



The SERENADER

*Celebrating 72 Years of Barbershop Harmony in Albuquerque
Chartered September 14, 1952 - Incorporated October 2, 1953*

E-Newsletter

Editor: Fred Green poolvacman@gmail.com ■ July 2025 ■ An Occasional Publication As the Need Arises



GOURMET BURGERS AND BARBERSHOP

Spotted: the origins of Red Robin restaurants' name — a barbershop quartet!



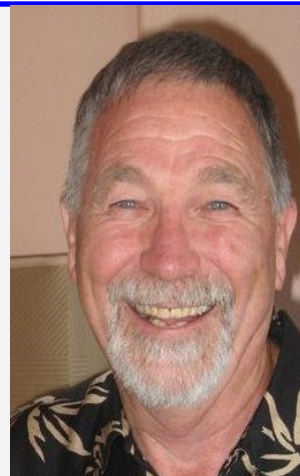
The official company chronology notes that in the 1940s, “Sam’s Tavern opens near the University of Washington. Sam, the owner, is known to sing ‘When the Red, Red Robin (Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin’ Along)’ with his barbershop quartet. He loves the song so much that he changes the name to Sam’s Red Robin.”

In the 1960s, “Sam’s is magically transformed from a tavern into the first Red Robin restaurant, which is perched on a Seattle hilltop in a 1,200-square-foot building. Although no actual magic is involved. In 1973, Jumbo beers, cellophane-wrapped sandwiches and popcorn on the menu are replaced with the Red Robin Gourmet Cheeseburger, the Bacon Cheeseburger, and the Royal Red Robin Burger® (topped with a fried egg). And the burger world is changed forever.”



Always remember that practice is what we do at home. Rehearsal is what we do together to perfect what we have practiced so that we can make music together.

**FROM OUR DIRECTOR:
“BIFFLEISMS”**



Hello again, brothers - and sisters - in song. Hope you are all doing well.

By the time you get this, we'll have sung our memorial to our late brother, Tom Hoover. Tom was a many year stalwart member of the New MexiChords who served in many capacities including Music VP and treasurer (there were probably more offices, but those are the ones I remember). Tom was an engineer who sang baritone, ran committee meetings, and kept the books with an engineer's precision. He was also a long-time public servant with important city- and state-wide offices. One of our running jokes was that, after serving as treasurer of the City of Albuquerque and chairman of the Legislative Finance Committee of the State of New Mexico, his next job was treasurer of the New MexiChords!

On a personal note, our ABQ quartet has sung Mothers Day lunch for many years at Coronado Villa, where Tom lived the last several years of his life. He was always there to greet us and give us his very honest review of our performance. We missed him this year.

May the road rise to meet our brother, Tom.

Also on the schedule will be our annual retreat. By now most of you will have met the inimitable Jim Clark, lead of international champion Storm Front, tireless worker for the principles and goals of Harmony Foundation, Inc., and terminal funny man. I'm sure our day with Jim was a life-changing one. Thanks, again, to the indefatigable Ruth for making that event happen.

Last, there is the decision facing your board as to whether we compete as a chorus at the Rocky Mountain Convention and Competition in Ogden, UT, September 26-28. As of this writing, as is often written, 28 of the 38 of you have responded to the survey we sent. The results, so far, are "I'm definitely IN!" – 10; "I'm open to the idea, but not sure yet" – 10; "I'm definitely OUT!" 5; and "I'd like to go, if..." — 3. I conclude by this that it's at least possible to have a chorus of 23 there.

We'll also need to know composition of parts, to ensure that we'll be covered there, so the next step will be to poll the membership by section. I'll soon set the section leaders that task. Please respond quickly so we can start making plans for the rest of the summer accordingly.

Enough for now. I'll conclude with a quote from my old friend, Frederich (too many consonants) Neitzsche: "Without music, life would be a mistake."

Don't make a mistake next Tuesday, folks. Come sing with us!

Bill

At the end of June, the New MexiChords gathered at the Isleta Resort for our Annual Retreat. The clinician this year was a real treat to have with us. Jim Clark, lifelong barbershopper, Lead singer of Storm Front, which won the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) International Quartet Championship in 2010, and all-around great guy, spent the whole day to share stories, his knowledge, and to hone our vocal skills. Here are some random photos taken during the day.







LEARNING A SONG

by Jay Giallombardo

While there are many ways to learn music, some methods are more effective than others. When it comes to part singing, how you go about learning an arrangement will certainly affect the quality of your performance.

In a cappella singing, barbershop, specifically tuning, or the locking and ringing of chords, is a hallmark of the style. How you go about learning a piece will have a considerable impact on how well you stay in key and how well you tune chords.

There are three things that affect tuning: 1) Pitch 2) Volume/Balance 3) Color. Of course, learning pitches is actually the easy part. Fine tuning the pitch in a chord requires proper balance (volume relationships between parts) and lastly, color matching. In the past we called color matching, vowel matching. Vowel matching gets you in the “ballpark”, but true intonation in chord-singing comes from the matching of resonance and vocal color. It is possible to lock and ring chords while actually singing different vowels, if the resonance and color of such vowels are “complimentary”, that is, work together to help the ear “tune”.

The method I have developed and taught has 3 simple steps:

1) Pitches 2) Word-Sounds 3) Integration.

If you learn the pitches of your part on “Loo” or “Doo”, you will accomplish some very important things that you would not accomplish if you had just plunged ahead the old way, attempting to learn notes and words at the same time.

Our brain is actually a big tape recorder. If you learn pitches first on “Doo”, some very interesting things begin to happen. First, there is nothing else for the brain to focus on other than the pitches and pitch patterns. There are no words, no changes from vowel to vowel, no changes in color or resonance, no consonants. Because we use the same sound over and over, “doo”, we can sort of forget about it and focus on the pitches and pitch patterns. It is all those “other things” which complicate the learning process and which invariably cause us to go out of tune in very short order if they are attempted in the early learning stages, or not applied with considerable skill.

If given a chance to focus on a single task, the brain will actually record the pitches and they will remain in memory in the subconscious. A few times through the song, listening to a part tape that has no words, just the pitch sung with “Doo” is the simplest and easiest way for the subconscious to “record” the pitches of the song. If there are a few tricky places, just spend a little more time listening and “doo”-ing those places.

After a few times through on “doo”, the pitches are recorded in the subconscious. How do we know this? At first you have to trust, because it is difficult to accept the presence of things that we are not aware of. But that fact will soon be made clear enough. The next step is 2) word-sounds. To begin to master the flow of word sounds, we use a method called “silent audiation”. That is the process of “mouthing” the word sounds, the vowels, the consonants, the “m’s and n’s” as if you were performing the song. BUT....you make no singing sound. It is more than just saying the words silently, it is actually singing without making sound. You breathe, articulate consonants, form vowels shapes, keep the throat open, lift the palate, arch the tongue forward, place in the mask, i.e., all the things you would do when you sing, but you make no sound. So steps 1 and 2 are “doo”-ing pitches and “silent audiation”. You can do these steps, separately over and over, until you are ready to move to the last step. By doing so, you will laying excellent ground work for the final step...integration.

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Before talking about integration, a word on “silent audiation” is in order. The purpose of this activity is actually to train the vocal muscles to memorize the flow and positions of the word sounds, while actually hearing the pitch in your head. What makes one song different from another is the combination of pitches and how the phonetics flow. The elements of the performance are always the same. The same 12 pitches are used, maybe in a different key; words are comprised of the same vowels and consonants. What is different is the order. That is what makes each song unique. So learning the order of events is 90% of the learning process. “Silent audiation” allows one to focus exclusively on the order of “events”, from shape to shape, so that the muscles learn the vocal movements and learn to anticipate these movements as the pitches and word-sounds flow along.

By doing this silently, it gives your brain a chance to associate the subconscious pitch with the muscle movement. That is very important, so I will say it again: By doing this silently, it gives your brain a chance to associate the subconscious pitch with the muscle movement. Every vowel and its duration of sound is therefore associated with a pitch. If we hear it or can imagine it, the vocal mechanism will go through the process of prepare to sing. When we actually engage the mind and say, “Sing”, the shape, if practiced, will be there and the pitch, if previously reviewed (with doo), will associate itself with the shape (i.e the vowel). Lanny Bانشام, Olympic Sharp-Shooter, the first to score a perfect 400 (all bulls-eyes) and to win the Olympic gold medal was unable to go to the practice range to shoot 6 weeks before the Olympics. So to keep in shape, he practiced the motions of shooting “bulls-eyes” without firing a shot. He steadied himself, cleared his mind, aimed, squeezed the trigger, and imagined the perfect shot, every time. In that 6 week period he never even fired a rifle. At the Olympics, he just repeated what he had practiced “silently” before. Such is the nature of the mind, use of imagery, and training the muscle-memory.

At first, you can practice word-sound flow listening to the pitches from our learning CD, but eventually you will want to do “silent audiation” and attempt to hear the sounds of the pitches in your head. That’s the “audiation” part... hearing in your head. As you practice, you will discover it is not that difficult. You have to use your imagination and memory, but the “doo” activity will provide a very strong experience from which to draw. The integration part will actually be quite simple now. The pitches have been recorded in the subconscious. The muscle memory has been trained to shape and flow through the word sounds. As you now start to sing, you shouldn’t be surprised to find the notes come booming forth from your subconscious as they are associated with the space and shapes of the vowels that you have already practiced.

I have watched many a singer struggle with poor learning habits; they often say “I may be slow, but this is the way I learn.” Too often they discover they learned many places incorrectly or sing many notes out of tune. The fact is that learning a song is not so much about learning notes and words, as it is giving the pitches a “place to be heard”. This method does just that.

It is my experience that, using this method, singers learn faster and more accurately. They maintain tonal center and sing more chords in tune. Please take advantage of our learning CDs that use computeraccurate tone generation on a “Doo Voice” sound that works in concert with this learning method. And, please let us know if this method has been helpful to you with a testimonial.

Harmony Singers....a special tip for you.

Spend as much time at first listening to the lead part as well as your own. It’s right there on your learning CD as well. Ultimately, your harmony part is tuned to the “anticipated” melody line. So, you need to know where the lead is going. (Of course, it helps if the lead actually “gets there”).

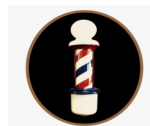
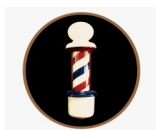
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Don't learn your part as melody from note to note. A harmony part sung "independently" from the melody will tend to sound out of tune. "Doo" the pitches so that you learn the note patterns. And practice "silent audiation" to get the muscle-memory activated. But then the integration process for you is one of listening to the melody as you sing your harmony part and allowing your ear to make the fine-tuning adjustments. On the Learning CD, when you are ready, flip the balance to the right speaker all the way, so that you can't hear your part in the left speaker. Then listen and sing along with the other three and you'll get some good experience in tuning.

Have Fun Singing...Have More Fun Singing in Tune!

Together in Harmony



The New MexiChords "Lineup" as of 1 July 2025

DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

BARITONE

Hudgens, Tom
Hudson, Hal
Koury, Ruth
Randall, Ron
Romero, Max
Strohl, Bill

BASS

Butler, Larry
Grady, Richard
Green, Fred
Maxwell, Nick
Porter, Doug
Quintana, Jerry
Ring, Dave
Taylor, John
Twiggs, Leo

TENORS

Baker, Charlene
Berardinelli, Bev
Browning, Jo
Green, Debbie
Hines, Cass
Meyer, Cam
Ratcliff, Hal
Yates, Janet

LEAD

Andrews, Tina
Cole, Tom
Courtney, Bob
Green, Eric
Kneen, Pat
Lash, Mike
Leverett, Juliette
Miracle, John
Nelson, Arlo
Parsons, Walt
Preston, Judy
Stavert, Xannie
Taylor, Lynn
Turner, Mary
Vertrees, Joe



Do you love to sing? Tired of entertaining only yourself
in your car or the shower? C'mon out and see how
much fun it can be to sing with a group of others!

See us at:

www.NMChords.com

Our chorus and quartets love to sing for our audiences and to share our love of barbershop.
You are invited to join with us to enjoy an evening of camaraderie and great barbershop
harmony. Don't miss out on the fun. Come and see what it's all about!

What? Weekly Chapter Meeting & Rehearsal

When? Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where? St John's United Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE, ABQ 87110



Here's a barbershop shout-out to our members with birthdays in July!

Max Romero	1 Jul
Walt Parsons	16 Jul
Lynn Taylor	19 Jul
Bob Courtney	30 Jul



The New MexiChords Calendar

Upcoming Chorus Events

2025

- 4 Jul - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW
- 25-27 Sep - Rocky Mountain District Convention & Contest, Ogden, Utah
- 12 Oct - Balloon Fiesta, approx. 6:15-7:00am, Balloon Fiesta Park
- 5 Dec - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW
- 19 Dec - Holiday Show, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 20 Dec - Holiday Show, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE

Stay up-to-date with us by visiting our "Shows & Events" page on the website at:

www.NMChords.com

We are a local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) and a member of the Rocky Mountain District (RMD), which includes parts of the following States/Areas:

Wyoming

Colorado

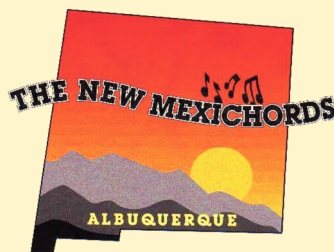
Most of Utah

eastern Idaho

southern Montana

northern New Mexico

western portions of South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas



Quartets can show up anywhere

Your Chuckles for July

The Jester's puns irritated the King, who ordered that he be hung. When the Jester begged for mercy, the King graciously granted it. "No noose is good noose" said the Jester, who was hanged that morning.

A king banished his personal fool for singing love songs. Turns out he wanted comedy, not a romantic jester.

You think swimming with sharks is expensive? Swimming with sharks cost me an arm and a leg.

What kind of shoes do ninjas wear? Sneaker!

My fingers are so reliable. I can count on all of them.

I decided to sell my vacuum cleaner ... it was just gathering dust!

Did you know that milk is the fastest liquid on earth? It's pasteurized before you can even see it.

Dogs can't operate MRI machines ... but catscan.

Why did the gym close down? It just didn't work out.

Why are pupils the last part of your body to stop working when you die? Because they dilate ...

Why did the football coach go to the bank? To get his quarter back.

Where can single men over 65 find younger women who are interested in them? In the bookstore, under "Fiction."

Keep the dream alive And hit the snooze button.

My boss asked me why I only get sick on workdays. I said it must be my weekend immune system.

If money doesn't grow on trees, then why do banks have branches?

I can tell when you're lying just by looking at you.... I can also tell when you're standing.

Why are balloons so expensive? Inflation!!



Our Mission:

The members of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society dedicate themselves to:

- **Continually seek the joy to be found in singing well in the barbershop style**
- **Promote the benefits of our hobby at every available opportunity**
- **Provide our community with high quality musical entertainment, and**
- **Foster continual musical growth and fellowship among the members**

To be added to our fan list, send your name and email address to subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com
To be removed, send your email address to unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com