizing held notes, do not let your increased energy push the pitch down.

We had a problem with that in a few spots last night.

9. “When the world goes wrong”

We worked on that phrase quiet a while. Here are important things to keep in mind:

Breath support right from the start

Put your emotions in the breath

Use more air to create the sound needed for the beginning of the song

Less volume, we are telling a sweet story, not yelling at someone

Keep it smooth

In a contest, the judges can and do determine the singing level in the first 2 measures of a song.

We have to start well and then carry it through the song.

Once we got to a higher level last night, it was easier to stay there and easier to sing.

Next week, we will be reviewing the verse. If you need to, print out these notes and review them before Monday’s rehearsal.

We’ll need to sing the verse well to earn our graduation to chorus 1.

I can’t wait till next week to see what this chorus can do when we set our minds to it. 

The Music Team has, as you know, embarked on a program we have dubbed "The Drive to 85." Its main goal is to bring us to a point at which we are consistently and automatically singing, no matter where we are, at what any judge or knowledgeable observer would call an "85%" level.

Getting there is, we hope, going to be a lot of fun, if only because singing at that level is so powerful and fulfilling for any singer - and it just plain thrills audiences, fun in itself.

Getting there is also going to be a lot of work and a lot of individual habit-change. It will require a commitment to getting much better at what we each do when we're singing. It's a hobby: we all know this. But it's a strange kind of hobby - it's one in which doing it really well - ringing everything - is just too great a thing NOT to do.

It's going to mean changing our entire singing culture, particularly being satisfied only with singing we can be proud of for good reason. That kind of changing takes time. We realize that it will happen in increments, some of which won't be recognizable in short time segments. We'll notice it when, finally, we hear from a certain critical internal judge that, yes, that song was at 85 this week and it has been for the past several weeks and so have all of the others.

This is both about contest performance and not about contest performance.

We've said, almost uniformly, that we want as a chorus to qualify regularly for the International Contest. We have also said, almost uniformly, that we want to finish higher at International than we have been finishing - somewhere in the Top 15 has been the general sense of things.


Well, if you look at the numbers, the 15th chorus finishes at about 84% to 85%. So if we want to be where we say we want to be, it means singing consistently and without exception - no matter where we are singing - at 85% (to round things up just a bit). Thus the "Drive to 85."

Our aim, as a team, then, is to drive us to 85. Simple. But not so simple. Why? Because we sing consistently at about 75%, sometimes a bit higher. Our internal judge saw our Sandwich SINGING performance at a level considerably below that. We cannot have that ever again. We owe it to our audiences not to accept any singing that isn't always the very best we can offer to them.

But we need ways to get there. We need to avail ourselves of every tool we can use.

One way to get there is with good coaching that we can use as a growth tool. And we're about to get some of that.

Mark Hale, Director of Masters of Harmony Chorus, with 3 International Gold Medals as Director of that chorus, and a quartet Gold Medal (Michigan Jake), as well as a certified Music judge and a member of the Society's Style Evaluation Committee, will join us on Monday March 15 (after being at IDAH) at our rehearsal to coach us in the craft of singing, focusing on the all-important aspect of vocal production.

This is a session not to be missed, so please put it on your calendar and highlight it. It promises to be both memorable and tremendously helpful to our Drive to 85. 

Singing Valentines continued

(Continued from page 1)



Highlights included: (1) Singing to two moms: Craig Landstrom's and Bill Satek's. These were so emotional but also self-satisfying. (2) Impromptu singing at a wine shop on Sunday for the clerk who was giving out free tasting of two wines. (3) Watching our tenor, Bryan Reeder, enjoy himself immensely as this was his first experience!

We encourage all quartets to consider doing Singing Valentines as it truly changes peoples' lives and it's a blast for the quartet!

Bass - Rich Carey, Lead - Bill Satek, Baritone - Craig Landstrom, Tenor - Bryan Reeder



Personal Challenge continued

(Continued from page 1)

used to singing. That will not help us reach 85%. We all need to improve our singing, every one of us. The important part of ensemble singing in a barbershop chorus is that we are all singing the same way, which Mark, Joe T and Joe K are teaching us each week.

Each week, we are taught or reminded of a number of singing concepts. These could be adding warm air to the note we are singing, or working with dark or piercing voices and help them find the balance which produces the ensemble sound for each voice part, or smooth singing. Take one of these concepts each week and work on them at home.

Personal commitment to improving means taking personal responsibility for what each of us needs to do. It is up to you to take personal responsibility to get all of us to 85%. Each week, we are given the lessons we need to learn. Our directors can teach us everything that they know, which is a considerable amount, but unless each of us takes responsibility for learning and implementing what they are teaching us, we are not going to reach our goal.

Jay Elliot wrote this note to the music team. I use part of it with permission:

*Personal goals - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded - SMART goals. We need to have each member set their own goals for personal commitment, get them written down, and hold each other accountable to them.*

*Mine is I will spend at least 30 minutes each week using my keyboard to work through a song, every week for four weeks. When I succeed I'll maintain and add to it until I'm comfortable that I am doing what I need to do to perform at an 85 every week for every song, every time.*

What is it going to take?

What are you going to do to help all of us together reach and consistently stay at 85%?

Schedule of Events

March 2010

- ◆ 1 Rehearsal
- ◆ 8 Rehearsal
- ◆ 13 IDAH—Bloomington, IL
- ◆ **13 Performance:**  
St. James Church, Glen Ellyn  
call time 6:45 PM

**15 Rehearsal—coaching with Mark Hale—wear GREEN SHIRT and BLACK PANTS**

- ◆ 18 Board meeting
- ◆ 22 Rehearsal
- ◆ 29 Rehearsal

April 2010

- ◆ 5 Rehearsal
- ◆ 12 Rehearsal
- ◆ 15 Board Meeting
- ◆ 16–18 District Convention
- ◆ 19 Rehearsal
- ◆ 24 Cabaret
- ◆ 26 Rehearsal

# March 2010

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |
| 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  |
| 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
| 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  |
| 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  |     |     |     |

2010

- ◆ **June 19— Chicago Rush—Nat'l Anthem**
- ◆ June 27 - July 4 - International (Philadelphia)
- ◆ July 8—gaming night—tentative
- ◆ Aug. 5 Cougar outing
- ◆ Aug. 18—gaming night—tentative
- ◆ Sep. 16—gaming night—tentative
- ◆ Sep. 24–26 Illinois Fall Convention
- ◆ Oct. 14—gaming night—tentative
- ◆ Oct. 18—Monday Full Chorus Performance—Monarch Landing
- ◆ Dec 10, 11 & 12 —Christmas show

# April 2010

| Sun | Mo | Tue | We | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |    |     |    | 1   | 2   | 3   |
| 4   | 5  | 6   | 7  | 8   | 9   | 10  |
| 11  | 12 | 13  | 14 | 15  | 16  | 17  |
| 18  | 19 | 20  | 21 | 22  | 23  | 24  |
| 25  | 26 | 27  | 28 | 29  | 30  |     |

# May 2010

| Sun | Mo | Tue | We | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |    |     |    |     |     | 1   |
| 2   | 3  | 4   | 5  | 6   | 7   | 8   |
| 9   | 10 | 11  | 12 | 13  | 14  | 15  |
| 16  | 17 | 18  | 19 | 20  | 21  | 22  |
| 23  | 24 | 25  | 26 | 27  | 28  | 29  |
| 30  | 31 |     |    |     |     |     |

# The West Towns Chorus

**PO Box 1005  
Downers Grove, IL 60515**

West Towns rehearses every Monday evening, 7:00 PM on the 2nd floor of the Moose Lodge, 1030 Warren Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515

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The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Chicagoland West Suburban Chapter aka The West Towns Chorus



**2010 Board**

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
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| Members At-Large:   | Mark Johnson      |
| Immed. Past President   | Darryl Nordentoft |
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## Birthdays



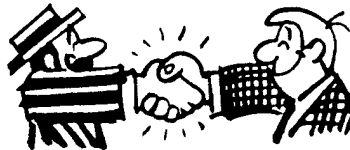
Happy Birthday to the following, celebrating birthdays on

**John Prater, February 28** (now living in Iowa)

**Paul Bellisario, March 4**

**Roy Lentz, March 5**

**Bob Rutan, March 5.**



## Last Week's Visitor Larry Galuszka