



# Notes 4 U

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
Land of Lakes District, Barbershop Harmony Society  
www.goldenchordsmen.com



21 June Rehearsals - Wednesday 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at St. Andrews Church (basement) 255 oak Street Issue 25 2017

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Take note of these important 2017 dates. Changes will be made as new information is received.

- June 21—Special event at Neil and Sharon Klipenstein’s
- June 24—Clean Up The Locker
- July 2 - July 9 - Las Vegas, NV - International Convention
- July 19—BBQ—Chris Magas
- July 22 - 30 - Nashville, TN - Harmony University
- July 26— No rehearsal
- Aug 2—No rehearsal
- August 9—BBQ—Ken Finnbogason
- Aug 16—Rehearsals begin again
- Sep 1—Learn To Sing Promotion
- Sep 30—Nuit Blanche—Tentative
- Oct 11 to Nov 15—Learn to Sing Program
- Oct 28—Gig at Club Regent/Canad Inn
- Nov 3—BOTY Dinner

John West: John joined the Brandon Barbershop Chapter in January 1950 at the age of 18. He received his 68 year renewal at a special presentation by the Langley Chapter last January. I had a great visit with he and his Quartet last August. His daughter Barbara sang tenor for them. Unfortunately he had a serious stroke about two months ago and passed away. His funeral was last Saturday. The Afterglow had lots of music and the Catholic Church will probably not be the same for awhile.

Both he and his son were very involved in the Langley Chapter thus all the ceremony. John and I sang together in the Brandon Chorus and sometimes in a quartet until he



moved to the Winnipeg Chapter in 1958. John’s urn shown in the attached picture was designed by his son and his son-in-law and is very unique and appropriate for the ardent Barbershopper that he was. CASS

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**June 21—Special event at Neil and Sharon Klipenstein’s 7:00/7:30 Apparel black pants and bumble bee shirt. See previous email from Brian for details**

## Magic Choral Trick #364 Word Sounds

by janet kidd

I've written before about the concept of getting rid of, de-emphasizing or mumbling unimportant words or syllables – but when my chorus was being coached by music judge Kathy Grea-son, she had an eloquent term for describing this.

Word Sounds. She asked my chorus members to just sing word sounds rather than enunciating the actual words, or the syllables that make up those words.

Our listening understanding of Word Sounds is rather like those texts we see on Facebook – where the words are printed upside down or backwards, but we still have no problem reading them.

When we listen analytically to natural speech patterns, most of what we hear is just Word Sounds. In fact, when we hear someone speaking and enunciating everything really clearly, it comes across as not only unnatural, but also as slightly condescending or judgmental. We get so caught up in listening to every syllable that we tend to miss the meaning of what's being said.

Most of the songs we sing were written to be immediately accessible, in the language and cadence of our times. Meticulous enunciation is not only unnecessary, but can be an emotional barrier for the audience. If they are being distracted by the accentuation of syllables that would normally be swallowed in speech, it takes a moment for the brain to discount their emotional usefulness.

If the songwriting is good, the music matches the flow of a natural delivery of the lyrics.

Strong song delivery finds the most meaningful word or syllable of the phrase and communicates that one thing very clearly – while allowing the rest of the lyrics to flow in such a way that they point to that meaningful word or syllable.

By the way – just as a rule of thumb, I say that all articles, prepositions and any words or syllables on a pick up beat need to be just Word Sounds, and not enunciated.

# Magic Choral Trick #361 How Much Chatter is Too Much?

By Janet Kidd

The happy chatter of choral singers getting up from their chairs

Cheerful discussions as they sit down again

Hilarity as they move from one standing formation to another

Many helpful suggestions to one another as people find the sheet music for the next piece.

So the question is – does this need to be stomped on, or is it just a side effect of people having fun?

The first part of the answer to that depends entirely on what the group's goals are.

For example – a church choir needs to be able lead the hymns on Sunday, and perform one or two anthems well. In addition to that, they'll need to lay the groundwork for similar success for a couple of weeks hence. If this can all happen to the satisfaction of choir, director and congregation even with a bit of chat at rehearsal – so be it.

A competitive chorus just weeks away from their competition may need gentle reminders of how much better they'll feel on the contest stage if they focus now, and are really well prepared.

The second part of the answer is that no matter what the group or their goals, having the director run a tight rehearsal magically cuts down on a lot of chatter.

If I have drawn up a schedule ahead of time, and know exactly what I want to work on with each piece, my groups are suddenly much more interested in what I have to say. Especially if each time I stop them I have something specific, and meaningful to ask of them.

Leading by example is also useful. If I speak succinctly about the reason I cut them off and my focus appears to be completely on the music, it's contagious. As is a director's passion for excellence.

I love to have both the rigorous, focused work and the happy chatter at my rehearsals. One is getting the work done, and the other releases the tension of all that concentration. Both build community.

## **Singing is an Athletic Activity, Plain and Simple.**

With Dan Paralis

What is an athlete, exactly, anyway? An athlete is someone who can perform a feat of physical excellence by using developed musculature, and coordination of that musculature. An Olympic runner isn't only fast because he or she was born that way; they are fast because they've been taught how to conserve their motion while running, how to alleviate tension in their bodies, how to breathe a certain way that will help their success, and not hinder it, etc. Behind every great runner, you'll find the person or persons who taught them the skills and techniques they needed to enhance their latent abilities and reach their potential.

Just like the act of hitting a baseball was daunting for me (see Article I, 'An Introduction to Voice Technique' ), the act of singing well is daunting for many people. There doesn't seem to be much rhyme or reason as to why some people do it so much better than others.

Well, a quick answer to the query is this: people who sing well naturally have better initial coordination regarding all of the muscular and neurological elements involved with singing than people who don't. But again, there's no reason why most anyone can't LEARN that coordination.

Yup, you heard it here first! Whether you're an amateur or an accomplished vocalist, it's entirely reasonable that you can become much better than you are currently are, by learning correct vocal technique. Things like correct breathing, alleviating tension, learning how to adjust the musculature involved in proper resonance, etc., can make your voice stronger, more resilient, and more diverse. Assorted ear training exercises can help develop the neural-pathways necessary to enhance your ability to match pitch, harmonize, and adlib more effectively and efficiently. And yes...negative emotional dispositions, whether they are simple or complicated, have a TREMENDOUS bearing on the way you sing (when I had that baseball being thrown at me, and I wasn't sure exactly HOW I was supposed to hit it, it scared the crap out of me! Do you think that fear and insecurity had an effect on my success (or lack there of) at hitting the ball? You better believe it!).

~ June 2017 ~

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Music Committee Meeting	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Executive Meeting	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Singing with Neil	22	23	24 Clean Up The Locker
25	26	27	28 Show Committee Meeting	29	30	

~ July 2017 ~

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Executive Meeting	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 BBQ	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

