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"A Barbershop Family Affair"

By Ray Sturdy

On November 9th & 10th the Sixteenth Annual Indiana Harmony Brigade assembled in Indianapolis. 120 men spent the two days engaging in extreme quarteting activities with one another. These included two contests of 30 and 10 quartets respectively, each composed of randomly selected singers who had not sung with one another before. Our own baritone Ray Sturdy happened to land in a quartet that snatched a first place finish for the Saturday night contest.

The highlight of the weekend however was the tribute to a long-time Indiana brigade singer Steve Reen, who had made the Indiana, Michigan and North Carolina Brigades a family affair by bringing a growing number of family members to each brigade to sing and compete



with other quartet men. Steve passed away suddenly this fall, but four of his children made the journey to Indy to say thank you for the \$95,000 go-fund-me help brigaders and others had put together for the family.

During the weekend, another hat was passed and the kids were presented with another \$14,000 that was raised literally overnight. It was always a treat to sing in a quartet with Steve and his kids and they have a place in the heart of every brigader who ever met them.

Happy December Birthdays to these Harmonious Braves!

3rd Jon Knapp 15th Jack Teuber 18th Howard Lynn
23rd Mike Frye 26th Zaven Melkonian 28th Jim Owens

Welcome Christmas Chorus Guests!

The busy season of Christmas caroling is already underway, and the Big Chief Chorus has welcomed some friends to join our harmonious throng as we traverse afar to bring seasonal joy to our neighbors. On November 27, these three men braved the weather with us at the Waterford Township treelighting festival and accompanied us to the Senior Living Community at Lockwood of Waterford:



Jim Lawson, bass, 4 years with the BCC Christmas Chorus



Dick Chapman, lead, first year with the Christmas Chorus



Dick Knapp, bass, 12th year with the Christmas Chorus

Cold Weather Tips for Singers

Submitted by Tom Blue

(from www.vocaladvancement.com)

Temperatures are dropping, the air is dry and brisk; it's officially winter! Cold weather can be a problem for singers: central heating, dry air, coughs, sore throats and colds can wreak havoc on the voice, but there are some easy ways you can counteract the winter chill and keep your voice healthy. Here's our top 10 list:

1. Hydrate - Have you noticed that during the winter your skin is drier than any other time of the year? The combination of cold, dry air with brisk winds and central heating are a one-two punch, which contribute to dry skin. Now imagine what that combination is doing to your throat. When dehydrated vocal folds are less flexible and don't work as well. One of the easiest remedies is drinking lots of fluids – and holiday champagne doesn't count! Drink plenty of water.

2. Drink warm drinks for vocal health. Nothing is better on a cold day than a hot drink to help you keep warm. And hot drinks have a second benefit; they are great for your throat. Hot drinks warm your throat and help keep your vocal folds limber. Herbal tea without caffeine, non-citrus fruit tea and "Throat Coat herbal tea are all good choices for singers. If you do drink coffee or hot tea with caffeine make sure you drink one glass of water per cup of coffee or tea to help counteract the dehydration your body experiences from the effects of caffeine. Another warm drink bonus? Honey! Add a little honey to your tea to soothe your throat.

3. Wear a scarf. We've talked a lot about the importance of keeping your throat warm, but we haven't discussed the most obvious way to do so – try wearing a scarf. There really isn't much else to say. Without a scarf your throat is cold, with it your throat is warm. Wear a scarf – enough said.

4. Do your vocal warm-ups. When the weather is cold you should take extra care to warm up your voice before singing. Don't be surprised if you need more time to warm up in cold weather, this is totally normal. It's even a good idea to let your body warm up first and then warm up your voice. If you're coming in from strong winds and snow into warm heated air, allow your body a few minutes to warm up and then begin your vocal warm-ups.

5. Dry air from central heating is not good for your voice. So here are some things to help: Clean your radiators and filters – get rid of dust and general gunk that you wouldn't want to breathe. Use a no-heat humidifier to add water vapor to the air. If you don't have a humidifier, a bowl of water on top of the radiator

or near a heat source is a good option. How about a mini-spa in your own home? All you need is a bowl of hot water (hot enough that it steams), and a towel. Place the towel over your head and lean over the bowl. Breathe in the moist air and enjoy!

6. Sore throat? Don't sing! This one is a big 'duh' but it's still worth saying – if you're sick and your throat hurts, please don't sing. If it hurts to sing then that's a sign your vocal health is compromised, so take a break. You don't want to risk causing long-term or even permanent damage to your voice. Just as you wouldn't run a race with a broken leg, don't sing with a sore throat.

7. Breathe through your nose. It can be tough to remember this tip, but when outside in the cold weather do your best to breathe through your nose. Breathing through your nose is beneficial and here are some reasons why: a. Your nose catches dust and pollen particles and stops them from entering your vocal tract b. The nose moisturizes the air as it passes through your nasal cavity. c. Breathing through your nose warms the air as it passes before it hits your vocal tract, lessening any drying effects from cold air.

8. Sleep. Here's one we all enjoy. Whether its summer or winter it's always a good idea to get plenty of rest to allow your body to heal itself.

9. Party wisely. No one wants to miss a social event so if you are going to party here are some smart ways to have fun and protect your voice: a. Stay clear of loud speakers, avoiding temporary tinnitus. b. NO SHOUTING! If the music is loud in a club it can be tempting to try to talk over it – and you wake up the next morning sounding like Donald Duck. It's not worth it. Don't try to talk or sing over the music. c. Don't overdo the alcohol – it's incredibly dehydrating. d. Beware the lure of karaoke. While it's fun to belt out a few tunes, if you overdo it you can strain your voice. e. Don't smoke and avoid places with cigarette smoke.

10. Be careful when choosing cold remedies and medication. Certain decongestants are known to dry the vocal tract and nasal passages. Find something that doesn't cause dryness. If your doctor has prescribed something for you, but you find it dries you out, make sure you drink plenty of water. One of our favorite common cold-busters is gargling with a salt-water solution. Gargling with your tongue out can help clear your throat and the salt in the water can help clear out some nasty bacteria.

Membership Renewals

Bachman, W. Brede, B. DeNio, W. Jackson, T. Keith, M. Lange, K. Melkonian, Z. Patrus, R. Sclesky, B.

"As Time Goes By..."
People keep saying:

"It was truly an amazing show."
 – Cody Harrell, bass, Frontier Quartet

On Saturday, November 4, 2018, fans of Barbershop Harmony drove from all over the state to pack the Mott High School Performing Arts Center for the 74th annual show of the Big Chief Chorus. The hard work the BCC braves devoted to this year's show paid off, and by all accounts it was a resounding success!



Q: - How many chorus directors does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: - The world may never know, because no one ever watches them.

Chief Eric's Year-End Thoughts

Greetings to everyone as we approach the end of another year. We are beginning a meaningful Holiday season as we sing at 20 to 21 different audiences (depending on available time on our busy bus tour). What comes to mind is "How do you spell Love? T-I-M-E". This is what we give when we sing from our souls for so many at Christmas. It is like one of my favorite commercials by Coca Cola: I'd like to buy the world a home and furnish it with Love. Yes, it is really about what we give to others that matters in this life on earth.

On that thought we have a hobby of singing and we need practice and effort to be a pleasant sound to our audiences. With work comes reward and our efforts have shown improvement as many positive reports of an excellent fall show have been heard (even "the best show ever"). Thank you for your dedication.

This year has had some challenges with and between each of us at times. Do you sharpen an axe with butter? No, you use a grinder and sparks will fly. Well it is like that with friends... do you sharpen each other with butter? No but instead sparks may fly. We just need to realize that, like the axe, we improve through the uncomfortable grinding and polishing process. If life was easy we would not grow. It is only through setbacks and hurdles that we learn to overcome difficulties. Anything worth having is worth working for. Pearls come through an irritant to the oyster.

Thank you to all for being in the Big Chief Chorus and know you make a difference in each other's lives. Thank you so very much Mr. Tom Blue for teaching and putting up with us. I would think the youth you teach are easily compared to us (at least they remember from week to week what you told them last week :o). Sometimes you must feel like the movie Groundhog Day.

I am looking forward to the New Year and we are planning an Installation of Officers dinner for January 8th. It is in the planning stages at Shark Club for 7 PM. Stay tuned for more information.

Like the rest of the Coke commercial.....I'd like to teach the world to sing, in perfect harmony.

Kind regards,

Eric Domke

President of the Big Chief Chorus

BCC Christmas Chorus Calendar

Uniform is white shirt with Christmas tie, black pants and shoes. Red vests, Santa hats, etc. are optional. Warm-up is 30 minutes before each sing-out.

Chorus Events

- Dec. 4, (Tu) 6:30 p.m Independence Village,
935 Union Lake Rd., White Lake Twp.
- Dec. 8, (Sa.) 2:00 p.m. The Well of Waterford
2844 Elizabeth Lake Road. @ VOORHEIS
- Dec. 11, (Tu) 4:00 p.m. Inn at Cass Lake
900 N. Cass Lake Rd., Waterford
4:45 p.m. Lourdes Nursing Care
2300 Watkins Lake Rd., Waterford
6:30 p.m. Lakeland Place of Waterford
2700 Elizabeth Lake Rd., Waterford
7:15 Dinner at Heroes---Optional
- Dec. 12, (W) 6:00 p.m. Canterbury (Assisted Living)
5601 Hatchery Rd., Waterford
- Dec. 13 (Th) 6:30 p.m. Canterbury (Independent Living)
5601 Hatchery Rd., Waterford
- Dec. 15 (Sa) 10:30 A.M. CHRISTMAS BUS TOUR
MEET AT WATERFORD OAKS ACTIVITY CENTER
2800 WATKINS LAKE ROAD
- Dec. 18 (Tu) Our Lady of Lourdes, Waterford
2300 Watkins Lake Rd., Waterford
5:30 P.M. Warm up at Fox Manor
6:00 P.M. Clausen Manor
6:30 P.M. Mendelson Assisted Living
7:15 P.M. Fox Manor

Chapter Leadership

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