



Association of Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors



# PROBEmoter



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

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## Where Does All That Bulletin News Come From?

By Herb Bayles, Escondido, California

Another good question. There's scarcely an editor among us who will not agree with the maxim, "Editors should edit the bulletin, not write it." But life isn't that kind. Bulletin editors will always have to pursue their sources, and will always have to do a portion of the writing. It should be a "given" (but seldom is) that all principal officers contribute to the bulletin on a more-or-less regular basis. Foremost among them is the chapter president. He should always have something to say. If he doesn't, impeach him; he's not doing his job. So, probably, should the secretary, though he can usually get by with a short summary report of the most recent executive board meeting. Other chapter officials should know they are expected to contribute periodically:



**Membership VP:** as often as he has plans or projects in progress. His report may be brief, but should detail upcoming activities, recent accomplishments, new member profiles, Man of Note awards, guest lists, and the like.

**Program VP:** a tough job in these days of chorus-intensive chapter meetings. Often he's not allowed the luxury of planning meeting activities. He should, however, be in charge and held responsible for complete planning and detailed information of events appearing in the chapter's activity calendar.

**Publicity VP:** see Membership VP comments.

**Music VP:** should have things to tell the members rather regularly. Repertoire, vocal training, coaching, learning schedules all are within his purview. He should also be held responsible for accuracy and pertinence of craft stories appearing in the bulletin.

**Chorus Director:** should have at least a few brief remarks for every issue.

**Chorus Manager:** periodically, as his needs arise.

**Treasurer:** occasionally: annual financial statement summaries, reports on show receipts, etc.

**Show Chairman:** As soon as a show begins to take shape he should become a regular contributor. He can discuss show repertoire, costuming, give a brief scenario, or call attention to needs. His reports should be ongoing right up to show time because an informed, savvy cast can be a great boon to him. And when the show is over, he should prepare the principal wrap-up report and award the appropriate "atta-boys."

### POINTS FOR EDITORS TO CONSIDER

You will always have to pursue some chapter officials for their bulletin contributions. Ours is an imperfect world. Frequently, brief contributions are better. Some men can say all they know in one paragraph. Anything more is snow. If it's missing, don't ask. If it's supplied, edit rigorously, or don't use it. It's often better to assign a contributor his topic. You get what you'd hoped for more often, and it eliminates tiresome duplications of thoughts and sentiments from several officers, following a major chapter event.

Use gimmicks. Give a man a piece of lined note paper, blank except for the topic you've written across the top. Tell him, "Just fill this in for me." Get fresh insights into chapter activities; ask a new

man to describe his first show, contest or convention. Seek the full support and cooperation of your chapter president. Once gained, you can let him harangue recalcitrant officers for their bulletin articles. You're no longer the villain.

Earn your contributors' respect. Maintain a dependable publication schedule and be firm about deadlines. Edit scrupulously. Ask for rewrites if copy is confused or inappropriate. Discourage scoldings, harangues and lectures, but don't avoid them if they are truly justified. It's an editorial judgment call. Be flexible. Accept stories recorded on brown paper bags, audio tape or on computer disks—if you're lucky to share equipment capability with a contributor.

Make generous use of full names, dates and detailed descriptions of events. You're also part historian for the chapter. Recognize that you may sometimes have to do a full rewrite. If your correspondent has minimal writing skills, accept it. Use the facts he provides and write it yourself. Never publish a bad piece of writing verbatim. It demeans your office.

Lifted from the Bulletin Editors Manual  
Editor Herb Bayles

WHY NOT Enter the on-line bulletin contest?



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## PROBE HALL OF HONOR

I nactive Deceased Active

Bruce Anderson Ray Barrett Herb Bayles  
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Lloyd Davis Wade Dexter Mel Edwards  
Leo Fobart Jim Fulks Harry Gault  
Dick Girvin Ray Heller  
Bob Hockenbrough Paul I zdepski  
Steve Jackson Terry Jordan Grady Kerr  
Deac Martin Bob McDermott  
William Moreland John Morris  
Roger Morris Buddy Myers Dee Paris  
John Petterson Waldo Redekop  
Craig Rigg Jerry Roland Lowell Shank  
Wilbur Sparks Stan "Stasch" Sperl  
Dick Stuart Jim Styer John Sugg  
Staff Taylor Dick Teeters  
Arnold Wade Charlie Wilcox

## Is Your Bulletin Part Of The BULLETIN EXCHANGE PROGRAM?

Why would you want to be? You will receive bulletins from every chapter in the program! You can discover what's happening in chapters throughout the Society. You can swipe material for your own chapter bulletin! Always giving proper attribution of course, but be careful of using material that has a copyright on it without first getting permission from the copyright holder. You can meet and talk with your fellow editors at conventions.

You can correspond and exchange ideas with other editors. What are my obligations? You only have one. It is an exchange program, so you must agree to send a copy of each of your bulletins to everyone in the exchange program. How do I sign up? To be a part of the exchange, simply contact coordinator **Alexander Edwards** and tell him you want to be a part of it, by email at [edwardsalexander@sbcglobal.net](mailto:edwardsalexander@sbcglobal.net) or by postal service at:

**Alexander Edwards, 535 W. Broadway #150A  
Glendale, CA 91204 Tel. (818) 956-1132**

He will add you to the list for other editors and will send you a list of current participants to add to your mailing list.

# Why A Chapter Bulletin?

By Herb Bayles



For several reasons, but primarily for the benefit of the chapter members. Benefit that accrues when the editor knows and pursues his purposes. They are:

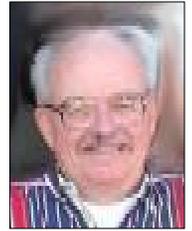
- **INFORM** of coming events. List their nature, place and time, and supply the small but important details needed for chapter members to participate effectively in them.
- **RECORD** recent barbershop events. Your members' interest in barbershop does not end with "Keep America Singing" each week. They will always find interest in accounts of conventions, contests, H.E.P.'s, COTS, Harmony Colleges; things that occur outside the chapter venue.
- **REFLECT** views of chapter officers and members on chapter activities. (Strengths, weaknesses, future plans, projects, etc.) A vital function. A basic responsibility of chapter officials is to inform members of their work. A well informed membership is a participating, cooperating membership.
- **RECOGNIZE** efforts and accomplishments of members and others. And not just those which occur in the chapter environment. News of noteworthy deeds in other phases of barbershop, in professions, in careers are interesting to fellow members, and enhance fellowship and understanding.
- **EDUCATE** about chapter, district and Society history, aims and goals; about various aspects of singing craft; about events and actions that shape the future of barbershopping. Things each member should know. A smart barbershopper is an active and participating one simply because he knows what's going on in his hobby.
- **PROMOTE** barbershopping in general, together with chapter, division, district and Society events and programs. Each entity needs enthusiastic participation in its activities to survive and prosper. Promotion at the chapter level is where it begins.
- **RECRUIT** Encourage members to bring guests; support member drives; publicize guests and new members. A crucial function to head off waning membership; to maintain the chapter's vigor.
- **ENCOURAGE** pride and participation in our hobby and Society. The "Preservation" we all value so highly cannot survive for long without pride and participation among the rank and file.

**Another good reason** for chapter bulletins is the benefits they provide for non-members of the chapter; wives and families. With information gleaned from the bulletin, they can plan and prepare for upcoming events, keep abreast of the chapter's programs and personalities, and relish seeing their man's name in print from time to time. Hence, it is important to ensure a bulletin reaches each member's home. Absent members, members with poor memories, members who misunderstand instructions—all have their problems solved with a current, accurate bulletin somewhere around the house.

**Put some "bull" into your bulletin!**

# My Thoughts About PROBE Contests

By Lowell Shank, PROBE President



Why does **PROBE** sponsor contests for members? To win plaques? To gain recognition? To become famous? To use it as a stepping stone to become a **PROBE** officer? To receive a critique that will lead to improvements?

Well, take your pick, and I'm sure you can think of some better reasons. It is time for you to prepare to enter a **PROBE** competition in either your local **Bulletin Contest**, hardcopy or online, or the **PROTY** Contest. While the deadlines will be after the first of the year, you need to get ready now. Publish your best bulletins in October, November and December or do your best PR for an event at the end of the year. If you have a question as to who to send your entry to, ask me. You might even find the answer on the **PROBE** web page.

Speaking of recognition, what better way to accomplish this than to nominate someone for the **PROBE Hall of Honor**. This is a competition if more than one is nominated. Last year, no one was nominated, which is the first year that no one entered the **Hall of Honor** which was established in 1989. The **Hall of Honor** now includes 39 Barbershops who excelled in their craft – see the web page (and this bulletin — SJ) for the complete list. Surely, you know someone else who deserves this honor. Send your nominations to **Dick Girvin** now.

## It's Great To Be A Barbershopper!

**Still another reason:** Some bulletins are distributed to selected barbershoppers outside the local chapter, to district and Society officials, other bulletin editors, etc. The bulletin is the window through which these interested outsiders view and judge the health and welfare of the chapter.

**A final reason:** Some chapters have active historians; some do not. With each successive issue he publishes, the bulletin editor in fact writes another page of chapter history. If he consistently provides names, dates and thorough descriptions of chapter activities, he is the chapter's *de facto* historian. Research through the past issues he saves will provide a comprehensive picture of the chapter's history.



**Editorial — Steve Jackson****Are We Fulfilling Our Purpose?**

It seems to me that one of PROBE's main goals is to promote viable communication tools, whether it's in the form of a printed bulletin, an on-line publication, an informative website, and/or creative, effective marketing and public relations. **It bothers me when I go to a website and it's out of date.** I submit to you that its potential is being wasted! If you have a regular bulletin, then sure, the website is a good compliment to your communications. Is YOUR webmaster effective? Does he post an up-to-date calendar of events, promote your events, performances, and shows? Having an informative website is a bonus for any chapter. No website? No regular bulletin? Your chapter bulletin board has gone missing? No wonder your President has developed that twitch. A healthy chapter is just that because the administration communicates effectively to its membership and others.

Let me speculate about the ideal chapter. The secretary would put out a weekly calendar of events and timely news, the bulletin editor would feature articles from officers and cover all chapter, most District, and some Society events in a monthly or by-monthly bulletin. Let the District and Society publications take up the slack, but provide a link to them on your website. Your website should provide a lot of background information about the chapter, have several archives, and always have an active link to the current copy of the chapter bulletin! When your bulletin is sent out to the members, the editor should make sure that the webmaster is copied so he can post/archive it as well. One last thought — always have current contact info prominent!

**Pet Peeves**

Some people have dogs and some have cats for pets; I have pet peeves. I can't stand it when the word "chorus" is used instead of "chapter." Example: "*I missed the chorus rehearsal last week*" or "*our chorus meets on Tuesdays.*" Aaargh! The chorus is part of your chapter! Chapter meetings are held weekly and the chorus practice takes up about 75% of it. See what I mean?

Do you have chorus rehearsals or chapter meetings? Hmm. May I suggest that a more diversified meeting will help the retention of ALL your chapter members? Yes, DO market your chorus, but identify that it's part of your chapter, i.e., the *Orange Empire* chorus from the Fullerton, California chapter. **Thankyouverymuch!**

Steve

I am in search of a person to write about the nuts and bolts of website construction — any takers?

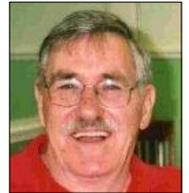
**What's YOUR opinion?  
Let the PROBEmoter be your forum!**

# PROBE CRAFT

Here's a craft article from Jon Wagner suitable for all chapter bulletins, thanks, Jon

## Diaphragm Breathing

By Jon Wagner, Sun City chapter, Florida



Many voice problems are caused by poor breathing habits. We will be demonstrating once again diaphragm breathing as opposed to chest breathing. But the answer is not totally in the expansion of the upper belly, sides and back of the rib cage, versus the lifting of shoulders as you expand your chest. You need abdominal support for the diaphragm, a tightening of the muscles of the solar-plexus so that when you push in and out on that part of your body, while making a constant tone, it results in a changing sound. When done correctly, you have absolute control over the amount of air you use and can, in fact, actually feel yourself pushing the air to your throat from your diaphragm.

Poor support is the major cause of tension in the throat area which causes restricted throat muscles. When I struggle to sing Tenor, **John Tardy** reminds me to stick to the parts I can sing, but that if I *must* keep trying, to relax my throat—that it is the key to unlocking the higher range. Ah, easier said than done. Last week I talked about abdominal support. Here are some exercises to help you reduce excessive muscle constriction.

- Close lips lightly, but all the way without pinching them;
- Part teeth a quarter in or so to relax the jaw;
- Place tongue flat in the mouth with the tip just behind the lower front teeth;
- Hum softly, allowing the lips to vibrate freely.

We've been talking about reducing throat constriction, abdominal support and diaphragm breathing. Last week we got to the point of humming.

The second step is to open the mouth easily in order that the placement of the tongue remains forward in the front of the mouth. To achieve this, allow the lips to part from the humming position to an "OO" (as in loose) and proceed, without stopping the sound, to "O" (as in go) and then to "AH".

If done properly, this technique will prevent the primary placement of the tone returning to the throat or nasal area. Along with the development of proper placement, humming is also excellent for warming up the voice and for utilizing the diaphragm and abdominal muscles.

**Keep the Whole World Singing!**

**PROBE Membership VP****David Haase****Hello PROBE!**

I thought I'd take time to say, "Hello" to the members of **PROBE**. Most of you probably don't know me, unless you have lived in Eastern Iowa for the last 25 years, so I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is **David Haase**, I was born and raised in Davenport, Iowa. My parents are Robert and Frances Haase. I have four brothers: Dennis, Jim, and Mike, who are all older than me, and Bill who is younger. I have a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mass Communications from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, and an Associates in Applied Sciences Degree in Computer and Internet Programming from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

I am employed at HON Industries in Muscatine, Iowa, as a second shift warehouse worker. HON Industries is the second largest office furniture manufacturer in North America. They make desks, filing cabinets, chairs, tables, cubicle partitions, and many other things. Currently business is great, so busy that we're working mandatory overtime on Saturdays. The only downside to working at HON is working the second shift. Everyone starts on second shift, so for the time being, barbershop singing will have to be put on hold until I can get on another shift.

Besides barbershop my hobbies are photography, Internet message boards, crossword and Sudoku puzzles, hiking, and biking. I follow many sports teams, the St. Louis Cardinals, the Chicago Bears, the Chicago Bulls, and any sports involving the University of Iowa Hawkeyes.

As for barbershop I have been a member with seven different chapters: Davenport, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids, all in Iowa, and with Rock Island, Lombard, Champaign-Urbana, and Bloomington, all in Illinois. I have been a chapter bulletin editor with the Iowa City, Iowa, chapter publishing *the Old Capitol Chorus Town Crier*, and with the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, chapter publishing *The Hawkseye*. Both are online bulletins and won first place honors in **PROBE's** International Online Bulletin Contest (*Town Crier* in 2003, *The Hawkseye* in 2005). Since I had to sit out this year I was asked to judge the "Functionality and Accessibility" category in the **PROBE** Online Bulletin Contest. It is sure different when the shoe is on the other foot.

Besides being a bulletin editor I have served as Heartspring Chairman, Chapter Secretary, Board Member At-Large, Membership VP, Public Relations VP, Show Chairman, Show Publicity Chairman and bass section leader. Currently I'm the editor of *Serenade*, the quarterly publication of the Central States District. I have been the editor for a year now and loving it (except when people are late with articles...grr).

As your new **Membership VP**, I will be working on increasing **PROBE's** membership; it has risen in the last year. I'd like to see every chapter and district bulletin editor and public relations/marketing VP on board. That is where I need your help. I need every district COTS to push **PROBE**. Every BE and PR class should be talking about **PROBE** and the many benefits it can provide. I can't do this all by myself. I will also be working with **Lorin May** to get **PROBE** information in the *Harmonizer*. It should also be in every district bulletin. So, let's get the word out! Contact me by e-mail at [quartetmandh@yahoo.com](mailto:quartetmandh@yahoo.com) or by phone at 563-391-6426 between 9 am – 12 pm CST Monday through Friday or in the evening on the weekends.

**Meet Bruce Anderson  
Public Relations VP**

By Bruce Anderson, Lincoln, Neb.



In June of 1977 I officially became a member of the *Lincoln Continentals*, but my exposure to barbershop music really started two years earlier. I was asked by a member of the chapter to provide some visual enhancement to their show in 1975 and 1976. I was hooked on the music, but at the time didn't have the time to devote to the organization. Finally, a person I worked with invited me to a Monday night rehearsal and I have missed very few practices since.

Several years after joining the chapter, I became interested in publishing a bulletin and the current editor said he would love to have someone take over the job. It was mine. For about two or three years I was the editor and loved every minute of the job. It was during this time I found out about the judging of bulletins and sent my name into **PROBE** for consideration. I was accepted as a layout and reproduction judge, October 25, 1987, and have again missed very few chances to judge bulletins. I only judged one IBC, but it was one of the most interesting. I have seen many changes take place in the judging ranks and hope that the judging will continue to improve. Shortly after becoming a judge, I was elected president of my chapter and had to give up the editorship for a time. I did get back to it for a year until other responsibilities took me away from the actual editing.

In my other life I have been a respiratory therapist at a local hospital for the last 17 years.<sup>1</sup> Before that I was a media specialist in education for 10 years. I have a B.S. in biology from Nebraska Wesleyan University and a Masters in education administration from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. While being involved in respiratory therapy, I have served on our state board a number of times and edited our state newsletter for three years.

My whole family is into barbershop and my two daughters have missed few annual shows or district contests. My oldest just recently joined Sweet Adelines. I am currently the chapter chairman for our district's next spring contest, which will be held in Lincoln. I have also served as chairman of our chapter's annual novice quartet contest for the past two years. I am also our chapter's delegate to the district.

<sup>1</sup>Article written in 1999 and lifted from the July-Sept. *PROBEmoter*, John Pettersen, editor

*Who says old news is redundant?*

The deadline for the  
Jan/March **PROBEmoter** is  
**Jan 5th**

**VP for Public Relations**

Bruce Anderson



**To post or not to post?**

The controversy reigns supreme when we start to talk about electronic vs. hard copy bulletins. Coming from the old school of hard copy bulletins of course I lean toward the printing of a bulletin. I do see the advantages of sending a bulletin electronically, but let's take a minute and look at both sides of the picture.

Hard copy bulletins are printed and handed or mailed to your members. They almost have to at least look at the front page and maybe it will draw them into what else is in your publication. They can then pass it along to the rest of the family and they can read it also. Even if the member does not even look at it, be sure that those in the family will, and take note of events and articles. The bulletin is also a good piece of PR for your chapter. Send it to others in the community to let them know what you are doing. Yes, there is more cost involved and perhaps more effort to making sure that the pages look good, but a well put together bulletin will not only stand out in your member's eyes but also in the eyes of the community, and perhaps just bring in a member or two. Once that member enters your door hand him a copy of your last issue.

A hard copy is also a piece of history. What happened in your chapter 5 years ago or 10 or 15? If you have saved the past bulletins as most editors do, you will have a record of the history of the chapter. Many editors of the "non-print" club, say that they have the information saved on a disk or on their computer. What happens if your computer crashes? Needless to say they do and you have lost all the information. As to storing on disk or other medium, just how long is that medium going to be around. Look at the 5 ¼ floppy disks, or the even the 3" disks. Or even look at the old format of microfilm. Many of these mediums cannot be read at this time, because the technology is old and none of the new computers reject those formats. I have also read that disks will loose information over time due to use and just due to time. We are talking a long period, perhaps 10 years, but in 10 years will we have computers that will read disks?

I know that many libraries are dealing with the problems of storing historical information so that it can be retrieved years hence. Many libraries are going to printed medium for historical purposes.

Now as to the electronic bulletins, yes they are much cheaper and easier to produce. You don't have to worry about taking them to the printer, assembling them, putting on mailing address labels and then taking to the post office and paying the postage. On the other hand when a member gets an electronic bulletin he could delete it as soon as it hits his mail box because he just doesn't want to read it. Even if he looks at it, does he print off a copy for anyone else? And needless to say if he does print off a copy does it print so that he can read it. With the various computers and programs not all electronic bulletins print the same on all computers or printers. There are two different methods – PDF and HTML – they do print different. If I don't print out a copy nobody else sees the bulletin. This is just a discussion of the two forms of bulletins. What your chapter decides to use is your choice. The main point of all the discussion is that you should in some way communicate with your chapter on a regular basis.

**Your Dues Are DUE!  
Or soon will be....**

By Dick Girvin,  
PROBE Secretary/Treasurer



Unless you have had the foresight to subscribe for a number of years into the future (good planning!), your annual **PROBE** dues will expire on December 31, 2007. Sure, December is a long time off but now is the time (so you won't forget).

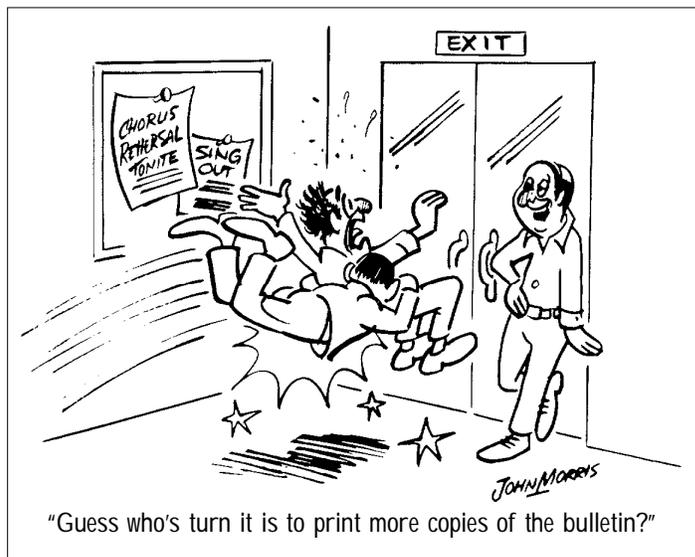
**PROBE** has no other revenue source than your dues to provide for the **PROBE**em<sup>o</sup>ter, the annual bulletin contests (on-line and print), the annual PROTY contest, the ongoing advice to the members via "**PROBEmail**" and other internet support activities. Your support in the past and the present is sincerely appreciated and we are looking forward to seeing your renewal checks (\$10.00 per year) in the mail soon.

In case it escaped your notice, several years ago the Society withdrew the service that permitted each chapter to pay your **PROBE** dues as part of their fiscal input. Today it is necessary for you to have your chapter (or you) send your check to the treasurer at the below address. In this way we can continue to offer the well-seasoned services to new and present members alike. Remember, we are counting on you — we have no other means of income other than your dues. Be sure to stay current in the "Society's Most Influential Fraternity."



Dick Girvin

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# Help for Editors

By John Elving  
PROBE VP Bulletin Editors



I'm assuming we all know about entering all the **District Bulletin Contests** as a way of improving our publications. That is only one way of making improvements. Another way is to upgrade our computer software. I know, that costs big bucks, and I don't have that much moola to spend on something I don't get paid for. I made those same comments until recently. Then something came along to change my mind.

Did you know that you can get many great software programs for pennies on the dollar? If that's still too much for you, there are free programs you can get. I'll tell you about them and how to get them. Let's start with the free ones. If all you want is an alternative to **Microsoft Windows**, there is an alternative. It's a whole suite of very usable, some would say better, programs. Check out <http://openoffice.org/> and see what they have to offer. They have a great word processing program in the suite that will do as much as **Microsoft Word**. Plus there are other programs in the suite you may find helpful.

For desktop publishing programs, there are two free ones. The first, and probably most popular, is **Scribus**, found at <http://www.scribus.net/>. It is a fairly full-featured desktop publishing program which is compatible with Linux, Mac, and Windows applications. The second is **PagePlus** from Serif, <http://freeserifsoftware.com/>. Although it is free, you can purchase an updated and more full-featured version for under \$10.00

If what you want is more "standard," or even higher quality software, it is available for much less than the advertised price. **As a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society, your chapter is listed as a 501(c)(3) organization.** That qualifies the chapter to participate in the program. First, go to <http://www.techsoup.org/stock/> and check out the "Getting Started" links. It takes a little bit of work on your part to get started, but in the end is well worth it. By ordering these donated software programs, your chapter can get the very best for very little cash expended.

**I would like to thank the 18 barbershoppers whose articles and/or contributed bits and pieces fill this issue:**

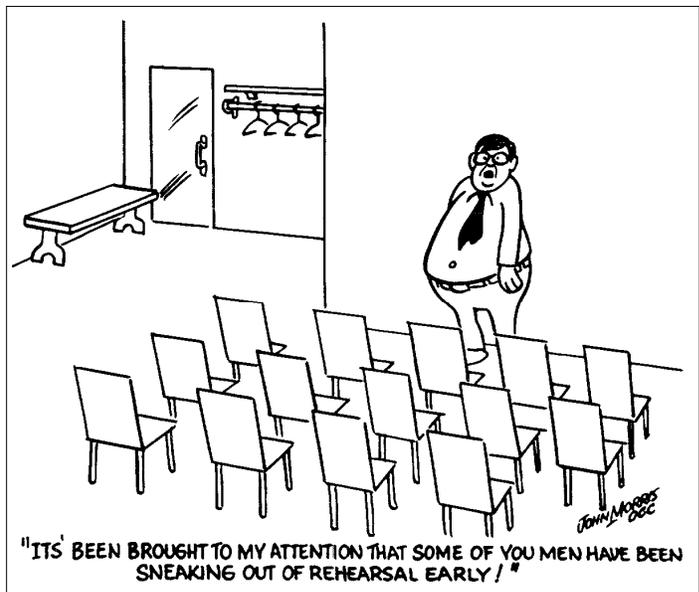
- Bruce Anderson (2), Todd Anderson, Ray Ashcroft (3), David Baker, Herb Bayles (4), Bart Bartholomew, Grant Carson, Warren Donaldson, Alexander Edwards, John Elving (3), Dick Girvin, David Haase, Dr. Clare McCreary, Robb Ollett, Lowell Shank, Arnie Wade, Jon Wagner (3), Rusty Williams**

As a couple of examples, I was able to recently upgrade (same cost as new) my **Microsoft Office** for a total of \$20.00. That's right, \$20.00 for the full version as opposed to \$330.00 retail. That will give you not only **Word**, but also **Publisher, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access** all for one low price! If you want really top-notch software, why not move up to **Adobe InDesign**? This program is fast becoming the industry standard for publishing. This \$700.00 program is available for \$60.00. I went to this program and have not been sorry I did. It is much more full featured than any desktop publishing program, which means I can do much more with it. And the learning curve for what we do is fairly low. It even comes with a great tutorial CD that is very helpful.

For you web designers, there is every program you could want. All priced from \$7.00 up, depending on the program. Graphics programs? There. Computers? There. Nearly anything you could ever possibly need, or maybe want, is there for your chapter's use. And it can be put on your own computer, just so long as it is used for the chapter. So what's holding you back from upgrading your software? We all upgrade our skills. It's time we take those skills and put them to good use with new software. All this helps you publish the best bulletin possible.




**Kristine Parkes column will return in the Jan/March PROBEmoter**



# Making Improvements In What We Do

By John Elving, PROBE VP Bulletin Editors

Did you ever wonder how we can make improvements in what we do as editors? How do we put out a publication that not only conveys the news to our chapter members and their families, but is also eye-catching enough to draw their attention to our publication? There are always ways we can improve what we do, but many ask how do we do this on our limited budget?

Never fear! There is help on the way! One of the best ways to improve what we are doing is by entering your weekly, monthly or bi-monthly tome in the district bulletin contest. *"Aw, shucks,"* you say. *"My bulletin is just for the guys in my chapter. There's stuff I don't necessarily want others to see that is discussed in our bulletin."* That's what I said, too. But let me tell you, when finally coerced into entering the contest, I discovered that help was there to make my bulletin better. I may be of retirement age, but I still want to learn. And learn, I have.



As with chorus coaching, not all comments are useful to me, or work in my situation. As with chorus directors, some things work for my chapter while others don't. They are, however, all valuable and teach me, an old dog, new tricks. The

people who judge our bulletin in district and international competition – I dislike the word competition when it comes to newsletters – were only interested in making me a better editor. For the most part, their comments were constructive and helpful. They pointed out areas that I didn't see on my own which will help me become better at what I do – publish a bulletin full of the news that will help my chapter.

So how can I get this great coaching? Simple – enter the **District Bulletin Contest**. Entering the contest so you can get coaching in improving your publication is really quite easy. First, some qualifications need to be outlined. The first requirement is that you be a paid-up member of **PROBE**. This is a reasonable chapter expense, and should be covered by the chapter for all bulletin editors, webmasters, and public relations/publicity officers.

In district judging, at the present time, only hard copy bulletins are judged. If you publish your bulletin on a monthly or bi-monthly schedule, at least six issues per year must have been published. For weekly or bi-weekly bulletins you must have published for at least six months.

In January, or shortly after that, each district Bulletin Contest chairman will put out a call for bulletins to be submitted to him. Bulletins considered are for the previous calendar year – 2007 for 2008 judging. Simply choose your best three consecutive bulletins for monthly or bi-monthly bulletins and send three copies of each to the district bulletin contest chairman. For those who publish a weekly bulletin, you need to compile three copies each of twelve consecutive issues. Bi-weekly editors compile three copies of nine consecutive issues.

It really is that easy. *"That's nice. But how do I enter the International bulletin contest?"* you ask. After each district contest has been completed, the district chairman will notify the top two district newsletter editors that they are eligible to enter the International Bulletin Contest. If they want to enter that contest, they need to submit new copies of the newsletter or bulletin in the same quantities to the International Bulletin Contest (IBC) chairman. These can be the same issues, or you can submit different issues if you choose.

**"That's all fine and dandy," you say. "But I only publish an online bulletin. How do I get in on all the fun?"**

Again, it's really quite easy. There will be a call for entries issued early in the year by the International Online Bulletin Contest chairman. Entries will be submitted as URL's of two consecutive monthly issues, four consecutive bi-weekly issues, or eight consecutive weekly issues. These may be in either HTML or PDF format, but must be accessible via the Internet.

**Deadline for entrants in the International Online Bulletin Contest is April 1.**

There is no district qualification for the online version. It is open to all PROBE members with the exception that any professional web designer who is paid for maintaining the website is not eligible.

Now, who of us doesn't want to improve our publication? I was one who only wanted to publish a useful bulletin for my chapter. But entering the contest has, hopefully, made me a better editor. That, in turn, makes things better for my chapter. For all the details, for entry forms and judging guidelines, go to the **PROBE** website, <http://www.harmonize.com/PROBE/> and follow the links for **PROBE** information. It's all there in an easy to read format. So, come on people, let's all get in the boat. It's a big boat that can hold all of us. It's a boat that can make us all better. Just don't miss the boat!

# Web pages: How cute is too cute?

By Arnold Wade, PROBE Webmaster (reprinted from the Society website)



Is your chapter online yet? How about your bulletin? If not, or even if so, you may want to take a look at the pages with a fresh eye. As with most things in life, it helps to know where you're going before getting too far down the road on your journey. What is the primary purpose of your web site? The chapter site may well be one that you hope will attract people to venture further into it, and the use of some gimmicks like animated graphics, multi-colored backgrounds, etc., might prove useful. Your online bulletin, on the other hand, is probably intended as a way to convey information and keep chapter members and friends informed about recent happenings, upcoming events, personal and chapter milestones, and the like, and simpler may well be better.

People who are just getting into the business of putting up web resources tend to go overboard in terms of making the pages look cute. It is tempting, when browsing and running across a neat animated graphic or piece of JavaScript or other innovative item, to want to use the same on your pages. Most of us, however, would be better served to remember our purpose and keep the pages as useable as possible rather than trying to make them the prettiest thing on the web. There are some beautiful barbershop pages on the web that I never go back to, simply because they use so many gimmicks and graphics that they take forever to load. Here's a few things to watch for:

## Pictures

When scanning pictures for use on the Web, use a low-resolution scan. My old scanner will scan up to 4800 dpi (dots per inch), which makes for a sharp printed picture. Most computer monitors, however, can only display pictures at 100-120 dpi. The additional 4700 dpi on a high resolution scan only makes the file bigger and takes it longer to load; it does not look a bit better.

## Graphics

Graphics come in many flavors, from background images to stars, dots, lines, buttons, etc. Some are animated GIF files, like a cat chasing a butterfly across the screen, or the under construction icon, animated to show a workman digging a hole. *The under construction icons are another animal entirely. Every decent Web page is always under construction, and we don't need a picture to remind us of the fact.* While the judicious use of graphics can make a page layout more attractive, remember that each one used makes the page slower to load. The webmaster at our university refuses to put up any pages that contain a total of 150 k in image files (graphics or pic-

tures). A single high resolution picture file can easily be many times that large. I received one recently that was 1,500 k.

## Proprietary Software

Unfortunately, while html standards for writing Web pages do exist, programs like Microsoft FrontPage don't adhere to them. (I'm not picking on FrontPage. I understand it's a good program, but it can still create problems.) The page that looks beautiful on one Web browser may look entirely different on another because of this problem, and the fancier you try to make the page, the more likely it is to have problems when viewed on another platform.

Another problem with proprietary software, especially WYSIWYG" (*What You See Is What You Get*) programs, is that when you, for example, drag a picture to a certain place on the page, the program codes it to display at that exact location (e.g., 650 pixels from the left side). If someone looks at a page with a browser that only displays 640 pixels across a page, they will have to use a bottom scroll bar to even see the beginning of the picture. And people tend to not like using bottom scroll bars.

For these (and other) reasons, the PROBE web site uses almost no graphics beyond the front page. Backgrounds are simple - either a plain white, or the simple paper look - and the text is about as plain vanilla as it can be made. It isn't the prettiest site on the web, but was never intended to be. The purpose was to provide articles and information that could easily be copied and pasted into other applications for your use. Up to this point I have managed to avoid the temptation to make it cute. But I really do like this little animated mailbox; let's see now, if I just stick that in next to the dog chasing his tail....

## Seven easy things to do for better L&R

By W. Grant Carson, SWD

**Tom Pearce**, *Layout & Reproduction* judge, was kind enough to share with me the score sheets and critiques of a district he judged. I noticed that the critiques kept saying the same things, so I made a tally. Here are the repeated items of advice, things most of us know we should do, and easy to do. There were seven bulletins entered.

Put a line drawing of a quartet in the nameplate, **five times**.

Give the meeting place in the bulletin, **three times**. (**Prominent spot, please—SJ**)

Use an action verb in every headline, **seven times**.

Use line art to break the monotony of text, **four times**.

Use special emphasis techniques, such as boxed text, **four times**.

When using boxed text, don't let the boxes crowd the text, **three times**.

Put page numbers on all pages but page one, **three times**.

All but one of these items are included in the L&R score sheet. The score sheets are a guide for what's good, or what PROBE thinks is good, in barbershop journalism. If you don't have all three, they're available from the PROBE website:

[harmonize.com/probe](http://harmonize.com/probe).

Reprinted from Society webpage

So, you know all about PR and Marketing — you send out your releases, and anxiously await to see what the local media is going to do, and NOTHING! What went wrong? Was it something you said or didn't say? Maybe it was a full news day? Maybe you need a different hook? Before going any further, read the article below. Ray Ashcroft from the Fullerton, Cal. chapter, past and present PROT Y (Public Relations Officer of the Year) takes a no nonsense approach to his efforts. He starts with the basics of all communication. Read on!

## To Develop a Public Relations Package Plan Your Move — Move Your Plan!

Written by Ray Ashcroft



While each public relations release talks about a different issue, there are five basic “words” that can be used to help develop the individual event package. These words are

### WHAT...WHEN...WHERE...WHY...HOW

Answer the five words and you have “planned your PR package move.”

“**What**” is used to develop an interesting event “title.” It must appeal to the reader. Use **bold face, underlined words** that best describe your event. Keep it simple using at most two topics...the event title and date.

“**When**” is almost always used in the first paragraph of the PR release. It repeats the title of the special event and “simply” lists the location and “time” the event starts, ie: showtime...8:00 pm!

“**Where**” and “**Why**” usually follow and they can be used interchangeably. If you are promoting a concert, list the performers and their special “awards” that would promote interest among your readers. “**Why**” were they selected to perform for the public? Also, if the funds generated by the concert will be used for a charitable cause...“Youth In Harmony”...state that in the release because it will make the public feel better about themselves and attending your special event versus another organization in your community because your article says...“you care!” Depending how well liked they are, you may want to invite a local celebrity to do a “cameo” appearance in your scripted show and discuss his part in the show. At the end of the show, present the celebrity with a “framed” certificate of recognition available through the **Barbershop Harmony Society** in Nashville, on show at the completion of the show.

In writing about “Youth In Harmony” you may want to quote your chorus director or event manager stating your community cause, if applicable. If the show appeals to families and can be rated “G,” mention it in your release. Today, it’s hard to find a live show that the whole family can attend.

“**How**” serves as a closure for the release. It should outline “how to order tickets.” Are you using an accreditation card program and/or checks sent to an address...listing that address and phone number. How are tickets priced? Are group sales available at a special price? Is parking “free” to attendees and where is it located?

Finally, the last paragraph should list your web site, show manager phone number and a Chorus Hotline if applicable...and...let readers know that they can make a donation to “Youth In Harmony”...even if they can't attend the show!

“**END OF RELEASE**” should be typeset across the bottom of the page, “dated” and list who wrote the release. Try to keep the informational release to one page, using short paragraphs printed on professional letterhead stationary stock.

### Finally...MOVE YOUR PLAN

Develop a media list of contacts that should be updated each month because contacts change. Introduce yourself to each contact. If you can make it a personal contact, all the better. It will help you to stand out above your competition. Many large newspapers receive 650 PR packages a day and without a personal touch, chances are your release package may end up “deep sixed.”

Try to get the PR package distributed personally to your media contact, it takes more time but helps keep your chorus (chapter, too — SJ) in the public eye...it says you appreciate your contacts help. It also gives you a chance to explain the “action” picture you have selected to support your special public relations event.

Remember, there is a lot of competition in the marketplace for media placement. Television, radio, internet, brochures, newspapers, and magazines, just to name a few. Whatever you decide to use, PLAN YOUR MOVE...and MOVE YOUR PLAN with an organized time frame schedule and keep to your PLAN. A professional PLAN and follow through costs very little, if any, in actual advertising rates and will help place your event squarely in the eyes of the public!

Marketing & Public Relations VP**Ray Ashcroft**

The Orange Empire Chorus  
Fullerton, California (FWD)

If you join the **Orange Empire** Chorus in Fullerton, California, you become a member of a team that is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the community. We are extremely active throughout the year. When you are a member of ..."Number Fun" (our slogan), things happen!

Our major events include "Singing Valentines," an outdoor Person park summer "Harmony under the Stars" concert, a major "G" rated family member scripted musical show in the spring (with two performances), two concerts at the Nixon Library and three "Holiday Cabaret Shows" benefiting Youth in Harmony. Incidentally the "Orange Blossoms" (our ladies auxiliary) proudly prepares a food menu each year for our holiday guests. This year's special performers for the outdoor concert were the **Westminster Chorus, The Crush, the 139<sup>th</sup> Street Quartet, Ready, Willing and Mabel** and the **Hemet Harmonizers**.

Quartets sing throughout the year for special events and our chorus started the first "Lunch Bunch" harmony group that is open to the public and meets each Friday, 11:30 a.m. at Fullerton's Giovanni's Restaurant.

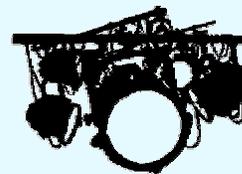
As V.P. of Marketing and Public Relations, my job is to develop our planned media programs that support the membership's outreach programs in the community. Through a selection of media including radio, television, newspaper, magazine, direct mail, chorus web site, and even a chorus "Hot Line," we attempt to answer and project to the community a positive, updated image of the **Orange Empire** chorus. We ask ourselves, "What, When, Where, Why and How." When these five conditions are answered about each event, we are "ready to roll."

Each project is supported with an individual story that is simply written, along with a professional event picture with photo ID captions. A four to six week media lead-time is scheduled prior to the event. Each PR package is personally delivered to the individual media contact...not mailed. It takes a little more time, but it is worth it! As an example, last year our chorus was featured in 6,353,956 newspaper copies throughout our marketing area. We were able to achieve an increase of 738,267 copies and a gain of 13.1% over last year's circulation. In addition to the major events mentioned earlier, we also project a positive chorus image through the placement of PR packages to support sixteen other special events throughout the year.

We are fortunate to have a team member, **Dick Cote**, our "*Barbershop Clippin's*" editor who has set a tradition of excellence by being awarded first place in the PROBE's International Bulletin Contest several times.

As a thirty year member of the Barbershop Harmony Society and a Gold Medal winner, it is a pleasure to be part of the Fullerton chapter and an honor to have received this year's **Public Relations Officer of the Year**, Year Long Effort Award. We are "Number Fun." Public Relations has helped the **Orange Empire** Chorus to grow in the community for 50 years. Public Relations can help your chorus or quartet grow in community awareness and membership as it has for our chorus. You see, when you're a member of the **Orange Empire** Chorus and "Number Fun"... things happen!

## Your Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words!



By Ray Ashcroft, V.P. Marketing & Public Relations  
Orange Empire Chorus; Fullerton, California

It's been said that "a picture is worth a thousand words!" And that is true, most especially when you are trying to communicate a public relations story to the press. As we write a story for the public, we should always try to answer the questions what, when, where, why, and how. Part and parcel of our release, however, always includes a picture of the event that is being communicated to our reader.

The picture you chose to support your public relations release will help the reader understand your special event. It should be colorful and exciting. If you "shoot" a chorus, pick an animate, small group of the singers, just a section and not the whole chorus. Make sure the picture shows pleasant, expressive faces. You are not only communicating an event but conveying a pleasant feeling to the reader.

Make sure your picture best represents the event to the reader. Is it in focus? Don't duplicate the four corners of your picture, each should represent a different venue.

Always include a "brief" description of the event attached to the bottom of the photograph that you include with your PR release. That "brief" statement helps the media understand your event with actual expressions of people. Later it will catch the eye of the reader when your article is competing for readability against your competition.

Clarity of picture subject is important to your newspaper publisher and ultimately your reader. You only get one chance and it should represent your organization well! Many of our newspapers have asked that we photograph our subjects using a reflex camera. They say that it is easier to increase or reduce picture size more effectively for their paper's reproduction. Micro dots "fall away from the page" if increased in size and "solidify in printers ink" image if reduced in size. Also, each newspaper buys from a different source of finished paper stock, and paper stock is porous. So you want to start with a clear image picture before it is subjected to the printing process.

A good picture is "worth a thousand words." It graphically communicates your event to the reader and may actually reduce a wordy release...by "a thousand words" and get your placement in the newspaper over your competition's release!



Open Forum

## On-Line Bulletins?

Dr. Clare McCreary

To all those bulletin editors who send notices through PROBE and the HARMONET that their bulletin is now on line at their website: as a fellow bulletin editor (*Scoops & Swipes*, St. Petersburg, Florida) who reads every bulletin that comes down the pike, I much prefer to simply download a .pdf file from my email. If I have to go to the trouble to access the web site, scroll through the links, and finally see the bulletin (in .pdf format), I probably will not go to the trouble. I don't think that I am alone. Join the editors exchange list and really get your bulletin read. Those who want information about your chapter will go to your website anyway. Save the rest of us the trouble. You've already created a mailing list, just attach the #\$\$@ .pdf file. Getting old and grouchy.

Warren R. Donaldson  
Director of Communications  
Cardinal District  
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This is just my two cents on the matter: In the case of a file that is going to be hosted on a web site anyway, it is much easier for sender AND recipient to send a link rather than attach the file.

a. Many e-mail users cannot or will not accept attachments, particularly above a certain file size. When I have a large attachment to send, I will first send an e-mail announcing that the attachment is to follow with instructions to contact me if the attachment never arrives with the subsequent e-mail. I don't have that problem when sending a link.

b. If the .pdf file is very large, I may post a small and large version of the same file online. This allows the reader the option of downloading a smaller file with somewhat less detail (primarily in the graphics).

c. Even if the recipient doesn't choose to save the file to his/her hard drive, it takes up space in the mail folder until (if at all) the e-mail is deleted. There may be something of interest in the e-mail that will cause the recipient to keep the e-mail even though the attachment is not wanted and he/she may not know how to delete just the attachment.

In summary, by sending a link to the file I have allowed the recipient to decide whether or not to download the file. Yes, I know that it may require ONE MORE CLICK of the mouse for you. But that is a small price to pay in thanks to the sender for not clogging your computer. Getting old and cheerful!

Bart Bartholomew  
[bart@bartbartholomew.com](mailto:bart@bartbartholomew.com)

My suggestion is to stop referring to bulletins that are on a chapter's website in .pdf format as bulletins "on line." I, for one, will not take the time to wait for a large .pdf file to download so that I can read another chapter's bulletin. My guess is that there are still quite a number of barbershoppers who still have slow, dial-up Internet service like I do. Waiting for a megabyte file to download so I can peruse the bulletin is not worth my time. I will, however, go to a website and peruse a bulletin that is in .html format, with a functional index and links, and read what interests me.

The bottom line is that the .html bulletin should be called "on line." The .pdf files could be called "downloadable" or some other term to indicate that the reader will have to wait for it to download. With proper labeling, all of us will be able to read the bulletins that we choose to read without a lot of wasted time whether we are "old and grouchy" or "old and cheerful."

Editor Emeritus  
*The InCider Press*  
"on line" and "downloadable"  
Little Apple Chorus,  
Central States District

[littleapplechorus.org/generalpages/newsletters.htm](http://littleapplechorus.org/generalpages/newsletters.htm)

Dr. Clare McCreary

[cmccrear@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:cmccrear@tampabay.rr.com)

As I expected, I received some kind advice from those who champion the "put it on the web-site" point of view, also from **Grant Carson** who told me "You've always been grumpy." Back when I was webmaster, I posted our bulletin on our web-site in HTML form. But back then, when our chapter was wealthy, we also sent out over 200 hard copies, to bulletin editors, old members, widows of members, etc. I am no longer webmaster, and I send him my bulletin in .pdf form.

I have to wonder. Do those chapters sending the bulletin strictly to the web-site have a membership that is completely computer competent, or do they rely on members with computers making a hard copy for those who aren't? I think the issue is, how do we get the bulletin read by most of the people for whom it is intended (including, especially, the wives of the members)? The answer is to make it easy for the reader. And I understand that there will always be different opinions on that. The answer is not, however, how to make it easy for the editor.



**John Elving**, in his recent post on this subject, said much of what I was going to say. BTW John, put me on your email list. I've been reading the web-site version because it is worth the extra effort. John touched on the size of the bulletin and down-load time. There are programs that will down size pictures and other graphics, but you probably already know that. My last bulletin was eight pages, with one full page of pictures and was only 738 kb in .pdf format. Hardly a formidable download.

**Tom Ennis** also made a point in that the formatting is different for HTML than for hard copy or .pdf. Yes it should be different. It should be easy to read without scrolling up and down a full page. You can format a page (intended to be downloaded in .pdf) so that most articles can be read completely without scrolling (on most modern computer monitors). And it doesn't look bad in hard copy. Most of us still print hard copies for those who are computer incompetent. I agree that an HTML file gives a lot more latitude in what you can do to make a bulletin fancy, but most of us still have to print a hard copy, so we must bear that in mind.



Dr. Clare McCreary, Scoops & Swipes  
[www.suncoastchorus.com](http://www.suncoastchorus.com)

**Todd Anderson, Kansas City editor, receiving "BETY" award from CSD President Don Fuson prior to his second place finish in the IBC this year.**



**PROBE VP - Bulletin Editors**

**John Elving**  
[leaderman@earthlink.net](mailto:leaderman@earthlink.net)



**On-line or hard copy bulletins?**

Whether we want to admit it or not, there are many things, form, articles, newsletters, etc. that are on the web in PDF format. Whether it is in HTML or PDF, if it is on a website, it is an "online" version" of whatever it is. The word "online" does not refer in any way to HTML. It refers only to something that is hosted on the worldwide web, as opposed to hard copy. It has become much more fiscally responsible to put it online than making hard copies and spending the postage for them.

In our case, I have solved a problem in a couple of ways. I will continue to post on the PROBE mail list when there is a new issue of our newsletter on the website. It is there in a PDF file, and in a text only HTML version. For those that want it sent via email, I will add their name to the mailing list. Even in our chapter the hard copies are for those who don't have internet access, and those with special needs.

And don't tell me about slow dial-up. Unfortunately, where I live, that's all I can get. Yes it's slow, but it doesn't waste my time. I can do other things while a large file downloads. Try downloading a 45 Meg file sometime. In my other business, I have to do that all too often. In that respect a 1 meg PDF file takes no time at all. Just think of all the time we used to waste standing out by the mailbox waiting for the mailman to come. Now we get upset while waiting a fraction of the time for a relatively small download.

In what ever version the newsletters are published on the websites, they will continue. If the newsletter editor is also the webmaster, then it is fairly easy to make an HTML version. For those who aren't the chapter webmasters, and who also print out the hard copy version, it is much easier to also make it into a PDF.

If any of you would rather have a PDF version emailed to you of the **Voice of Rushmore**, just let me know and I'll add you to my mail list. For all others, if you want the full color version, you'll just have to download the online PDF version from the website: [www.shrineofdemocracychorus.org/newsletter.html](http://www.shrineofdemocracychorus.org/newsletter.html) or read the text only HTML version (no pictures or graphics).





# Online Marketing for Chapters and Quartets

by Dave Baker, *Spirit of Phoenix*, Glendale, Arizona  
**Pre-reading: How Search Engines Work**

## An e-mail account.

One great thing about having your own domain is that you can arrange with your web hosting company to receive mail through that domain.

So you can be "[dave@equinoxquartet.com](mailto:dave@equinoxquartet.com)" instead of "[davesingstenor\\_12345@hotmail.com](mailto:davesingstenor_12345@hotmail.com)" or something equally embarrassing. Remember—this is your brand.

## Content

Before you begin developing your site, take stock of any "content" you might already have. This might include chorus or quartet logos, photos, promotional text, and even show or contest audio (though be careful about copyright laws). Once you've got a web host, a domain name, an appropriate e-mail account, and all of your content as a starting point, you're ready to develop your site. This is not the place to learn how to create a website. If you don't know how to design and execute a site, you can either learn how to do it yourself or find someone else to do it. If you choose the first route, there are lots of online resources that will help you learn. (Just do a Google search on "how to create a website" and you'll see what I mean.) But whether you do the work yourself or have it done, please keep these things in mind:

### Simpler is better

Avoid lots of in-your-face graphics, animated GIFs, Java applets, distracting background images, and complex designs. Avoid frames and excessively segmented layouts. The more words you put on the site, the less likely it is that people will read them. And make sure the words you do use are very relevant to the topic at hand. And one more thing—every website on the planet is continually under construction. Please don't state the obvious with a big yellow-and-black "Under Construction" banner. That's just so 1996.

### Stay on task

This dovetails with the simplicity mantra. Keep in mind your goals in mind, and design your pages specifically to accomplish those goals. Make sure that someone who stumbles across your site can understand in less than five seconds what it is all about. If your main goal is to attract new chorus members, make sure your rehearsal time and location are front and center. If you're merely trying to get gigs for your quartet, make sure people don't have to hunt around to find your contact information. A big "Book Us Now" button might be appropriate.

### When in doubt, emulate

One of the best ways to design a website is to make a list of the sites you like and the sites you don't like. Figure out what elements of the "good sites" appeal to you, and what elements of the "bad sites" turn you off. It might be the navigation scheme, the visual layout, the color scheme, or the use of screen real estate. Note that these don't have to be barbershop sites. Any site can be fodder for good design ideas. Alternatively, you can just buy a template from a site like [www.templatemonster.com](http://www.templatemonster.com), or download one for free from [www.oswd.org](http://www.oswd.org).

## Test, test, test

Remember that you're not the only person who will be viewing your website, so make sure you test on a variety of platforms and browsers to make sure everything looks correct. At the very least, test on Internet Explorer and Firefox on Windows, and Safari and Internet Explorer on the Mac. Test with your monitor set at 800x600 pixels as well as at higher resolutions, and test with different color levels (8-bit "256 colors", 16-bit "high color", 32-bit "true color").

## 2. Optimizing Your Website

If you don't already understand the inner workings of Internet search engines, read the companion piece, "How Search Engines Work." It will help you better understand why optimization is so important, and why you should tweak your site's content to make it more "attractive" to search engines. The more optimized your content is, the greater the likelihood that your site will rank well in search results. This increases your chances of being found when someone goes looking.

A website is just a collection of text files, graphics files, and other media files (like audio, video, Flash, and so on) that are combined together by a visitor's web browser program (like Internet Explorer, Safari or Firefox) and displayed in a window. The graphics and other "rich media" in your site have very little effect on your search engine rankings.

This means you need to focus on content and code, both of which are in the HTML files in your site. The content is the text that is actually displayed on the screen (that people can see). The code is the "invisible stuff" that tells your visitor's web browser how to display everything. There are lots of things that you (or your web developer) can do to both the content and code of your site to help increase your rankings. Note that this is just the basics. Search engine optimization (SEO) has grown into a multi-billion-dollar industry as companies and organizations battle for the lucrative top slots in the major search engines. But even though we're selling barbershop here, it can't hurt us to think like a big-time web developer.



## Stage Presence: Close Your Eyes

We cannot stress enough the effect smiling and movement adds to speech and song. It brightens your sound almost like adding a halo behind (not over) your head and it puts sparkle in your eyes. Don't think for a moment that someone in the audience isn't looking right at you every minute you're on stage....they are! It's up to you to give them something pleasing to see.

An interesting event happened when I was asked my opinion of a new quartet who had never had any coaching, yet did a wonderful job on-stage. I told them I was amazed at their proficiency and that Joe, the Bass, had the best stage presence. He was dumbfounded! You see, he's 100% blind and just reacted to the emotion of the words, unaware of how it looked and not the least self-conscious in demonstrating how he felt. His brother, Tom, the Lead and 90% visionless, was close behind him in physical expression.

## Optimizing Content

It's time for some market research. The challenge: go back to your goals and revisit the whole purpose of your site. Then put yourself in your customer's shoes and reverse engineer the process of searching for the site you are building.

### Example 1

If your site's main goal is to increase membership for your chorus, the Main Street Minstrels (formerly known as the Corn Country Cavalcade) in the town of Spitwater, Indiana. Let's brainstorm a bit about your customer and jot a few assumptions:

The customer is a man who likes to sing (or friend or family member of a man who likes to sing). The customer may or may not know about barbershop music. The customer may or may not know about the Main Street Minstrels. The customer is looking for information about your chorus specifically, about barbershop choruses in general, and/or about men's choruses or other performing groups in the greater Spitwater metropolitan area.

While it looks like we don't know anything about our customer, we actually know a lot. We just have to tailor the text of our pages to address the different variables so that the search engines will pick up on what our product is and what we



have to offer. To address the assumptions above, we can brainstorm some keywords and key phrases that would help set our site apart from the others: man, men, male, guy, guys, singing, performing, vocal, harmony, harmonize, harmonizing, entertaining, entertainment barbershop, barbershop music, barbershopping, close harmony, four-part harmony, a cappella, quartet, barbershop quartet, Barbershop Harmony Society, SPEBSQSA Main Street Minstrels, Corn Country Cavalcade, Spitwater, Indiana barbershop chorus, men's chorus, a cappella singing group.

Now comes the fun part: writing the content of your pages to maximize the keyword density. The secret is to "pack in" the keywords to the point where the search engine will associate them together and recognize your site's relevance in relation to these keywords that are important to you. We might create sentences like the following:

"Are you a guy who likes to sing? The Main Street Minstrels are the premiere men's singing group in Spitwater and the surrounding region. We sing four-part barbershop harmony and have a great time performing around town."

"Formerly known as the Corn Country Cavalcade, the Main Street Minstrels comprise the Spitwater chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBSQSA). We focus on vocal development, quality singing, and close harmony as we develop talents and friendships."

"More than just a men's chorus or a cappella singing group, the Main Street Minstrels are a brotherhood of barbershop singers dedicated to entertaining the

Spitwater community." The only caveat is that the copy should be written with the keywords packed in as tightly as possible, but should still be readable and feel more or less like natural English. (That is, as far as "marketingese" can be considered both "natural" and "English.")

### Example 2

If your site's main goal is to get gigs for your quartet, the TestosterTones (from Mud Lick, Kentucky), you'll be targeting an entirely different customer. Here are a few assumptions: The customer has an event (large or small) for which he or she wants entertainment, in or near Mud Lick, Kentucky, and the surrounding area. The event might be large or small, formal or casual; it might be for a special occasion. The customer may or may not be aware of barbershop music, the society, or the TestosterTones.

Based on those assumptions, here are some keywords we might suggest (and there would probably be more): performing, performance, event, entertainment, entertain, audience, Mud Lick, Kentucky, book, booking, gig concert, show, birthday greetings, birthday party, anniversary party, wedding entertainment, serenade, singing valentine, singing telegram, corporate events, TestosterTones, TestosterTones quartet, barbershop quartet, harmony, close harmony, a cappella, Barbershop Harmony Society, SPEBSQSA. So in the content of our quartet's site, we would include phrases like the following:

"The Testoster Tones is a highly acclaimed quartet specializing in close a cappella harmony, singing songs in a variety of styles such as barbershop, doo-wop, pop and gospel. We are affiliated with the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBSQSA) and are the current novice quartet champs in the Mud Lick division.

We are available to perform at a variety of events and concerts, and have serenaded crowds at birthday parties, anniversary parties, wedding receptions, corporate events and special Christmas programs. The Testoster Tones quartet can be booked for special command performances such as singing telegrams, wedding proposals and birthday greetings. Please call for rates and repertoire suggestions."

## XP Keyboard Shortcuts

Jon Wagner, editor/director,  
[jon\\_wagner1@msn.com](mailto:jon_wagner1@msn.com)

For those using **Windows XP** on their computers, here are 50 keyboard shortcuts which vastly improves the speed with which you can work with your documents. The ones I use all the time (and have for years) are:



**CTL+ X** Cut to clipboard  
**CTL+ C** Copy to clipboard  
**CTL+ V** Paste at cursor location  
**CTL+ S** Save the current document (you should do this frequently when composing anything)

But, there are simply LOTS of things you can do much faster than using your mouse to point and click.

**CTRL+ Z** (Undo)  
**DELETE** (Delete)  
**SHIFT+ DELETE** (Delete the selected item permanently without placing in Recycle Bin)  
**CTRL** while dragging an item (Copy the selected item)  
**CTRL+ SHIFT** while dragging an item (Create a shortcut to the selected item)  
**F2 key** (Rename the selected item)  
**CTRL+ RIGHT ARROW** (Move the insertion point to beginning of the next word)  
**CTRL+ LEFT ARROW** (Move the insertion point to beginning of the previous word)  
**CTRL+ DOWN ARROW** (Move the insertion point to beginning of the next paragraph)  
**CTRL+ UP ARROW** (Move the insertion point to beginning of the previous paragraph)  
**CTRL+ SHIFT** with any of the arrow keys (Highlight a block of text)  
**SHIFT** with any of the arrow keys  
 (Select more than one item in a window or on the desktop, or select text in a document)  
**CTRL+ A** (Select all)  
**F3 key** (Search for a file or a folder)  
**ALT+ ENTER** (View the properties for the selected item)  
**ALT+ F4** (Close the active item, or quit the active program)  
**ALT+ ENTER** (Display the properties of the selected object)  
**ALT+ SPACEBAR** (Open the shortcut menu for the active window)  
**CTRL+ F4** (Close the active document in programs that enable you to have multiple documents open simultaneously)  
**ALT+ TAB** (Switch between the open items)  
**ALT+ ESC** (Cycle through items in the order that they had been opened)  
**F6 key** (Cycle through the screen elements in a window or on the desktop)  
**F4 key** (Display the Address bar list in My Computer or Windows Explorer)  
**SHIFT+ F10** (Display the shortcut menu for the selected item)  
**ALT+ SPACEBAR** (Display the System menu for the active window)  
**CTRL+ ESC** (Display the Start menu)  
**ALT+ Underlined** letter in a menu name (Display the corresponding menu)  
 Underlined letter in a command name on an open menu  
 (Perform the corresponding command)  
**F10 key** (Activate the menu bar in the active program)  
**RIGHT ARROW** (Open the next menu to the right, or open a submenu)  
**LEFT ARROW** (Open the next menu to the left, or close a submenu)  
**F5 key** (Update the active window)  
**BACKSPACE** (View the folder one level up in My Computer or Windows Explorer)  
**ESC** (Cancel the current task)

## From the E-Bag

### WE READ ALL YOUR EMAILS *Some are worth sharing!*

Norman Richards, BE  
 Fairfax, Va., *What's Happening?* and  
 Chapter Affairs editor for *Mid'l Antics*.

The **Lloyd Davis** craft article was very helpful. I use screamers all the time!!! Bad practice. Will stop. Also, I didn't know about the use of state abbreviations. Very interesting; I have a lot to learn. You're doing a great job with PROBE.

#### Added note

I enjoy receiving the *PROBEmoter* and always find an idea to apply in my Grand Lake, Ohio chapter (Johnny Appleseed District). Thought you would like to see this short piece on definitions:

"There seems to be a lot of confusion regarding the differences and similarities between advertising, promotion, public relations, marketing, and all the other methods we use to get the word out. Here's a little story that clears up the issue quite nicely:

If the circus is coming to town and you paint a sign saying "Circus Coming to the Fairgrounds Saturday," that's advertising.

If you put the sign on the back of an elephant and walk him into town, that's promotion.

If the elephant walks through the mayor's flowerbed, that's publicity.

If you can get the mayor to laugh about it, that's public relations.

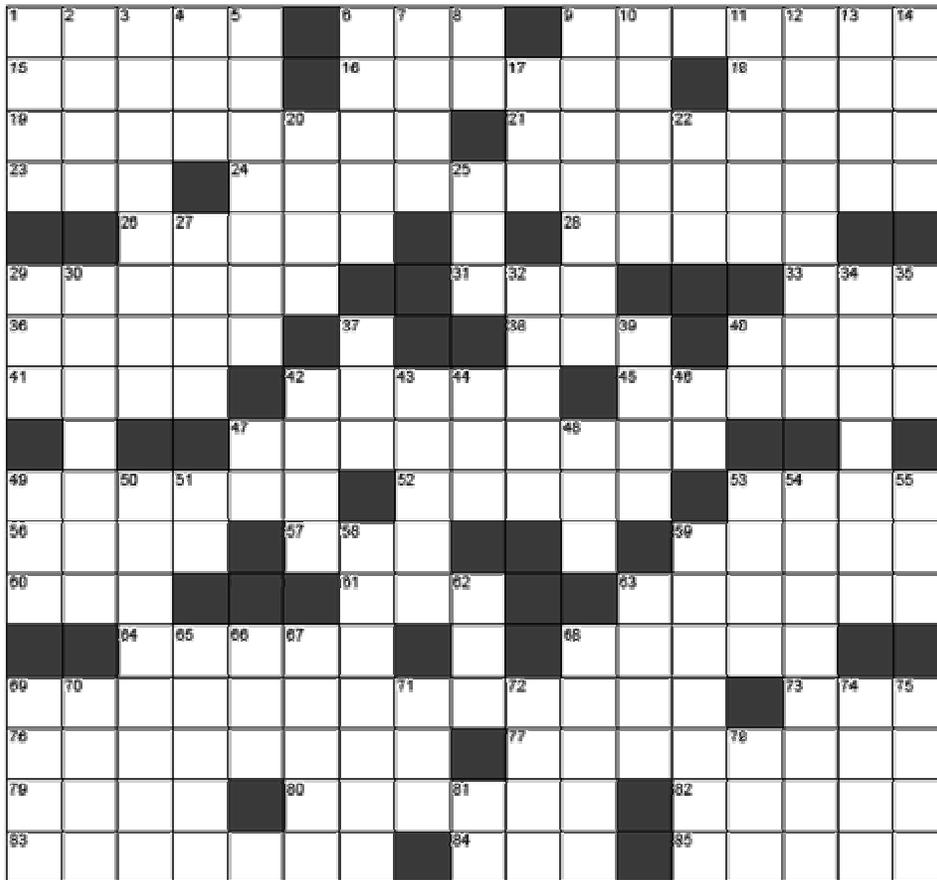
And if you planned the elephant's walk, that's marketing.

Thanks, Norm, for the nice piece. I'm sure this will make things clearer for our readers - Editor



By **Rusty Williams**, Associate Editor, *In Tune*, Sept. 2007, editor **Linda Williams**, Hunterdon *Harmonizers*  
*Even though there some local references, let's see how good our readers are at crossword puzzle solving — enjoy! SJ*

**A  
B  
A  
R  
B  
E  
R  
S  
H  
O  
P  
P  
E  
R  
S**



**C  
R  
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S  
S  
W  
O  
R  
D  
P  
U  
Z  
Z  
L  
E**



**ACROSS**

- 1. Flat third?
- 6. Haggard Novel
- 9. Puzzling thing
- 15. Baja buddy
- 16. Top of Taiwan
- 18. Spelling-challenged Quartet
- 19. Apply
- 21. Certain pasta, for a cockney
- 23. Direction from Hunterdon to A.C.
- 24. Where a 47-A is happy
- 26. Steak
- 28. "tete- \_\_\_\_"
- 29. 15-A north of the border
- 31. Personal ID entry
- 33. Hog heaven
- 36. Illuminates-
- 38. Electronic rolodex
- 40. Flicka's Dad
- 41. Previously owned
- 42. A 47-A's Italian buddy
- 45. Where quartets do their thing
- 47. Self-proclaimed centers of universe
- 49. Song leader

- 52. Another 47-A associate
- 53. Pork or Lamb
- 56. Swedish Barbershopper
- 57. Sedona or Sorento
- 59. Monstro
- 60. Rolodex info (abbr)
- 61. Heston is in charge
- 63. Apply to
- 64. Aligned with
- 68. Earthquake
- 69. Where Quartettes stay
- 73. A gran ending
- 76. Glue guy
- 77. William Tell composer and kin
- 79. A pasture
- 80. Mandates
- 82. "Fear of Flying" female
- 83. Things that get up
- 84. Residue
- 85. Potato and Sad

**DOWN**

- 1. Charts
- 2. Morning radio voice
- 3. Best time in Dixie (var)
- 4. Pier \_\_\_\_
- 5. Lighters

- 6. Hot spot
- 7. Tortoise nemesis
- 8. MacDonald's Doubles this and adds "o"
- 9. Writing appendage
- 10. Starboard
- 11. Many 3/4 Barbershop songs
- 12. Keeps
- 13. Joliet 1669 visit
- 14. Doctor, nurse
- 17. Mrs. Richard M.
- 20. Divert
- 22. Width indication
- 25. Negatives
- 27. Deform a chord
- 29. 1918 Pandemic
- 30. \_\_\_\_ Shine!
- 32. Bill and coo
- 34. Slow vibrato
- 35. Law suffix
- 37. 35-D passage barrier
- 39. Maple genus
- 40. Jr. dad
- 42. Worse than bite
- 43. Ravi's instrument
- 44. Jeanne d'Arc
- 46. Camden Yard roosters

- 47. Diddley
- 48. SF peak
- 49. Men in gray
- 50. Many 56-A's
- 51. Disease abbreviated
- 53. Charles, shortened
- 54. 47-A strives to be \_\_\_\_
- 55. Hog Heaven
- 58. Not in words, but \_\_\_\_
- 59. Schwarzes und \_\_\_\_
- 62. Sun devils
- 63. Apiary individuals
- 65. Joe Connelly says:
- 66. Lobby loudness
- 67. Keyboard keystroke
- 68. Stanislaus nickname-
- 69. Univ.
- 70. MAD honor society abbrev.
- 71. India honorific
- 72. Underground trains
- 74. Jazz solo
- 75. Railroad pioneer Whitney and namesakes
- 78. A Gershwin
- 81. Governor's State

## Who's A Bulletin Editor?

By Herb Bayles, Torrance, California

Good question. Ideally, he would be a man with good grammar, spelling and punctuation skills; a man with good written communication skills; a man inquisitive of mind and alert to events around him; a man who can improve the writing of others (yes, edit); a man with some knowledge of page layout, typography and printing; a man with sufficient time to do a thorough job; a man with the tools and equipment necessary to publish. Rarely does such a man exist.

Usually the job falls to the man least reluctant to accept it. Usually he will possess some of the desirable attributes. Rarely more than a few. Frequently he will be among the hardest working, most unsung men in a chapter, spending more solitary time at his task than any other chapter official. Hence this Bulletin Editors Manual.....we shall try to ease the burden of experienced and novice editors alike; sometimes with specific instructions, sometimes with guidance and references. The contributors to this manual are not all-knowing. Readers are urged to use it as a "base camp" from which to launch exploratory excursions into the wonderful world of editing and publishing. Realistically, little can be said here to significantly improve an editor's basic grasp of writing skills. For most of us, our last exposure to formal training in English grammar was back in high school, or perhaps the first year or so of college. For many of us, what we remember from those years will have to do.

Author Jim Quinn, in his book, *American Tongue and Cheek—a Populist Guide to Our Language*, observes with both logic and humor, "For me, the only sensible standard of correctness is usage by ordinary people. We are the ones who do almost all of the inventing and changing, we are the ones who make English the living and exciting language it is.

"We talk—that's English. And we know how to talk long before we go to school; in fact, except for vocabulary, a six-year-old child is essentially a language adult, who can use all the grammatical forms of English competently. We go to school not to learn English, but to learn that relatively rarer activity, called writing.

"*We don't go to school to learn how to talk, luckily. Luckily, as someone once pointed out, we don't have to go to school to learn how to walk either. Or we'd be a nation of cripples.*" We do go to school to learn how to write. And thanks to what we learn, and how we're taught, most Americans write like cripples. So they go to books...to straighten out their writing—and come away with advice about as useful and sensible as shortening a short leg."

Editors can, however, improve the quality of their work by simply acknowledging their shortcomings and referring often to a modest selection of reference works. For starters, a dictionary, a thesaurus and a grammar and punctuation guide will do. And supplementary reading of books on writing style can't hurt. Surprisingly, the study of writing and English usage need not, as is the study of economics, be "a dismal science." There exist a great many sprightly, interesting books on the subjects, such as the one quoted above. A short selection of them is listed in the Appendix. Also in the Appendix are four brief and enlightening essays about style, spelling, punctuation and writing with clarity. They're succinct, interesting, humorous and written by experts. Read them.



This cartoon was part of the nameplate of Herb's South Bay Hey Hey Herald chapter bulletin.

### WHAT'S AN EDITORIAL?

Basically, an expression of the writer's personal views. Editorials contain personal pronouns (i, me, my mine). An editorial may comment on a news event, but it should not *report* the event. Chapter officers should be *discouraged* from reporting news, and encouraged to write editorially. Editorial writing fixes responsibilities and tells the readers they are being pursued. It is the editor's responsibility to make this point clear to his officers.

**Criticism for its own sake—the dog-in-the-manger or sour grapes variety—should not be allowed in any editorial piece. Constructive criticism should be encouraged.**

Gripes and complaints should always be accompanied by some suggestions for alternatives; for better ways (in the writer's opinion) to get the job done. This, again, is an editor's judgment call, and he can always ask for a rewrite. The bulletin editor is in a unique position: as he gathers news about his chapter, he gains first-hand knowledge of unfolding events, and he can witness developing trends. He should almost always have an editorial opinion to express.

## So, a chapter bulletin is good PR?

By Robb Ollett, former Chairman  
Society PR-Marketing Committee



Many may not realize that I cut my barbershop teeth as a chapter bulletin editor for two years, volunteering as district editor in SWD, *edited at one time by PROBE Pres. Grady Kerr for three years*, and even a stint writing *The Harmonizer* and *PROBEmoter* at the Society headquarters during those eight years. So my comments are meant in support of editors, yet clarifying that a chapter bulletin is good chapter PR!

### Why bother, who needs it?

Any chapter will tell you they would die without a bulletin, and others will tell you they'd love to have one! Few truly realize the overall function of a well-done chapter bulletin - they're the best membership retention vehicle, an easy orientation tool, and a running history of the chapter.

### Recognition and Encouragement

Chapter bulletins reflect the attitude of an active chapter - not the personal expressions of the singular editor. It's NOT the place to blow steam and complain. It IS the place for officers to report on progress, provide "attaboys" to those deserving, inform on what's happened and what's coming, highlight chapter activities, explain the new music stories and repertoire, detail the next performance having cheered for the most recent one, update those members who haven't attended each meeting, and offer information to district officials and Society Headquarters.

### Timesaver

Think about it- what you read in the bulletin (or get in the weekly handout sheet at the chapter meeting) allows you more time to sing, rather than long, boring, repetitive business meetings. No need to repeat three or four times the uniform and date for the next performance - it's in the handout! And, if you do the weekly handout, you can fold up several weeks' worth and mail them to members not showing up (with a note inviting them back). OR, you can create a special edition for show patrons, supporters and "alumni" of the chapter to keep them in the loop between annual shows. Saves telephone calls and long drawn out visits for selling that advertisement. And remember, your chapter members are not the only readers. It's a great way to keep wives and families informed and updated.

### Just do it- works every time

Is bulletin editing a time consuming job? Yes. Is it one of the loneliest jobs? Uh-huh. Is it one where your most efficient deadlines and timely issues are never mentioned until you miss an issue? Count on it. But it is rewarding and chapter members appreciate it. So why not start one? We're not searching for a Journalism Ph.D. **Write the articles just as you speak.** Today's world believes in bullet points, not long prose. Once you get started, allow for improvement. The more issues you accomplish, the easier they become. PROBE has score sheets from the International Bulletin Contest with suggestions and a bulletin swap listing to read what other chapters do. You'll be amazed how your readership grows!

And what about the electronically connected? I'm all in favor of e-mail and sending messages, but we have to keep in mind that not everyone is as excited. We still have to distribute paper to many. An alternative is a telephone message with only outgoing messages full of information. It all depends upon your chapter needs and what a budget allows. Do me a favor? The next time you get your bulletin, or read the weekly handout, THANK the writer. Take that moment to remember that this person is an important link to retaining members, orienting members and to chronicle the chapter's history. Let's B#.

## PROBEmoter Editor

Steve Jackson



## Back to the basics....

The last few issues have been keyed more towards marketing and PR so I hope that this issue will benefit both new and experienced editors. I feel that sometimes we lose sight of our objectives. **We are communicators!** I know that I tend to get tied up in details — logistics like distribution, fancy and elaborate layouts, colorful large issues (that takes significant time to download for some of our editors — yes, I'm paying attention), extensive use of vocabulary, etc. I have to remind myself to keep it simple!

So, it's "back to the future" for this issue. Huh? **Back to basics, ok?** Some of these articles may seem to be elementary to some of our more experienced editors/webmasters, etc. Please step back, take a deep breath, keep an open mind, and reread them carefully. You might learn something, or be reminded of details that will help develop your skills as communicators and bulletin editors/writers.....bulletin writer? Yup, me too. Even with email, I'm still forced to key in several articles to report my own events. Sure, I get good contributions on a chapter, District, and Society level, but I feel that I have a unique perspective as an editor (not necessarily the RIGHT one, but maybe one broader in scope) by editing three different levels of barbershop publications. Sure there's different issues with my chapter bulletin vs. the District magazine vs. the PROBEmoter. But the basics are the same. So, bear with me, please.

While leafing through the excellent **Bulletin Editors Manual** (ably assembled by now retired editor of the **Hey Hey Herald, Southbay, Cal., Herb Bayles**), *I became engrossed by the common sense prevalent in these priceless pages of how-to craft for BE's. Herb didn't originate a lot of the materials, but he did a masterful job of tying everything together. He states our mission simply and with humor.* I really enjoyed rereading it. I met **Herb Bayles** as he traveled through Denver in the mid '70 and early '80's; he would always stop by our chapter meetings whenever possible. Nice guy, good bass, and a great barbershopper. And an excellent editor! The BE manual is available on the PROBE website under "**Bulletin Editor Aids.**" Thanks, Herb!

I have also borrowed a lot of articles from PR guru **Robb Ollett**. Thanks, Robb. While written several years ago, they still ring true! Nothing changes, you know. I read several **Harmonizers** recently from the '50's and '60's. In this issue, there is an article reprinted from one of them. Try to find it — like I said, nothing changes!

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To PROBE member/barbershopper:

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Courtesy of Steve Albert, Anthony Winters, John Tardy via Jon Wagner

## Opening the throat is perhaps the second most important technical issue in singing

1. It relaxes the voice and allows the vocal folds to vibrate freely and comfortably, even on high notes, where there is a natural tendency to force the voice to operate. Forcing the voice is almost never a good idea, as you will sound awful and destroy your voice.

2. The extra space created by opening the throat adds resonance to the voice, which makes it richer and more beautiful. Especially in the high voice, where notes tend to be thin naturally, many harmonics can be added to the sound, in the same way recording studios add reverb and echo effects to Pop voices.

3. How to open the throat and sing at the same time? You need patience and persistence. It isn't a question of open versus closed, but a question of degree of amplification. The simplest way is to yawn and sing at the same time. A similar approach is to gasp as if you are surprised, and keep the muscles of the neck flexed in an outward direction while you sing.

Coaching: Don, Glen and I asked Gerry Bennett to join us at the very last moment to get quartet coaching at Sizzle even though the four of us had never sung together. Bill Billings, Director of Tampa and 3-time Bronze Medalist, agreed to listen. For the first time in 20 years, I was advised to change my singing. I did, but it wasn't easy.

It proved once again that you cannot coach yourselves from within the singing ensemble and that what you hear yourself singing is NOT what the listener hears. Change is difficult.

Wayne, Bob Lang and Ray Codner are about to undertake a neat adventure as they receive extra music to pencil in their interpretive markings.

How will this improve their singing? Anything you do to more fully understand the songs you sing improves your ability to express yourself vocally. When you understand the song's story, you feel emotions of some kind. They aren't always easy to identify or admit to when we normally try our best to subdue feelings.

Figuring out how to best convey your emotions by volume, expression and tempo requires you to really examine yourself as well as the music. And then you get to sell your interpretation to the other singers. It 'ain't' always easy, Buster.