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Meet New Member Lester Grossman

How did you hear about West Towns?

I started singing with the Lamplighters in Montgomery in October after my wife brought home a flyer of theirs from her quilt shop in Oswego. There I met Jim Fourmont and Tom Erwin, who always bragged about the West Towns Chorus, and Jim sent me an invite to the Guest Night in January which I attended. (Way to go Jim and Tom!)

Were you ever involved with barbershop singing before?

I got into barbershop around 1983 while living in Columbus, GA. It was mainly for fun, but they did Christmas shows and other sing-outs, and I was in a quartet with my 3 buddies, singing tenor. I moved to Nashville, TN in 1990 and sang there also in the Music City Chorus. When I moved again, I did not sing again; from 1991 until this year.

Are you now or have you been in other singing organizations?

In addition to my previous barbershop singing, I did a lot of singing in the Orthodox synagogue in which I was raised, and

my father was a perfectionist when it came to singing the parts.

I saw from your application that you are married (to Beth). Do you have any children or grandchildren?

We have 4 children, ranging in age from 34 down to 18. Three boys and the youngest is our girl. Our 31 year old son in Louisiana gave us a granddaughter, Maddie, age 7. None of them sing (that I am aware).

What is your occupation or what do you do for a living?

I am a Project Manager for Eaton Corporation in the electrical equipment division and work in Glendale Heights. We manage multi-million dollars orders with our customers, mainly in the construction, industrial and electric utility markets.

What other hobbies and interests do you have?

I love many sports, played some baseball in my youth, am studying now to get certification as a Project Management Professional (PMP), and like to do Sudoku puzzles to keep my synapses firing.



Progress

When the Music Team met for its planning meeting in December and hatched the "Drive to 85" plan, we were careful to caution ourselves not to get impatient. We were very excited, to say the least, about the prospects. We want to change the singing culture of our chorus so that

our singing allows us to do what chorus members told us they, for very much the most part, want to do: finish, eventually, in the Top Ten at International. That is not our only goal, but it's a good one

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around which to form a plan.

We had to wait to implement much of our plan while we prepared for our engagement in Sandwich. Things really got started after that, and got going seriously with Mark Hale's visit and learning about vowel shaping and "Singlish."

We didn't know how everyone was going to react to the new regimen, but our plan was to persist and do our best to bring everyone in under the new singing umbrella. Our expectation was that the process would be slow but steady, noticeable and measurable over time.

To our delight, not only are people on the risers taking to it and working very hard at it, we can already hear a significant difference. Proof was the surprise of "Irish Blessing" last Monday. We have never sung it that well. Ever. We have been singing that song for years on end, but not like that. It was as if a chorus from the Southwest had walked in the door. Seriously. It had finesse, great feeling, and real prayerfulness to it that just hasn't happened before. We listened to each other and sang with true sophistication. It had none of the usual impending, soon to explode "barbershout" in it at all.

Why did it work that way? Well, for one thing, we were all of us trying to form our vowels the same way and it showed. For another, we seem to be beginning to understand a fact of barbershop chorus life in these times: that the winning choruses, the successful choruses don't sing as they did even a short 5 years ago. They sing with artistry and an elevated sense of sound and phrasing. It's the sort of singing we have, as a chorus, been hinting at in our ballad singing for a long time.

In an important way, it is good that we are singing the VM's version of "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," not only because it is a great vehi-

cle for us, but also because it was and remains a trend-setter. The VM changed International-level chorus singing with this song in the contest of 2000. It took the rest of the Society several years to get it, but get it the Society did, and choruses started backing off, instead singing with grace and subtlety. Yes, of course we can get the rousers still, but even those songs strongly partake of the carefully crafted art of singing that has come to the fore.

We are pleased, to say the least. We are excited.

We have post-rehearsal meetings after every rehearsal (that's why we disappear into the kitchen) to talk about what went well, what did not, what needs work or fixing, what to do next week to make it even better. A couple of us, having heard how good we could be, champed at the bit to be that way all the time, right away, let's get going!

We reminded ourselves about impatience. We reminded ourselves that a major change in the way a group of men sing together, if they have already sung together for a long time, is rather harder than all learning to drive on the left side of the road. We are more than thrilled with how it's going, but need to give it time to sink in with everyone. We want to run, but walking is our speed right now.

The good news is that so many people are writing to us and talking to us, giving suggestions, offering contributions to the effort. Keep it coming. Those of you up on the risers who haven't quite gotten with the program (body language and facial expression tell a lot), please give the program a chance. Participate. Have some fun, learn some new stuff.

There's more coming. Let it come to you.

Thanks, everyone! Great effort, good results, lots of promise.

Ed McDevitt

VP, Music & Performance



Recorders



Thanks to the guys who responded to my request for information on voice recorders. Since I'm sure there are some other guys who may be looking to replace their recorders or just need one, I thought I'd publish a summary of the information I received. I have not replaced mine yet, but this definitely helps.



Brand	Model	Est. Price	Comments	Member
Olympus				Bill Hasselberger
Olympus		\$50	From Radio Shack and has decent sound and is easy to use.	Ken Keever
Olympus		\$45	Purchased at Freys	Ron Welch
Olympus	Digital Voice Recorder VN-5200PC	\$50-\$60	Adequate quality, lots of recording time, easy downloading with supplied USB cable, and fits in your shirt pocket. I think it was \$50-\$60 @ Radio Shack	Tom Erwin
Olympus	Digital Voice Recorder WS-311M	\$100	I have one and really like it. It has a feature of being able to be plugged directly into a PC USB port for transferring data directly to a computer or emailing out. I think I paid around \$100 a couple of years ago.	Dick Kingdon
RCA	VR5220-A	\$30	Purchased at Walmart or Meijer. It recorded very well	Jon Hoekema
Sandisk	Sansa C240 MP3 player/recorder	\$18	Built in microphone plus earbuds and cable but no speaker. (including FM radio and more stuff ...) Bought at: Micro Center 80 E. Ogden Ave. in Westmont. Tel 630-371-5500	Erik Roffelsen Bruce Rhoades
Sony	ICD-PX720	\$90	Purchased last fall from K-Mart. I have been happy with it.	Dustin Wells
Zoom Or Edirol	H4N R-09	Both < \$300		Dwayne Rice
Yamaha	Pocketrak C24 Pocketrak W24	\$199 \$299	I saw your email and wanted to mention a couple good ones, though a bit expensive. We sell these in our store and I'd be happy to help with additional discounts if the chorus wants to put together a group purchase.	Michael Schaner General Manager, PM Music Center 630-978-9927 w 616-308-5280 m

Chicago Rush Arena Football—Eric Sutherland

On the next page is a flyer that you can print to give to friends, family, business acquaintances, etc. I am very excited to have more time this year to have this outing also work to our benefit as a fundraiser. As you can see on the attachment, tickets for our friends and families are \$20.00 with \$8.00 coming back to our chorus. In addition to this, for every two friends and family tickets we sell, one of our singing members gets their ticket for free.

I think we should shoot for the moon on this.

- If we sell 200 friend/family tickets, 100 members sing free and the chorus gets \$1,600
- If we sell 250 friend/family tickets, the chorus gets \$2,000, etc.

So lets get started early. I will have a sign-up sheet at rehearsal for those who will be singing.

June 19, 2010—7:00 PM
(chorus call time to be determined)
Allstate Arena
6920 N. Mannheim Rd.
Rosemont, IL 60018

CHICAGO RUSH ARENA FOOTBALL WELCOMES



WEST TOWNS CHORUS



THE CHICAGO RUSH IS PLEASED TO INVITE THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF WEST TOWNS CHORUS TO THE GAME ON JUNE 19, 2010 TO WATCH THEM SING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. STAY AFTER THE GAME TO MEET YOUR FAVORITE RUSH PLAYERS AND ADRENALINE RUSH DANCERS AT OUR COMPLIMENTARY AUTOGRAPH SESSION! GET YOUR SEATS BY CONTACTING SHANNON ALLEN AT (219) 628-2079 (cell) OR MAILING THE COMPLETED FORM TO 3602 BURR OAK LANE, ISLAND LAKE, IL 60042 (home address).

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE GAME!

Section	Saturday, June 19 7:00 PM Milwaukee		
\$20 Upper Corner Seat (\$8 will go back to West Towns Chorus)		=	\$
Singing Chorus Members have a separate sign up sheet		Grand Total	\$

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM OR CONTACT SHANNON ALLEN BY MAY 19TH!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Payment Info

Please circle one: Visa MasterCard Discover

Account #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____ V-Code: _____

Or-Enclosed is check # _____ payable to the Chicago Rush

920 W. Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60195 Phone: (847) 882-9400 Fax: (847) 882-9413
Questions? Contact Shannon Allen
Email: sallen@arenarush.com Direct Phone (219) 628-2079 cell

Schedule of Events

April 2010

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

May 2010

- ◆ 3 Rehearsal
- ◆ 10 Rehearsal
- ◆ 17 Rehearsal
- ◆ 24 Rehearsal
- ◆ 31 Memorial Day—Rehearsal ?

April 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	

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

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					

June 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			

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 Music Team

Joe Krones	Joe Tomecek
Mark Betczynski	Ed McDevitt
Craig Lancaster	Jay Bentz
Jim Brown	Eric Sutherland
Jon Hoekema	Don Thompson
Trenton Ferro	Bryan Reeder
Email: musicteam@westtowns.org	



Happy Birthday to

Lester Grossman:	April 5
Howard Roberts:	April 5
Kevin Connell:	April 9
Andy Kinne:	April 9
Dave Thompson:	April 11



Last Week's Visitor Larry Galuszka