



Abomination of Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors



# PROBEmoter



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

Vol. 45, No. 37

Published when I feel like it

April/June 1932

## PROBE-ING AROUND

### OC Times missed qualifying for International

*They forgot to set their clocks ahead*

### Grady Kerr appointed Society President

*He vows to implement "Hall of Shame" program nationwide*

### After a recount, Brian Beck wins IBC

*Hey, he's won everything else, it was inevitable!*

### PROBE website features racy photos!

*Webmaster Arnold Wade insists that "the NASCAR pics are really cool!"*

### Next Harmonizer to feature centerfold with "scratch-n-sniff"

*First up is SEP "with a Cajun scent;" Allen Gasper seen heading for Nashville!*

*In a related story, Bobby Gray reorganizes the Bartlesville Barflies*

### Secretary/Treasurer Dick Girvin investigated for laundering PROBE funds

*"Hey, I was just trying to make a few bucks for the guys!"*

### Herb Bayles sues PROBE for copyright infringement

*Herb did not give permission to reprint all his old dated material, anyway*

### BE VP Elving visage to be added to Mount Rushmore

*Can the presidency be far behind? See photo on page 7*

### Big Apple Chorus Merges with Big Chicken Chorus

*It could be a delicious combination, but a helluva commute*

### Grant Carson enters Witness Protection program

*Tired of dealing with editor Jackson and his incessant plea for articles*

IN A FOLLOW UP PIECE, REST OF PROBE ADMINISTRATION FOLLOWS!

### ASCAP to investigate PROBEmoter reprints

*Editor absolved of blame after study reveals Jackson legally insane!*

### Bruce Anderson makes finals on "American Idol"

*What more can we say? When you got it, you got it.*

*In a related story, Bruce will star in the remake of "Bruce Almighty"*

### PROBE VP/CSD Editor David Haase Cloned!

*Society plans to stock all chapters with Haase look-alikes*

### Nashville Headquarters Sold to Foreign Investors

*BHS relocates to Nova Scotia after Watson said "price was too good to pass up!"*

### PROBE Merges with AHSOW to become PROBAWS (OBESO?)

*PROBE President Lowell Shank retires and enters monastery*

### Steve Jackson Fired As PROBEmoter editor!

*Last seen at Sweet Adelines HQ applying for editor position*

### What did you do for St. Patrick's Day?

My quartet (*Da Knuckleheads*) delivered *Singing Shamrocks*. Yup, for \$39.99 each, we sang two Irish songs, gave the recipient a bunch of shamrocks (*four leafed, of course*), danced a jig (*yeah, right!*) then chugged a beer and/or hoisted a shot of Bailey's finest (*sometimes both*) in their honor. We made 25 stops (*and that was just bathroom breaks*), and 25 deliveries, singing from 9:00 am to 11:30 pm, I think. And we made 185.43 in tips (*that our bass forked over, anyway*). We made us a sweet \$999.75.

We gave \$300 to our chapter ( *cuz we're nice guys, ok, our bass is the treasurer, rats*), put \$100 in our gas kitty (*boy, did we have gas*), donated \$200 to our Youth In Harmony program, (*are you keeping' track yet?*) gave each guy \$50 bucks for munchies (*yeah baby*), and used the last of it, \$199.75, to bail our stupid baritone out of jail.

Oh, we'll never tell what he did, so don't even ask — ok, he called the bartender at our last stop a "*flippin' limey!*" Let me tell you, I haven't moved that fast in years! Next year, we're going to do it just a little differently. No more chuggin (*on the job, anyway*), and no more insulting the bartenders; what were we thinking? I bought us four of those caps with the dual cup holders and the sipping tubes. It'll keep our hands free for the choreography.....next?





Association of Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors



# PROBEmoter



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

Vol. 45, No. 2

Published Quarterly

April/June 2008

## PROBE Annual Meeting

Thursday, July 3, 2008  
Nashville, Tennessee 8:45 am

See agenda elsewhere – but why should I attend?

Meet PROBE officers, bulletin editors and public relations officers

Be first to hear who has won the various awards that are given out

Take my plaque that I have won home with me

Make suggestions for improving various aspects of PROBE

Make suggestions for improving the Marketing & Public Relations Track at COTS

Elect new officers for next year

**SING!**

**Deadline for the July/Sept  
PROBEmoter is July 15**

## PROBE Nominating Committee Looking for President & Public Relations Vice President

Written by Grant Carson

PROBE, a subsidiary of the Barbershop Harmony Society, is an educational fraternity dedicated to the encouragement and support of Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors. The nominating committee is soliciting volunteers to be nominated for President and Vice President for Public Relations. These officers will be elected at the annual PROBE meeting at the Nashville convention and will serve for two years starting October 1, 2008



Duties and qualifications of officers are at the PROBE web site, specifically PROBE By-Laws and Standard Operating Procedures:

[harmonize.com/probe/about/ProposedAmended2004.pdf](http://harmonize.com/probe/about/ProposedAmended2004.pdf)

I earnestly solicit your desire to be a leader of PROBE, and I will be happy to provide you with any other information you may desire.

Grant Carson, Chairman  
Nominating Committee

[wmgcarson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wmgcarson@sbcglobal.net)

940-612-4279

1118 Lindsay St

Gainesville, TX 76240

# APRIL FOOLS!

I just couldn't resist — hope you enjoyed my feeble attempt at tomfoolery! If you liked it, great; if not, blame Grady Kerr (hee, hee) — hey, it's one way of finding out how many of you actually read this publication — feel free to use (or abuse) my front page.



## 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, contact **Alexander Edwards** and tell him you want to be a part of it —

**Alexander Edwards**  
 535 W. Broadway #150A  
 Glendale, CA 91204  
 Tel. (818) 956-1132  
[edwardsalexander@sbcglobal.net](mailto:edwardsalexander@sbcglobal.net)

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

## P.R.O.B.E. LEADERSHIP



### President

**Lowell Shank**  
 2413 Stonebridge Lane  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101  
 (270) 842-3214  
[lowell.shank@wku.edu](mailto:lowell.shank@wku.edu)



### Bulletin Editor VP

**John Elving**  
 6806 Peaceful Pines Rd.  
 Black Hawk, SD 57718  
 (605) 718-4292  
[leaderman@earthlink.net](mailto:leaderman@earthlink.net)



### Public Relations VP

**Bruce T. Anderson**  
 2010 So. 26th Street  
 Lincoln, NE 68502-3025  
 (402) 435-0974  
[job60@ix.netcom.com](mailto:job60@ix.netcom.com)



### Membership VP

**David Haase**  
 4142 Fillmore Lane  
 Davenport, IA 52806  
 (563) 391-6426  
[quartetmanDH@netscape.net](mailto:quartetmanDH@netscape.net)



### Secretary-Treasurer

**Dick Girvin**  
 34888 Lyn Avenue  
 Hemet, CA 92545  
 (951) 926-8644  
[dickgirvin@juno.com](mailto:dickgirvin@juno.com)



### Imm. Past President

**Bruce T. Anderson**  
 2010 So. 26th Street  
 Lincoln, NE 68502-3025  
 (402) 435-0974  
[job60@ix.netcom.com](mailto:job60@ix.netcom.com)



### PROBEmoter editor

**Steve Jackson**  
 215 Cheyenne St. Lot 18  
 Golden, CO 80403  
 (303) 384-9269  
[sjbullead@comcast.net](mailto:sjbullead@comcast.net)



### Webmaster

**Arnie Wade**  
 3628 Sussex Drive NE  
 Milledaleville, GA 31061  
 (478) 452-4491  
[arnbari@alltel.net](mailto:arnbari@alltel.net)



## Did I really screw that up? Sorry!

**John Pence**, one of our eagle-eyed readers has quietly pointed out that **Mike Wallin** and **Jim Hawthorne** (MAD honorees — page 10, last issue) were mistaken for each other. They really don't look alike, do they? Sorry, my mistake.



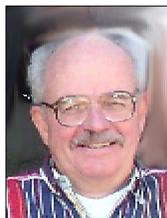
**Jim Hawthorne**  
 6 Country View Rd  
 Holmdel, NJ 07733-1851



**Mike Wallen**  
 12915 Chipstead Rd  
 Chester, VA 23831

## PROBE Annual Meeting Agenda

Nashville, Tennessee  
8:45 am  
Thursday, July 3, 2008



Call to Order: **Lowell Shank**, President  
*The Old Songs – All*

### Welcome & Introductions

**Lowell Shank**, President

### Minutes

July 5, 2007 PROBE meeting in Denver, Colo.  
**Dick Girvin** – Secretary/Treasurer

### Officer Reports

President – **Lowell Shank**  
Membership VP– **David Haase**  
Marketing and Public Relations VP – **Bruce Anderson**  
Bulletin Editors VP – **John Elving**  
PROBEmoter Editor – **Steve Jackson**  
Webmaster – **Arnie Wade**

### Awards

#### **PROBE Hall of Honor (2007)**

**Dick Girvin**

#### **PR Officer of the Year (PROTY, 2007)**

**Bruce Anderson**

*\*\*Award winning entries will be displayed for all to view\*\**

#### **International On-Line Bulletin of the Year (2007)**

**Bruce Anderson**, IBC Chairman

#### **Most Improved Bulletin Award (2007)**

**Lowell Shank**, IBC Chairman

#### **International Bulletin Editor of the Year Award (2007)**

**Lowell Shank**, IBC Chairman

*\*\*Award winning bulletins will be displayed for all to view\*\**

### Old Business

PROBE membership status  
List provided by Secretary **Dick Girvin**

Establish an In-house program to solicit new Barbershop cartoons with rewards given – **Dick Girvin**

### New Business

Topics presented by attendees

### Election of Officers

Term begins October 1, 2008

### Report from Nominating Committee

**Bruce Anderson**, Chairman

Nominations from the floor (if any) and Election

**Keep America Singing – All**

### Adjourn

No later than 10:15 am to make the Mass Sing at 10:30 am

### Bulletin Editors VP

**John Elving**



## The “New” Why Publish A Chapter Bulletin?

In this modern day with all the electronic gathering and sharing going on, the question comes up, “Why publish a hard-copy chapter bulletin?” I’d like us to explore together some of the reasons I have discovered.

In the past, paper bulletins were the only way of communicating with our chapter members, outside of the telephone, telegraph, or smoke signals. Then the internet came into being, along with the worldwide web. Those two events seemed to change our view of things immensely. But did they, really?

Admittedly, I use all forms of communication with my chapter. I make a weekly “poop” sheet to let them know what’s happening at the chapter meeting. I also use the internet to send out emails about what happened and what’s coming up next. Monthly, I edit and publish a chapter bulletin (sometimes, it seems, a whole newspaper/magazine). Occasionally I even publish a “Special Edition” bulletin.

Why would I resort to using all of these avenues of communication? The answer is simple. They are all used for the same reason you advertise via the use of many different outlets. Some people are attracted to buy tickets to your show because of radio/TV ads. Some see articles and ads in the newspaper. Others see posters and flyers advertising our shows. Yet others find out via word of mouth.

The more we can inform members via different avenues of communication about what will happen, what is happening, and, in the words of Kenny Hatton of Bluegrass Student Union fame, what happened, the better they will “get it.”

Weekly “poop” sheets are great for informing them about what is happening now. Email can be used to inform about several different things. Unfortunately, both those methods are often lost in the shuffle of our busy lives. If your email inbox is like mine, something important is all too often lost as new things come in. That is true of whether it is for something that just happened or is coming up.

Websites are great ways to communicate – if your members are all computer savvy. Unfortunately, that isn’t always the case. Many times people will use email but not go much farther than that in terms of being online. We have a wide disparity of computer capable people in our chapters. Let’s take that into consideration.

Also, how do we communicate with our spouses/significant others and families? Do we tell them to, “Come in here and look at this?” Or do we refer them to the chapter website to let them know what is happening that they should be aware of? The answer, I would hope, is neither of those. Even if it is on the website, it makes sense to print out what they can read at their leisure and assimilate at their own pace.

**The deadline for the July/Sept  
PROBEmoter is July 15th**

When guests visit our chapters, do we like to say, "Welcome! Go visit [www.mychapter.com](http://www.mychapter.com) to find out about us." Chances are they have already done that, unless they are older men. Then the chances are that they haven't. That's just the demographics of how things work with such a wide age differentiation that we appeal to. Give them something concrete (hard news) that they can read. They want good facts about what has been happening in your chapter. We want them to take the time to get to know us. We can't do that with quick-fix websites, etc.

Many chapters are experiencing the demise of the chapter bulletin. Why? Is it a lack of interest? Or maybe a lack of time? Maybe it's a lack of confidence in what you think can be done. Whatever the reason, there are people willing to help bring about the change needed to bring back active bulletins in every chapter, whether online or hardcopy.

From experience, I can tell you that a chapter bulletin of whatever style, helps create interest in your members and guests (soon to be members). When people see that you have an active and interesting chapter bulletin, they start to get excited about being a part of something that is alive and "happening." Don't deprive them of that. Make it happen. Be part of keeping history alive for the chapter member and their family members and friends.

And don't be afraid to enter your bulletin in the yearly contests. They can be of more help than you think in improving what you do. Your chapter bulletin could be one of the best public relations and marketing tools available.

# PROBE HALL OF HONOR

## NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN



Top directors and medalist quartet members justifiably receive high praise. But there are many other members who work behind the scenes in non-singing tasks to support our Society and the musical accomplishments. They are the marketing, public relations and bulletin volunteers who help communicate our message and our music, both within the Society and to other music lovers.

PROBE wants to recognize the top practitioners among them. And you can help — by nominating them for the prestigious PROBE Hall of Honor award established in 1989. Nominations are open for persons who will be considered for recognition at each summer's international convention. A nominee, living or deceased, must have been a PROBE member for at least 10 years, and must have made contributions to PROBE and its purposes beyond the normal duties of performing PROBE-related functions for a chapter or district.

Any current PROBE member may make a nomination. If you're not a member, join now or pass your nomination on through a member. The nomination must be in writing, specifically describing the nominee's services and contributions. Include supporting evidence if available. You also may include letters of support from other persons who know the nominee.

Your nomination need not be extremely sophisticated or professionally prepared. The selection is not based on the presentation, but on the nominee's merits. Further, this is not a competition, but recognition. **The deadline is May 30th.** Send your nominations now, before the deadline, to the award committee chairman:

Dick Girvin, Chairman  
**Hall of Honor Committee**  
 34888 Lyn Ave  
 Hemet, CA 92545  
[dickgirvin@juno.com](mailto:dickgirvin@juno.com)

### WANT ADS

**For Sale: Make Me An Offer**



**1936 Hewlett/Packard Computer**  
 Complete with printer and mouse  
 Used, but in great condition

## PROBE HALL OF HONOR

I nactive Deceased Active

- Bruce Anderson Ray Barrett Herb Bayles W. Grant Carson Jerry Coltharp 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

## PROBE Launches Cartoon Contest

Written by Dick Girvin

### New cartoons needed by Society BE's

Acting on the approval of the **PROBE** membership, as represented at the International meeting in Denver, on July 5, 2007, a search for new barbershop cartoons has been set in motion. A "call for new cartoons" and a contest to reward the best of the submission were approved, as well as a plan to pay the creator for his/her work upon acceptance. Further, it was determined that the results of the cartoon contest" would be made available on the **PROBE** website for Society bulletin editors to select and use (for a nominal fee) in their own publications.

**PROBE** Treasurer/Secretary, **Dick Girvin**, who proposed the plan to the **PROBE** members, has been given the leadership of the committee to implement the contest and establish and publish the rules of engagement. Generally the cartoons must :

- Be new
- Be of good taste
- All submissions that are accepted and paid for (at a price to be established) by **PROBE** become the property of **PROBE**.
- Accepted cartoons are to be placed on the **PROBE** website for purchase. Each cartoon will be shown in a reduced size and with an overlay to prevent direct copying.
- Each cartoon will be stamped as copyrighted.
- Interested parties can purchase any cartoon from **PROBE** for a nominal price (to be established).
- At the end of the year, the authors of the cartoons that have had the most copies purchased will receive recognition and prizes.

The newly formed committee will be charged with the review of all entries, will provide for payment of accepted cartoons and place them on the **PROBE** website. Methods for procuring of the cartoons for use in Society bulletins will be established and posted.

Artistic members, especially the youth, are solicited to submit their ideas and finished cartoons (in digital format). They are encouraged to take playful stabs at the "old guys" and concentrate on how the "young guys" are excelling, and to include funny mishaps at practices and performances and the like.

Questions and future submissions should be addressed to:

**Dick Girvin**  
 34888 Lyn Ave  
 Hemet, CA 92545  
 951-926-8644  
[dickgirvin@juno.com](mailto:dickgirvin@juno.com)

Deadline for July/Sept PROBEmoter is July 15th

It's GREAT To Be A Barbershopper!

## Public Relations Officer of The Year (PROTY)



If you are actively promoting your chapter, no matter what your title is, please prepare and submit an entry in **PROBE's PROTY**. Note that the effort is evaluated independent of whether it was successful. **PROBE** membership is required for review and awards. Winners shall not again be eligible to participate at the international level for two years. Bulletin editors can readily submit samples of their work that can be quantified and judged according to specific criteria. PR men must not only originate a submission, but provide supporting documentation with comments and/or explanation. As a rule men doing PR are not shrinking violets, and will have files and records of all recent events, so compiling the year's activities is at least an excellent review exercise. PR ideas and projects reported through PROTY entry will provide input to a central entity, and the evaluation and comments by experts will undoubtedly give better insight and knowledge to all participants.

### OPTIONS

One-time marketing or public relations activity for a special project.

Year-long marketing or public relations activity.

### COVER SHEET

Note which option you are entering.

Biographical information for the person entering.

Chronological outline of the activities for the option entered.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

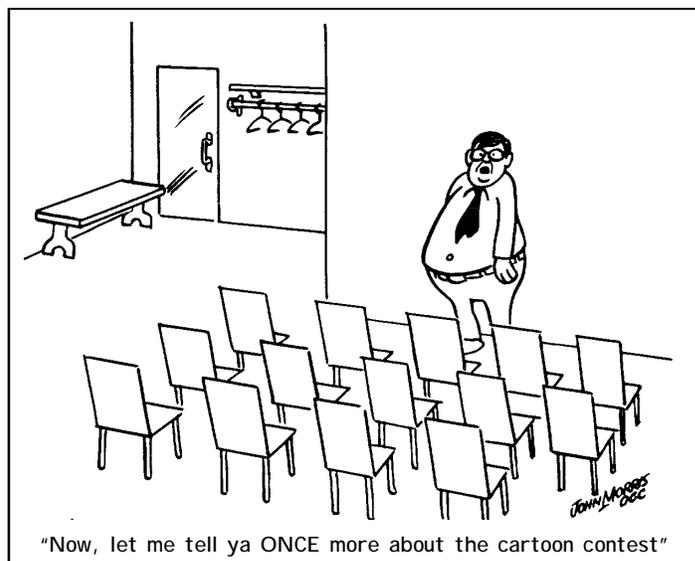
Make a separate page for each activity shown on the Cover Sheet, with brief commentary about the planning, execution, documentation and follow-up. Include copies of pertinent documents (news releases, newspaper clippings, correspondence, printed programs, thank-you letters. etc.)

### DEADLINE

**April 15** of the year following the year the promotion took place regardless of when the event occurred. Additional info is available from PR VP **Bruce Anderson**.

Bruce T. Anderson, 2010 So. 26th St., Lincoln, NE 68502-3025  
 (402) 435-0974 [job60@ix.netcom.com](mailto:job60@ix.netcom.com)

With apologies to **John Morris** for changing the words.....



## Increasing Laughter in Your Chapter Meeting

*Kirk Roose offer ways to make every week a reward for members*

Research suggests that a good hearty laugh can help:

- reduce stress
- lower blood pressure
- elevate mood
- boost immune system
- improve brain functioning
- protect the heart
- connect you to others
- foster instant relaxation, and
- make you feel good

Listen for the amount of happy laughter in your chapter. Nurture it. Your guests will be impressed if they hear during breaks a happy buzz sprinkled with laughter. Not only recreational chapters, but all chapters need humor and delight.

Fortunately, we don't need to force humor into our meetings, because barbershop music is inherently funny. Have we forgotten this? Barbershop music has a tickle. A shtick. Meredith Willson knew this, as he used the quartet of school board members in **The Music Man** to bring a chuckle to his audience with "ice cream - ice cream - ice cream - ICE CREAM!" And lyrics like "*how can there be any sin in sincere?*" The tenor soars, the bass descends, the lead holds a note while the others gyrate, it's all good fun. This is why we had 40,000 men singing barbershop. Junior high school kids giggle when they hear us sing. We're the hams that can't be cured. So don't forget the shtick.

Do something interesting with the music. Instead of just singing "Down Our Way," ask them to sing "Down Our Way Cha-Cha-Cha." You get the idea. Or sing the tag quickly, abruptly ending the song. See how fast they can sing an uptune. Take an old repertoire song and pitch it up a fourth—falsetto practice! Or turn it into a waltz or a rap.

The director's mood counts. Before you enter the meeting place, be ready to have the most fun you've ever had, tonight. While you are directing, if something funny happens feel free to crack up.

Add some funny choreography. Have them wiggle their hands by their ears every time they sing the word "wild" in "Wild Irish Rose." Just make something up. You'll get better at it. And they are listening for lyrics! It doesn't have to be permanent.

Use quartets in a funny way during the chorus time. For some reason, quartets are amusing. Have a quartet sing a chorus-repertoire song before the chorus sings it. Make the quartet funny—three tall guys and one short, (you should see my **quartet-SJ**) or give them funny hats.

Make sure your entire out-front team is on board, especially the guy who is in charge of the program. A lot of this is in his bailiwick. If your chapter meetings have degenerated into chorus rehearsals, encourage your officers and program people to work with you to increase and improve the time that is not strictly "rehearsal." As the musical director, you may be one of the most creative people in the chapter, and you may set the tone.

If you or any of your members or guests can tell a joke, let them. Surprise the chapter by calling on your funny man between two songs you are directing. If the joke bombs, that's funny too. If there are two or more funny guys, call them up front for the joke of the week contest.

Your team should encourage the supporting actors. Handing out membership cards for renewals can be fun—in one chapter, the secretary does a funny walk out front, in another the guys applaud each renewal with the number of claps that the renewed member has years of membership (10 years, 10 claps). If your chapter has refreshments, let the refreshment guy come out in a chef's hat and announce the "menu for this evening," perhaps in an atrocious French accent. What does it take? Fifteen seconds? And another guy gets to do his thing, another laugh.

Your team should schedule special nights like "loud shirt night." Or "ugly outfit night." You might win, even if you forget. You may have to work up to that one.

Try improv. Improvised songs, skits, and other creative entertainment can be worked into your chapter meeting. We had a lot of fun with this one: we divided the men into four groups, and told them they had ten minutes to go off in a corner and prepare "a corny song." Didn't have to be barbershop or even harmonized. Ten minutes later, they came back and each group performed in turn. It was a hoot. I noticed that the newer and younger members and even guests especially participated. You are strengthening creativity and performance skills, too.

Improv can be based around scenarios ("your third-grade music class"), or around props like a newspaper or cell phone, around funny poems the guys know, or around a certain tag or polecat. Use your imagination and encourage them to use theirs. For variety, sometimes give them a week to think about it. Share your successes with other chapters. Notice what parts of your meetings bring down the mood and energy level.

If appropriate, make them funny or at least interesting. Of course, humor is not always appropriate. If an announcement is made that a member has died, mirth is out of place. That is time for a few minutes of warm sharing of memories. Maybe hum "I Believe." A great meeting may have both laughter and tears.

More laughter in your chapter should increase the fun and energy. You will all be younger. You should hear a difference in the sound of your chorus, a more joyful sound. Guests will be drawn in. Members will want to invite their friends to these barbershop parties.

Found on the Society website



## Improving Our Organization

By John Elving, VP for Bulletin Editors

Here are my suggestions for making the bulletin contests better and more up-to-date as to what we as PROBE members need to do.

- Continue the print contest, but with added emphasis year-round on the importance of the chapter bulletin. This would include more articles in the *Harmonizer*, constant communication with the district coordinators, articles in the district magazines/bulletins, etc.
- Help the districts implement the addition of an on-line bulletin contest for the district to go along with the print contest. It would result in a **BETY** award and an **OL'BETY** award.
- Actively solicit volunteer judges through the *Harmonizer*, the *Harmonet*, PROBE<sup>em</sup>ail, the *PROBE<sup>em</sup>oter*, and every other means we can think of.
- Making a big deal of the district winners in the *Harmonizer*. On the PROBE and Society web pages, too? SJ
- Awarding the top prizes for IBC, both on-line and print, during a full session at the International Convention each year. If the recipient isn't there, we need to at least make people aware of their having won in front of the entire convention.
- Making someone available in each district to teach classes at COTS (or what is taking its place), district harmony colleges, sizzles, etc. I'm sure there are several who would be willing to teach such classes in whatever district may schedule it.
- Adding a class at Harmony University each summer. (For both bulletin editors & marketing gurus.)
- With the possible exception of the L&R judging, allow submission of hard copies via pdf format to the judges. (It may be that the L&R could also view via pdf.) It is not hard to make pdf versions of documents in today's world. The only exception to this would be the occasional judge (there are a couple of them) who doesn't have internet access.
- Publish a print version, and offer on-line, a guide for all district coordinators as to job description, duties, dates, deadlines, and all other pertinent information needed by them to do their job better and more efficiently. This is presently not anywhere to be found, I don't think.
- Work more closely, if possible, with **Todd Wilson**, **Lorin May**, **Ed Watson**, and any others from Society headquarters to have a constant presence in the *Harmonizer* and other Society publications. Have articles published not only of contest dates & deadlines, "how to" and why articles, but also success stories of winning publications and editors.
- More communications between judges, coordinators and PROBE officers in making this thing work at its best. Several judges seemingly don't understand all that is expected of them as to critiques, atta-boys, etc. to help the chapter editor be better. Some are very good, others not so much.
- A periodic, possibly quarterly, bulletin from the VP for Bulletin Editors (I know, I have too much time on my hands – NOT!) to all the district coordinators just to keep them up on expectations, duties, available help, etc.

February 13, 2004

## Getting more free publicity

*Lorin May, Harmonizer editor, offers a few pointers on pitching your story to the local news media*



There's nothing better than getting featured in a prime radio, TV or newspaper story. Here's a secret: it usually will happen when someone has asked for it. If you merely send press release about a concert to "the media" (accompanied by a photo of a bunch of identically dressed guys on risers), expect to see it buried in the back pages, if it runs at all. The secret to pitching a story to "the media" is this: If you know the rules of business-to-business courtesy, you already know most of what you need to know.

Don't prepare to talk to "the newspaper" or "the station"—prepare to talk to a human being. People often talk about "the media" as if it's some mysterious all-powerful entity. (To tell the truth, we who work in the media kind of like that perception—it takes us feel powerful!) However, every decision is simply made by a flesh and blood person, usually with a title like "program manager" or "editor." These people may be happy to give you good publicity if you give them a good reason.

Send someone who knows how to sell. Let your best writer do your writing and get the best action photography you can afford. But when it comes to getting your foot in the door, let someone who's good at face-to-face meetings make the initial contacts. Someone who projects a professional image will be treated as a professional.

- Develop a judging program for websites. These are now getting to be one of our most valuable recruiting tools. When men are looking for something to join, they now go to the web first to scout things out. Besides just offering a mentoring program, we need to actively work to make things better. This can be done in a judging program. The only thing is that we need to have two divisions – amateur and professional.
- Be much more pro-active in our mentoring programs for bulletin editors. The thought that if we offer it, they will take advantage of it doesn't work. This can be done by monitoring the bulletins by the district coordinator who would offer to hook them up with a mentor. It could also be done within the COTS programs and other district and Society schools. Editors are like singers – no one wants to be a bad singer or editor. They usually gladly accept help when offered.

Your desire for publicity is your problem, not theirs. Don't show up to ask for something —go there to offer something that solves her need to fill a page or air time with something fun and unique. Be prepared to pitch a story or idea that would appeal to a lot of people, and which wouldn't use up too many of her resources. It's hard to say "no" to someone who's offering to save you a lot of work.

Come up with a unique hook. There are dozens of groups having concerts in town, but how many of them feature an 87-year-old tenor? How many are donating net proceeds to the homeless shelter? How many are traveling to Montreal to compete against to world's best? How many have a show featuring an international champion quartet? Give them a hook, give them some sounds and photos, and get them thinking outside the box.

Respect their time. Editors and program managers are very busy people with constant deadlines. To them, time well spent is time spent with people who have equipped them to make a good decision immediately. Know what idea you're going to pitch, and pitch it well in advance of the desired publicity date— otherwise, they'll have something else slated for "your" spot. Prepare a very short presentation and bring some brief press releases and interesting photos, and some high-quality audio or video clips. If she doesn't have what she needs to make a preliminary decision in a few minutes time, the answer will likely be "No."

Be flexible. The program manager liked your Singing Valentine video and thought your idea has potential. Yes! He doesn't want to do live feeds of your best quartet's deliveries throughout the morning show. Darn! Okay, how about five minutes in the studio with the hosts? No? How about some ten seconds before and after a couple of commercial breaks, and you can follow the quartet next year? YES! Remember: if your first idea doesn't work for him, maybe another one will.



## Pittsburgh Editor Tom Koch honored as chapter BOTY for 2007

As you all know, in addition to being your editor, I "MC" at most of our chorus performances. As MC, I'm never at a loss for words or stories. But at this year's ladies night, when I was announced as the BOTY for 2007, I was greatly surprised and really at a loss for words (well, almost). If I forgot to say it that night, let me say now that I am highly appreciative of this honor. I hope to remain worthy of this designation in the future. Special thanks to the nominating committee: Bill Amos, John Kirwan and Gordon Knapp, for making this possible. I mentioned to Bill Amos that he must enjoy my MC jokes. He replied, "Well, there were pros and there were cons." Oh well, you can't win them all!

Talking about "special thanks," there is one person that I must really extend special thanks to, and that is my wonderful wife Carol. You all know how much time this "hobby" of ours can consume. In a typical week, I might be at our meeting Tuesday night, over at the VETS hospital with the "Harmonizers" Wednesday morning followed by a chapter board meeting Wednesday night. Then there may be a chorus performance and a quartet job in the same week. Then I disappear into my home office for hours on end to work on my bulletin. It takes a special kind of wife to have the patience to tolerate our "hobby" and I have been fortunate to have one. So, here's a big **Thank You** to my wife, Carol, for standing behind me. Hang in there kiddo, COTS is next month!

Seen in the Nov/Dec issue of the *Pittsburgh Press*, of the Greater Pittsburgh chapter, Tom Koch, editor



# When Headaches Start, Pain Mounts Up OR They Never Would Be Missed

By Professor H. Stirling Wilson



He never crosses the street when the sign says "WAIT," and won't blow his horn at an old lady in front of his car. He doesn't flick his cigarette ash in your trousers cuff, and doesn't speed up the revolving door just as you enter. He saves olive seeds at cocktail parties till he gets to the street, and avoids stepping on toes going to his theatre seat BUT - he butts into a quartet as fifth man without batting an eve.

He phones his wife when he is going to be late for dinner, and never cheats the blind man at the cigar counter. He won't reach across you to get the sugar in the cafe, and doesn't throw Dixie cups from the car window. He hangs up his clothes at night and always puts the cap on the tube of toothpaste. He won't look at his wristwatch when you're telling your best story. BUT - when you're singing your highest note he points upward to indicate you should go higher, when you couldn't without a helicopter.

## THAT'S OUR BOY

He gives you change for the pay phone, and pays for the bucket of ice in the hotel. He accepts appointment to the ticket committee and always speaks well of his mother-in-law. He lets you have the only piece of rhubarb pie in the showcase, and never burps in mixed company. BUT - he wants to change your favorite arrangement to something he dreamed up.

He will pick up the kids after Sunday School and doesn't object to taking a glass of grape jelly to old Mrs. Geevern way over on the West Side. He acts as substitute for the sick newsboy and won't gripe when the neighbor fails to return his ratchet screwdriver. He laughs at the druggist's old joke and doesn't crab about the price of the prescription. BUT - he folds your only copy of your favorite song and twists it into a pretzel while he tells what happened to him in the bus.

## "ONE OF THESE DAYS, BUSTER"

He contributes to the Community Chest, and never throws shoes at night roaming tomcats. He doesn't put unlabeled bottles in the medicine cabinet, and doesn't get sore when the man in the row behind coughs on his neck. He never says "Mine was a highball" when you hand him an old-fashioned. BUT - he insists on singing "*Somebody Stole My Gal*" when you want to sing "My Gal Sal."

He never forgets his chorus uniform and shows up in time for the bus trip. He will lend you his copy of the HARMONIZER till yours comes, and remembers to return the five he borrowed at the convention. He won't argue with the judges' decisions and admits the *Four Gnatz* would have done better if their lead hadn't had an attack of warts on the larynx. BUT - when you ask him to blow a B flat he gives you a B natural or an F sharp.

## "GIVE HIM AN INCH, HE'LL THINK IT'S A RULE"

He stays overtime with the quartet even if his wife is waiting for him to pick her up at the bridge party, and will sing the new words to "*Integrated After Dark*." He will return your urgent call even if he comes in after dark, and admits your power lawn mower is as good as his. He obliges the lobby quartet by filling in for "*Sweet Roses of Morn*" and won't sing in his hotel room after 2 a.m. BUT - he will recite long passages from the by-laws to prove a quartet registered in Weehawken, N.J. is eligible to compete in the Evergreen District Contest.

## "THAT'S ALL FELLA!"

He pays his dues on time, and doesn't talk during chorus rehearsals and doesn't argue with you for putting catsup on ice cream. BUT - he wants to omit your favorite intros and tags and your only solo part. What can you do? Kill him or kiss him? Or give yourself up and join the Foreign Legion?

THE HARMONIZER MARCH/APRIL 1962

# Keep the Whole World Singing

PROBE VP - Bulletin Editors**John Elving**[leaderman@earthlink.net](mailto:leaderman@earthlink.net)**HARD COPY VS. ON-LINE?**

I have to say that I am torn between the two. It is my belief that the hardcopy version will be read by more people, especially wives and other family members. It is also convenient to be able to place them around in strategic places like doctors' offices. Of course, how many of them are actually read in those places? I would venture to say not many.

The reality of the matter is that we are becoming a much more electronic society. Newspapers, in general, are taking second place to television due to the instantaneous capabilities. People would rather see and hear at the same time. And if something is happening they want to know now.

People in general, even those with dial-up like I am forced to have, shop online, they read their news online, and in short, spend much time online with various tasks. And the younger generation is even more in that mode.

That being said, we still must attend to the needs of our older generation. I'm somewhat of an anomaly in that I am in that generation, but my livelihood depends on my being able to use the computer, and the internet, constantly. That means that we will still need to produce hardcopy editions of our newsletters. But it also means that for many of us we will need to learn new skills and produce newsletters for electronic distribution.

Here's another thought to chew on. The newsletter that I produce for my chapter, with very few of the younger generation in it, is very different than what I would produce for a chapter like Westminster. As my chapter (hopefully) gets younger, my newsletter, and even the chapter website, will need to change to reflect the younger, more hip, if you will, wants and needs of those younger members. If not, they will not be interested in what's there. That's just a fact of life and the changes that are taking place.

Think this hasn't already happened in our lifetime? I just recently got some newspapers from my grandparents time. How different those newspapers are from what is on the stands today. Layout styles, writing styles, language usage, all different. Good? Bad? Each of us has to decide for ourselves, but the newspapers of today have had to change to keep up with today's demands.

Change is hard for many because it goes against our memories of what used to be. Those memories are good. They keep us all grounded in history. Change, however, is inevitable, and we are sometimes forced to go along with change much to our chagrin. One of those big changes that we have had to make is to come into the new electronic age. It's not all bad. Likewise, the old ways aren't bad either, especially for many of our chapters. That's alright, too. Let's just make sure we are serving our chapter members in the way they need to be served, not necessarily in the ways we think it should be. There is no "one size fits all" here. Each will be different. That's what makes life so interesting! Just keep publishing. I enjoy getting either hardcopy or electronic versions of all the bulletins. Keep them coming.

Editorial**Steve Jackson****From Where I'm Sittin'**

Wow! The focus of **PROBE** has certainly shifted in the past two years. We've added on-line publications and websites to our vision of effective communication. Are we meeting your needs? Hopefully, **PROBEmoter** is providing food for thought. Whether you publish a hard-copy only bulletin, publish on-line, email bulletins and print them out for guests and non-email members (you do provide that service, don't you?), or operate a current website (more on that later), I hope to provide how-to and motivational tips and articles. We have many talented men willing to share their expertise with you.

Is it time to change our name to reflect our changing mission? Not trying to cause any trouble, just wondering if a lively discussion might yield some tangible possibilities? Hmm, how about **PROBEW?**.....nah, **ABEPRW?** Nope! **PROBLEM?** **P**ublic **R**elations, **O**n-Line, **B**ulletin, **E**ditng, **M**arketing, that's funny, but it works.....nah! Back to the drawing board.

I've been learning something new over the last six months — **how to edit pdf' files. I would certainly welcome some how-to articles in this area.** I've managed to grasp the concept of "saving as" documents to convert to workable text, and I've found the tools for deleting text and lines. I'm almost dangerous. Sometimes, you have to learn something through necessity. You know those disclaimer lines put out by free pdf generators. You can delete those. Go slowly, though. Your "undo" function only works on the immediate past action, as I've learned to my regret.

I hope that **David Baker's** (Glendale, Arizona) excellent article on online marketing has held your attention. The last installment will be running next issue. Maybe we can get him to write another informative piece for us. **Jon Wagner** (Sun City Center, Florida) has kept us entertained with his excellent craft tidbits, he's a director AND an editor — a real glutton for punishment, makes you wonder, doesn't it? Ever since **Grant Carson** "retired" from barbershopping and relocated, he's been very regular with articles. There's a line here somewhere about you can quit the BS, but it doesn't quit you (insert the word of your choice here, hee, hee)! We have some good men (and women) contributing — thank you! Let's keep it going, OK?



## PROBE Getting Promoted at the District Level

By David Haase, PROBE Membership VP



By the time this *PROBEmoter* hits your e-mail box you will either had your spring district convention or will be coming up very soon. In the last issue I asked for your help to help promote **PROBE**. I didn't get the response I was hoping for, but sometimes you have to take baby steps before you can walk. It is probably too late to get people on board for the spring convention, but maybe we can plant the seed to get things going for the fall district conventions.

For the spring district conventions we have representatives from the Central States and the Rocky Mountain Districts pushing the cause of **PROBE**. My thanks goes out to **John Elving** and **Steve Jackson** from the RMD and **Robert Uy** from the CSD and other volunteers from both districts for helping out.

So what are we promoting? Two things, **PROBE** and effective communication. I can't speak for John and Steve but my plan of attack at the CSD convention is this:

- Have an information booth at the convention
- Have a handout on how to start or improve a chapter bulletin
- Have free copies of the *PROBEmoter*
- Have information on **PROBE's** bulletin editors contest, both hard copy and online
- Have information on **PROBE's** public relations contests
- Explain to them the benefits of joining PROBE and entering the contests
- **Find out if there is an interest in a bulletin editors class for COTS**
- Find out what topics they want covered at COTS
- Find out if there are current bulletin editors who would help neighboring chapters start a bulletin

Sounds like a lot of work doesn't it? Not really, especially if you plan ahead. I believe the effort will cause a growth in chapter communication via the chapter bulletin and in the membership of **PROBE**.

If you have an interest in planning a **PROBE** information booth at your fall district convention send me an email at [quartetmandh@yahoo.com](mailto:quartetmandh@yahoo.com).

**PROBE** will also have an information booth at this year's international convention in Nashville. Stop by and meet our leaders and other **PROBE** members. We are asking for volunteers to help with the booth in Nashville. All we're asking is maybe an hour or two of your time to help promote **PROBE**. Drop me an email if you can help out. Hope to see everyone in Nashville!

In the next issue of the *PROBEmoter* I'll let you know how things went at the CSD and RMD conventions. Keep the whole world singing and PROMOTING!

*Do The Write Thing*  
 Help Your Editor With A News Item  
 For the Next Issue

### Some Commandments of Chorus Rehearsals (1991 Version)

- Thou shalt be at they appointed place when the meeting begins and also when break hath ended;
- Thou shall hold not private conversations nor conduct business other than singing during rehearsal time;
- There is but ONE music director. Thou shall place no other before him nor criticize, except to him privately;
- Thou shalt render unto the director, or whosoever might speaketh, thy undivided attention; scorn him not, nor fooleth 'round;
- Thou shalt heed ALL directions from thy director, neither singeth nor hummeth thine part unless told; sing in unison with gladness;
- Thou shalt be quieted and keepeth thine mouth SHUT when thy director worketh with another section;
- Thou shalt smoke not in the rehearsal room, for it is an abomination to many;
- Honor they board and thy officers, for they are pleased to serve only by thine appreciation and respect.
- Be prepared to delivereth the goods.

Jon Wagner  
 Sun City Center, Florida





## Online Marketing for Chapters and Quartets

By Dave Baker, *Spirit of Phoenix*, Glendale, Arizona

### Managing Your AdWords Campaign

Managing a pay-per-click campaign requires attention to detail. The good news is, Google provides you with lots of information about what is happening with your account. The bad news is, you'll actually have to pay attention to this information to make the campaign work effectively. When you look at the "Campaign Management" screen, you'll notice that you have a single campaign (called "Campaign #1") that is marked as "Active." You can rename your campaign by checking its box and clicking the "Edit Settings" button. If you do this, you'll see that you can also make changes to all of the other parameters you set in the initial setup of your account.

Google lets you run multiple campaigns, each of which can contain multiple ad groups, each of which can contain dozens or even hundreds of keywords and keyphrases, bids, and ads. For now, let's just work with one campaign, and one ad group. Click on "Campaign #1." This takes you to a page that shows you the various ad groups within your campaign. You'll have just one, called "Ad Group #1." Click on that and you'll see the ad group detail page. First, let's scrutinize the major areas of the screen:

#### Tools

**Filter Keywords:** lets you control which specific keywords and key phrases are displayed in the keyword detail grid below.

**Add Keywords:** exactly as you'd expect, you can add new keywords to your ad group here.

**Edit Keywords:** this feature lets you deal with the entire list of keywords at once, rather than as individual entries.

**Keyword Tool:** helps you get creating by suggesting keywords you've overlooked.

#### Ad Area

**Example Ad:** if you currently only have a single ad, it will be displayed here. If you're running more than one ad, you'll have to scroll down to the bottom to see them all.

**Create New Ad:** lets you add an additional ad that will be displayed when someone searches for one of your keywords or phrases. This lets you test out different ads to see which ones are most effective. You can tell AdWords to display the most popular ads more (as measured by how often they're clicked), which should increase your campaign's effectiveness.

#### Date Range Selection

**Pre-determined periods:** you can choose a pre-determined time period to display ("yesterday," the "last 7 days," or "all time," for example).

**Create New Ad:** alternatively, you can specify a starting and ending date. To refresh the Keyword area, click the "Go" button.

#### Keyword Area

**Keyword:** the keyword in question.

**Status:** whether the keyword is active or inactive. Google will

tell you whether a particular bid minimum needs to be reached to activate the keyword.

**Current Bid:** how much you're currently "bidding" for a click on your ad.

**Hide Settings:** allows you to track the cost-effectiveness of individual keywords.

**Clicks:** how many times a Google user has clicked on an ad linked to this particular keyword, within the date range specified.

**Impr. (Impressions):** how many times a Google user has displayed an ad linked to this particular keyword, within the date range specified.

**CTR (Click-through Rate):** the ratio of impressions to clicks.

**Avg. CPC (Average Cost per Click):** The average amount you're paying per click on an ad for this keyword, within this date range. Note that the cost can be less than your bid, but won't go over your bid amount.

**Cost:** the total amount spent on ads linked to this particular keyword, within the date range specified.

**Avg. Pos. (average position):** the average order in which your ad is being displayed for this keyword—1 would be the top position, 2 would be the next one down and so on.

Let's be clear on what we're aiming for. Your goal here is to generate the most targeted traffic possible for the least amount of money. There are a few universal truths. Pay attention, because this is what it's all about:

The more you bid, the higher your ad is displayed. This is called "bidding your way to the top," and it works. If someone else is bidding on the same keyword, and you offer Google more for a click, they're intrinsically motivated to display your ad higher, because ... The ads at the top get more clicks than the ads lower down. The distribution of clicks on #1 ads vs. #2 ads, #3 ads and so on depends on who you ask, but you'll definitely see lots more clicks if you are in a higher position. Google "hedges its bets" by displaying more relevant ads over less relevant ones. Does that mean you might actually outrank (in terms of placement) someone who outbids you? Believe it or not, yes.

Google wants to make money, and it makes more money if the ads are actually relevant. So the strategy is simple. Begin with a minimum default bid amount, like five or ten cents to start, for your entire list of keywords. Then sit back and watch. You'll notice, after a couple of days, that some keywords are much more popular, and have higher impression volumes (this means the ads are being displayed more often). You can actually sort your keyword list by impression by clicking on the "Impr." header at the top of the keyword grid. If, after a day or so, you have hundreds or even thousands of impressions on a particular keyword or group of keywords, you know what folks are searching for. That's a good thing.

Cont. next page

Now it's time to work on your positioning. Check back a couple of times a day at first, then daily after that. Pay attention to the average position of your AdWords ads. If you're happy with a 26.3 average ranking—fine. You'll never get much in the way of clicks, though. If you'd rather be in the top 10, or top five, or actually at the top, increase your bids for specific keywords by checking the box next to the keywords and clicking on "Edit Keyword Settings."

Enter your new Search Bid(s), click "Save Changes," then sit back and watch for another day or two. Keep in mind during all this that your campaign is constrained by the budget you specified. If you're bidding 25 cents per click, and have set your spend to a dollar a day, expect to get about 4 clicks a day before Google stops showing your ad. If you're bidding \$1.50 a click and your budget is \$1.00 a day, expect to get ... not much.

As you work to "dial in" your bids, you can be doing other things, too. One thing the pros do is create multiple ads with slightly different (or even very different) ad copy. Then pay attention to the ones that get clicked the most. AdWords will automatically display the more popular ads more often. This way you can find just the right stimulus that creates the best response.

### Other Online Marketing

Though search engines—and both sponsored links and organic results—will probably be your largest source of "customers," there are other things you can do to drive more visitors to your site. Many of the other kinds of paid online advertising are just not feasible for a barbershop chorus or quartet. (Most choruses don't have \$10,000 to drop on a million-impression Flash banner ad campaign. Plus, they rarely work anyway.) With pay-per-click advertising being the notable exception, sometimes the old adage is true: the best things in life (especially online) are free. Here are a few additional things you can do to get more visitors to your site:

Add your chapter's or quartet's website address to your entry on the Barbershop Harmony Society's website, [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org). You'll need access privileges to do this. If you don't have access, ask a chapter officer to do it. Add your chapter's or quartet's website address to the appropriate location on the Barbershop Wiki at [www.barbershopwiki.org](http://www.barbershopwiki.org). Full disclosure: I'm the wikimaster of this particular site, and host it on my own server.

Cross-link like crazy. If you're a quartet, make sure to get quartet information and linkage on your chorus' website. If you're a chorus, make sure each of your chapter quartets links to your chorus site from their individual quartet pages (if they have them), and make sure you have updated links on both district and division pages as well. Remember—the more sites link to you, the more popular you appear to search engines. Announce major additions and revisions on the Harmonet, but be careful not to overdo it.

### Refining Even Further

Getting your campaign working well for you takes some time and dedication, but if you work at it diligently, you can make your AdWords campaign the most effective dollars you spend on promoting your chorus or quartet. Feel free to try things out, such as setting up additional campaigns or ad groups, targeting neighboring regions, testing new ad language and adding additional keywords. Here are a few other tips and strategies you might want to try:

Think "outside the box" with other potential sources of impressions and clicks. If you suspect that people looking for information about the local symphony orchestra might also be interested in your chorus (it's possible), set up a separate ad group with symphony-related terms, with ads targeted toward symphony-goers. Don't forget about the competition. You can't use a "competing" Group's name in your ad copy, but you can certainly bid on the group's name (or target their core audience) to run your own targeted ads. (Remember to consider both barbershop and non-barbershop competition!)

**If you're attracting new chorus members, ask each new guest how he found out about your chorus, and make a note of those who said, "on the Internet."**

Lost clicks are cheaper than high-cost clicks. This seems obvious, but if you're spending a buck a click on a single general term with high click volumes, and you can get the same amount of clicks with a hundred low-volume, highly targeted, and relatively inexpensive terms, do that instead. If you have the budget, do both!

Re-optimize your site as you go. If you find that one particular search phrase produces massive impression volumes, consider going back to your website content and reworking the text to include that term more often. However, do not just list that term over and over, in white-on-white text, in tiny type at the bottom of your pages. Pasting Britney Spears 200 times in your page footer will actually hurt your rankings in search engines. Plus, it's sleazy and stupid.

Do not "set it and forget it." Your ad campaign is not a Ronco Rotisserie. Even after you've spent a couple of months honing your campaign settings to a keen Ginsu-like edge, you'll want to check in a couple of times a week and see how it's going. Above all, make sure to monitor the calls and e-mails you're getting to determine how effective the campaign is at accomplishing your goals. If you're attracting new chorus members, ask each new guest how he found out about your chorus, and make a note of those who said, "on the Internet." If you're getting a new member a month from your AdWords campaign, look at your monthly spend and see whether the cost per new member is in a tolerable range. If it is, consider spending more and see if you can improve on those results!



## Words of Wisdom

*Continued from last issue*

- Risers are a big waste of money. Why not buy a single tower for the director. You'd all see him better and, an added advantage, it would keep him from trying to become part of the first row of the chorus.
- Their logic escapes me. They tell me to take "big steps" going up the scale and "small steps" coming down the scale. I tried it in the key of C. I ended up in the key of G.
- Yes, we have our contests. But, the true soul of barbershopping does not rest in how well you sing it, rather, in how great it takes you feel while you're singing it.
- Have reservations about joining a quartet in which the lead follows the other parts.
- The shortest measurement of elapsed time is the time it takes a good woodshedding bari to; hear the other three notes, identify the intended chord and deliver the missing correct note.
- Why is it that 95% of all barroom tags you'll ever hear will be done at one-half the speed of the original quartet.
- Beware the 'gambler' barbershopper who believes he'll get even on the next song, two at the most.
- A good tag will never beat a good song.
- A guaranteed way to increased chorus membership, go out and buy new risers that meet your current needs.
- Want more money for your chapter treasury? Maybe this idea will start your brain juices flowing. Do a double printing of all tickets to your annual show. True, at curtain time you may have a little chaos in the aisles. So what. You tell them it was the printer's fault, followed by your loudest song. And, besides, it's only a rented hall.
- Fifty percent of all chapter presidents believe that, when the nominating committee was asking for volunteers for that job, the rest of the chapter collectively, took one step backward. As relates to any other elected job, this figure raises to 90%.
- The statistical probability of your chorus/quartet winning at the international level is about equal to any two guys in your chapter mounting a heated campaign to obtain your vote in the joint pursuit for the job of treasurer.
- Annual chapter elections are about as exciting as vocal warm up exercises. Here's a way to really spice them up. Make the post of past president an elected office. You'll be swamped by contenders. Why not?
- All you gotta learn is how to say "we never did it that way."
- Tired of giving your annual show audience the same old uniform look?  
Consider this. Get your local church choir to trade their robes for your uniforms for one weekend. It will give you a brand new look for your Saturday night show and sure as hell increase the attendance at the following morning's services.
- Without fail I attend every chorus rehearsal. No misses. No exceptions. No excuses. I feel that it's the least I can do for my chapter because, come contest time, I prefer sitting up in the balcony keeping score on the back of my program. (an aside. I polled my chorus on this. They didn't seem to mind. A really nice bunch of guys.)
- When you can no longer duck from taking a job in your chapter, become the chapter's bulletin editor. To begin with, it doesn't take much talent and you can do the job entirely in the comfort of your own home.
- In many ways it's much like singing lead; it requires a heavy dose of attitude adjustment. If you can restructure your thinking to truly believe that you are only responsible to some level of barbershopping higher than your chapter, your district, or Kenosha, you'll have a lock on it.
- Singing barbershop is the illusion of perfection. I delude myself regularly.
- Ninety-five percent of all leads are singing out of their range.
- In defense of his suggestion for new chorus uniforms, my friend claimed the "the better you're dressed, the better you sing." I gave it a try. I wore a brand new, top of the line, 3-piece suit to the next chorus rehearsal. I still flatted.
- If you're having trouble finding the fourth guy for your quartet, consider this: stop looking. Instead, call your three-man group a "mini chorus." It's all a matter of semantics. A mini chorus will fly. A three-man quartet is a dumb idea.
- Show Chairman: No one ever left the theater of an Annual Show saying, "it was a lousy show, but it did come in under budget."
- Every chorus requires a contest to sustain it's own sense of worth.
- The less you know about singing lead, the more attractive it is.
- Contests: The judge's jokes are always funny.
- Chorus Directors: If you let the chorus discover your standards, they'll use them against you.
- Headquarters Hotel: Never try to adjust your clothing in a crowded elevator.
- Go figure: If the quartet is stubborn and wins, it has guts. If it is stubborn and loses, it's dumb.
- The three other parts can reform, but a bass is forever.
- There is a pessimist in your chapter who thinks the old days were better. You know who I mean. You also know the optimist who believes that things are getting better. Trust me on this one, they're both wrong.
- No member of the chorus is completely useless - he can always be used as a horrible example.
- The amount of food prepared for an Afterglow, as a percentage of the guest's requirements, is either 84 percent or 192 percent.
- When a barbershopper tells you, "I'm as good a singer as you are," it means that he thinks he is better.
- We spend our lives buying new-stuff and throwing away old-stuff.
- Exception: we never throw away an old pitch pipe. Interesting.
- The talent of a tenor is inversely proportionate to the weight of his music bag.
- No quartet or chorus will ever do "Down Our Way" well. A classic case of "no respect for the too familiar."
- Give pause to joining a chapter that has the local nursing homes singing for them.
- The only reason our pitch pipes have 13 notes is some wise-guy (usually a bari) can "prove" that we dropped a half note.

## Singing Tips

**Jon Wagner**  
Sun City Center, Florida



**A Section Leader's Job:** If you want to become a better singer quickly, become a Section Leader where you must know the exact notes and words of each song and be able to sing any phrase, too. There's more to it than that, but it's a good place to start.

### **Teaching techniques can come later**

As the front-line teacher of the part, you need to listen lots; during rehearsals and section meetings alike, so you know what mistakes are being made. You can't fix problems unless you know what they are, and you can't hear them while you try to lead with your own voice.

As a SL for three voice parts in 17 years, I've made many notes as I listened, writing the measure # and one word to jog my memory of the problem. It wasn't important to know who made the mistake—it showed that the phrase needed review.

In my previous choruses, I always held my section meetings 1/2 to one-hour before rehearsal, depending on what needed fixing. It became a matter of pride for my singers to know the songs before any other part.

SL's hate to teach word and notes, but better that they do it than the Director in full rehearsals. I found my singers learned much faster in the small group, too—like in a quartet, it's hard to hide in a section meeting. They even started learning at home. "What a novel idea," as Andy likes to say. Wanna B 1? I promise to hold more Section Meetings. Honest Injun!

**Easy one this week.** 1) Get out your music at home; 2) Find your learning CDs; 3) Match the sheet music with a CD track; 4) Listen to the track; 5) Hum the melody along with the CD; 6) Hum your part with the CD; 7) 'ooo' your part with the CD; 7) Sing your part with the CD a line at a time until you have it solidly learned; 8) Refresh yourself the next four days.

### **Visual Impressions:**

My response when asked my view of a quartet..."I got the impression that the bass was controlling the quartet rather than the lead...may I quietly add that was 'arrogantly' leading the quartet?...and I don't even know him? I think it was his non-movement and his bland look that he was participating just to allow the guys to sing on stage. Doing them a favor, so to speak. Guess another way to look at it was that he thinks his voice (which is good) is sufficient and he doesn't have to enhance his performance beyond allowing people to hear him. (That really sounds mean. Hopefully, he's a nice guy and I'm wrong.)

Isn't it amazing how an audience will form opinions of the singers just by watching and listening? Last contest, someone said they didn't like a singer because he seemed really stuck on himself. They could SEE it and FEEL it. The lesson for us? What impressions are YOU giving the audience? Having fun? Bored? Scared? Doing them a big favor by singing? Nice guy? Friendly? Mean and Macho?"

You've heard me say we want to sing lyrics conversationally - the way you would speak them. When we talk, we naturally add expression and emotion to the words, giving one word a little extra push or volume, softening another, cutting a word sound short, lengthening another. Try this exercise:

Turn on your recorder and read the words in a normal voice as if you were in a conversation with me without trying to be anything/ anyone other than yourself. The pattern of a song's lyrics have a tendency to push you into saying or singing words/phrases a certain way, but try not to let it happen. Can you clearly understand each word? Can someone else? Have them humor you by listening over again until they can.

Pencil notations to the music's lyrics of how you said each word and highlight those still needing corrections for coloring, clarity, volume. Check several times mark to it right. Now learn it that way...now sing it that way. The audience needs to understand each word you mutter - should feel the word's emotion same as you do. If you are "telling the story," you WILL feel some passion. I hope you'll try this exercise. You'll be surprised at the results.

## Three things a singer should do when running out of air

### **Inhale**

First, let me be clear on one point: I am talking about planned breath spots, not catch breaths. At planned breath spots, the first thing to do is get a full tank of air. While this isn't a discussion on *how to inhale*, just remember to use an open throat and your diaphragm to fill up for that next phrase.

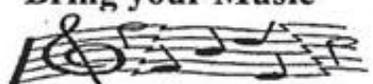
### **Smile**

I use the phrase "smile through the breath," meaning that each time a singer inhales, a smile should cross their face. Even in a tender ballad or sad passage, a warm smile can keep the tone bright. Remember, each time you inhale, you must smile.

### **Move**

Finally, move your feet. This is also called a re-set. This final step is the reason that this approach applies to planned breath spots in the music. You might not want movement occurring during a catch breath on a long phrase, for example. This movement adds a visual element and increased energy to the next phrase. Some guys get lock-knees or cement-feet. Inviting them to move at each planned breath, can get them into the feeling of the song.

**Remember!**  
Bring your Music



Bring a Pencil (with eraser)



Bring a Recorder



**Every Rehearsal**

## It's Not WHAT You Write - It's HOW You Write It

Editor's note: Among the numerous bulletins we read each week, we always look forward to the humorous quotes, anecdotes and casual comments contained in "Rest Notes," edited by Art Bush, Berkeley, Calif. Although his weekly publication may never win an award for format, layout or perfect grammar, it is an extremely effective communications piece. Our thanks to Sam Aramian, International Board Member, Far Western District, who extracted the tidbits shown below from Art's recent bulletins. If you like his little funny bone ticklers, why not drop us a line. There's lots more where these came from.

Hey, you guys, don't forget your music next Monday. Wrap your garbage in something else this week.

From the Podium: "Don't let me discourage you, even if I think it stinks." Or, "You're not wrong, you just like to sing it another way." Or, "We've made a couple of changes in this song. Those of you who didn't know it anyway won't be bothered by them."

If we could get our music printed on cellophane we could watch the director and read the words at the same time.

**WE GOT A LETTER FROM DAVE STEVENS. SOME OF IT WAS EVEN READABLE.**

Girls, next week the baritones have early section rehearsal. If old gristle brain forgets, will you remind him.

Last week we tried singing the first note with out a tune-up. The different versions of the same note were truly amazing. We finally arrived at the same chord from directions you wouldn't believe.

When we get right down to the nitty gritty on a song, old Peerless latches on to the tu-tu system of the great white father from Kenosha. The results are amazing. A few of the chaps bellyache about it. They don't like the tu-tu system and they're quite vociferous about it. In this case, vociferous is synonymous with obnoxious.

If you happen to be looking in the direction of the director and he is giving you the palm of his hand, he will expect you to immediately sing softer. If you see his fist it means that you were not looking when he had his palms out.

Quote from up front: "As long as you see notes, keep on singing." Or, "Some ding-a-ling is not singing 'dbg.a-ling'." Or, "Who bloo the Loo Loos?"

**I'M NOT ONE WHO BELIEVES THAT THE BARIS SHOULD BE SEEN AND NOT HEARD.  
I BELIEVE JUST THE OPPOSITE.**

**WE SHOULD WORK WITH THE DIRECTOR, NOT ON HIM.**

To the stay-at-homes. Now doggone it men, once in a while someone is going to faux a pas, and poke someone in the feelings. Heck no one's perfect. Perhaps the chapter does something that you don't like; don't just stay home; stand on your hind legs and holler.

Our leader came up with a new way of learning a song. No singing, just clapping the hands in rhythm. This brought up the inevitable question: How do you turn the page while clapping.

**OUR DIRECTOR WAS WORKING ON A TAG THAT WAS SO HIGH OUR TENORS  
SPRAINED THEIR EYEBROWS.**

The old boy came up with a new arrangement that is as tender as a boiled marshmallow.

**WE HAVE AVERAGED FIFTY-TWO POINT FIVE BODIES AT THE LAST TWO REHEARSALS.  
THE POINT FIVE IS A TENOR. I BELIEVE.**

We have 12 weeks work to do in four weeks. But there's hope. We've progressed to new mistakes, having licked the old ones.

**WE PRAISED THE LEADS SO MUCH LAST NIGHT THEY COULD HARDLY GET THEIR  
HEADS THROUGH THE DOOR.**

Old Peerless stepped up to the podium and led us in a glorious rendition of tu-tu-tu-tu-tu-.  
"When the notes go up, YOII guys at least head in the right direction. "

**Old Charlie has more irons in the fire than an octopus in a Chinese laundry.**

## How to write with style

By Kurt Vonnegut

*Kurt Vonnegut, author of such novels as "Slaughterhouse-Five," "Jailbird" and "Cat's Cradle" tells you how to put your style and personality into everything you write.*

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Newspaper reporters and technical writers are trained to reveal almost nothing about themselves in their writings. This makes them freaks in the world of writers, since almost all of the other ink-stained wretches in that world reveal a lot about themselves to readers. We call these revelations, accidental and intentional, elements of style.

These revelations tell us as readers what sort of person it is with whom we are spending time. Does the writer sound ignorant or informed, stupid or bright, crooked or honest, humorless or playful? And on and on.

Why should you examine your writing style with the idea of improving it? Do so as a mark of respect for your readers, whatever you're writing. If you scribble your thoughts any which way, your readers will surely feel that you care nothing about them. They will mark you down as an egomaniac or a chowderhead--or worse, they will stop reading you.

The most damning revelation you can make about yourself is that you do not know what is interesting and what is not. Don't you yourself like or dislike writers mainly for what they choose to show you or make you think about? Did you ever admire an empty-headed writer for his or her mastery of the language? No. So your own winning style must begin with ideas in your head.

### Find a subject you care about.

Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, and not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style.

I am not urging you to write a novel, by the way—although I would not be sorry if you wrote one, provided you genuinely cared about something. A petition to the mayor about a pothole in front of your house or a love letter to the girl next door will do.

### Do not ramble, though.

I won't ramble on about that.

### Keep it simple.

As for your use of language: Remember that two great masters of language, William Shakespeare and James Joyce, wrote sentences which were almost childlike when their subjects were most profound.

---

*"Should I act upon the urgings that I feel, or remain passive and thus cease to exist?"*  
*"To be or not to be?"*

"To be or not to be?" asks Shakespeare's Hamlet. The longest word is three letters long.

Joyce, when he was frisky, could put together a sentence as intricate as a necklace for Cleopatra, but my favorite sentence in his short story "Eveline" is this one: "She was tired." At that point in the story, no other words could break the heart of a reader as those three words do. Simplicity of language is not only reputable, but perhaps even sacred. The Bible opens with a sentence well within the writing skills of a lively fourteen-year-old: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

### Have the guts to cut.

It may be that you, too, are capable of making necklaces for Cleopatra, so to speak. But your eloquence should be the servant of the ideas in your head. Your rule might be this: If a sentence, no matter how excellent, does not illuminate your subject in some new and useful way, scratch it out.

### Sound like yourself.

The writing style which is most natural to you is bound to echo the speech you heard when a child. English was the novelist Joseph Conrad's third language, and much that seems piquant in his use of English was no doubt colored by his first language, which was Polish. And lucky indeed is the writer who has grown up in Ireland, for the English spoken there is so amusing and musical. I myself grew up in Indianapolis, where common speech sounds like a band saw cutting galvanized tin, and employs a vocabulary as unornamental as a monkey wrench.

In some of the more remote hollows of Appalachia, children still grow up hearing songs and locutions of Elizabethan times. Yes, and many Americans grow up hearing a language other than English, or an English dialect a majority of Americans cannot understand.

All these varieties of speech are beautiful, just as the varieties of butterflies are beautiful. No matter what your first language, you should treasure it all your life. If it happens not to be standard English, and if it shows itself when you write standard English, the result is usually delightful, like a very pretty girl with one eye that is green and one that is blue.

I myself find that I trust my own writing most, and others seem to trust it most, too, when I sound most like a person from Indianapolis, which is what I am. What alternatives do I have? The one most vehemently recommended by teachers has no doubt been pressed on you, as well: to write like cultivated Englishmen of a century or more ago.

### Say what you mean to say.

I used to be exasperated by such teachers, but I am no more. I understand now that all those antique essays and stories with which I was to compare my own work were not magnificent for their datedness or foreignness, but for saying precisely what their authors meant them to say. My teachers wished me to write accurately, always selecting the most effective words, and relating the words to one another unambiguously, rigidly, like parts of a machine. The teachers did not want to turn me into an Englishman after all. They hoped that I would become understandable—and therefore understood.

And there went my dream of doing with words what Pablo Picasso did with paint or what any number of jazz idols did with music. If I broke all the rules of punctuation, had words mean whatever I wanted them to mean, and strung them together higgledy-piggledy, I would simply not be understood. So you, too, had better avoid Picasso-style or jazz-style writing, if you have something worth saying and wish to be understood.

Readers want our pages to look very much like pages they have seen before. Why? This is because they themselves have a tough job to do, and they need all the help they can get from us.

#### Pity the readers.

They have to identify thousands of little marks on paper, and make sense of them immediately. They have to read, an art so difficult that most people don't really master it even after having studied it all through grade school and high school — twelve long years.

So this discussion must finally acknowledge that our stylistic options as writers are neither numerous nor glamorous, since our readers are bound to be such imperfect artists. Our audience requires us to be sympathetic and patient teachers, ever willing to simplify and clarify—whereas we would rather soar high above the crowd, singing like nightingales.

That is the bad news. The good news is that we Americans are governed under a unique Constitution, which allows us to write whatever we please without fear of punishment. So the most meaningful aspect of our styles, which is what we choose to write about, is utterly unlimited.

#### For really detailed advice

For a discussion of literary style in a narrower sense, I commend to your attention *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White (Macmillan, 1979). E.B. White is, of course, one of the most admirable literary stylists this country has so far produced.

You should realize, too, that no one would care how well or how badly Mr. White expressed himself, if he did not have perfectly enchanting things to say.

## Mentors

Written by Grant Carson  
[wmgcarson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wmgcarson@sbcglobal.net)

The publication in the last *PROBEmoter* of Owen Herndon's account of a 20 year quest to win the **International Bulletin Contest** stirred many memories. First, I judged Owen's bulletin in both the BETY and IBC. Although some competitors were awesome, he deserved to win. Secretly, I was pulling for Owen, although my dispassionate judgment wasn't affected. I, too, had been editor for small chapters. Editors for larger chapters may not appreciate the publication of a bulletin for a smaller chapter where the news for the month was nothing newsworthy! And, like Owen, as a new editor, I was taken under the wing of **Herb Bayles** and **Dick Girvin**. They were my mentors.

In those days before e-mail, Herb and Dick and I exchanged letters by post almost monthly. I would proudly publish, and they would subtly critique. I remember Dick suggesting that I might want to enter a BETY contest and enclosing scoring sheets. I laughed a loud laugh! You want me to do what? You want me to use volume and issue number? Who knows? Who cares? Little did I know at that time that **Dick Girvin** was a founder of *PROBE* and a retired newspaper journalist who knew everything concerning print journalism and why.

I once challenged **Herb Bayles**, then editor of *PROBEmoter* as well as my mentor, to write an article for my bulletin telling about *PROBE*. He did. The article was in my font and in my column width, ready to paste in. The headline was "*Frying ants with a magnifying glass.*" That was just to get attention. The article was a very concise history of *PROBE* until that time.

Fast forward many years. I was *PROBE* VP-BE, retired, and certified as print bulletin judge in both Content and in Layout and Reproduction. Then came a call for a new initiative from then *PROBE* President **Grady Kerr** to establish a committee of seasoned journalists to mentor new editors. How could I resist, having been professionally mentored myself? I volunteered to head the committee. And very able volunteers stepped forward:

**Milt Weisman**, now retired from *PROBE*. Among his "mentorees" was **Clare McCreary**, whose name you may recognize, editor of "*Scoops and Swipes*," St. Petersburg, and a frequent contributor to the **Harmonet**. Milt was very, very gentle in his suggestions.

**Don Heist**, deceased, West Coast. When I was VP-BE, and the post of **Layout & Reproduction Specialist** became open, I had no hesitancy in installing Don. He was an artist who could spread his hands over a newsletter page and make the mundane become magical. His critiques were gentle and insightful, and I paid attention to learn more.

**John Petterson**, editor of *PROBEmoter* and long time editor of the **Serenade**, the CSD bulletin. John's service to barbershop extended well beyond his loss of hearing. When he could no longer listen and sing, he still published his chapter, district and national bulletin. And, he was so gentle, so persuasive in his advice to new editors that I was very much impressed.

Other volunteers were **Bruce Anderson**, **Jade Walker**, **Dick Teeters**, **Alan Burt**, **Steve Jackson**, **Tom Pearce** and **Dick Girvin**. The committee was active for several years, giving continuing advice to 17 new editors. Then there were no new editors for print bulletins. The committee felt only qualified to critique print bulletins. So, the initiative died.

## Better bulletins make chapters better!

### RMD Rumbings

I can add a brief note to that having encouraged and shared information and tips with RMD editors **Russ Born** and **Brett Foster**, Billings, **Ralph Valentine** and **Harold Catmull**, Pocatello, **Jim Jensen**, Mile High, **Dick Lambert** and **Becki Whalen**, Albuquerque, **Roy Godbolt**, Ogallala, and **John Elving**, Rapid City.

My mentors (editors who influenced me) were **Herb Bayles**, HEY HEY HERALD, **Grady Kerr**, Dallas, **Dan Daily**, SKUPPER (EVG), **Lloyd Davis**, Pal-Pac bulletin, **Jim Fulks**, STARTING GATE, Louisville, **Lowell Shank** (who?) Mammoth Cave bulletin, **Jerry Easter**, CHORD CRIER, Waterloo, Iowa, **Warren Edmonds**, RMD **New Harmony Horizons**, and **Wade Dexter**, HARMONOTES, Kansas City; long-time editor of the Oakland County (Detroit) bulletin, **John McDermott** GENTLEMEN'S SONGSTER (with in chapter artist **John Morris** — lucky stiff), and the editor of the Sarasota TAG RAG, who put out quite a string of quality bulletins in the early 1980's (memory fails me as to the gentlemen's name).

Steve Jackson

# PROBE<sup>m</sup>oter

Editor Steven Jackson

215 Cheyenne Street Lot 18

Golden, CO 80403

(303) 384-9269

<sjbullead@comcast.net>



To PROBE member/barbershopper:



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*This block of white space is provided courtesy of the editor who was too lazy to find something to fit the space — so there!*

## Have you heard the one about The Singing Fish?

**Lead:** Hey, Chris! How's your new pet fish doing? You told me he was really something special.

**Tenor:** To tell you the truth, I'm really disappointed in him. The guy who sold him to me said I could teach him to sing like a bird.

**Lead:** You bought a fish because you thought you could teach him to sing like a bird? I can't believe it!

**Tenor:** Well, yeah. After all, he's a parrot fish.

**Lead:** I hate to tell you this, Chris, but while you might be able to teach a parrot bird to sing, you're never going to get anywhere with a parrot fish.

**Tenor:** That's what you think! He can sing all right. The thing is, he keeps singing off-key. It's driving me crazy. Do you know how hard it is to tuna fish?



*—submitted to PROBE by Tina Gunther, Barbershop Harmony fan, Whittier, Calif.*