

BARBERSHOP POINTERS

Stevens Point, Wisconsin chapter of Barbershop Harmony Society, Inc.

Meeting every Monday 7:30 P.M.

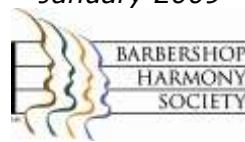
Harmony House – 3500 Harmony Lane

P.O. Box 482 – 715-344-9052

Packerland Division – Land O Lakes District

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BARBERSHOPPER OF THE YEAR 2008



Jim Kruziki

With all points tallied and some secret rooting for a few who lagged behind by mere points, Jim Kruziki came sailing to the fore as the total leader. Thus, yet another Barbershopper of the Year was announced at the 2008 Christmas dinner. Jim joins the ranks of a select group not only for the recognition but also of being an even more distinct group who have achieved this honor twice during their membership with the Northern Gateway Chorus. Congratulations to Jim Kruziki. This from Jim:

"A great big thanks is in order to our Music team for procuring the learning CDs for our new songs. The quality is excellent, and I'm finding they are a terrific means to learn these new songs. My goal is to listen and sing the songs at least three times a day--practice makes perfect. Sing your part and then sing with the full quartet. I dare you not to look at your music."

"Here's a hint for those of you who have a computer handy: rip the CDs into your favorite music player. I find I can easily backup and repeat any sections there are more difficult to learn (seems like many sections for this old baritone). It makes the learning process fun."

Jim Kruziki

Historical Happenings

A Blast from the Past

Musings by Max Kopchinski



Historian
(Even back then!)

Early in 1952, a group of about a dozen men met at the Stevens Point American Legion Club. This was an informal group which, to the best of our knowledge, had no officers and kept no written records. The reason for the meeting was a mutual desire to harmonize. Their interest lay in singing "The Old Songs", rather than "Popular" music. Of this nebulous group, only two things are clear. First, they had obtained two copies of the Mills Book published by SPEBSQSA. Second, they chose one from among themselves to act as director. The man they chose was Carman Lane, then a teacher at Auburndale, Wis.

It is of no great surprise that the group grew toward SPEBSQSA. By April 1953, extension activities were well under way. Under the sponsorship of the Wisconsin Rapids Chapter, a charter was granted on June 30, 1953. The Stevens Point Barbershoppers began with 23 Charter Members. Carman Lane was the first Director, shortly replaced by Frank Wesley, who died in an auto accident after three months as director. The next director was Walter Montgomery, who held the post from 1954 through 1956. Carman Lane became director again in 1957 and remained in that position through 1986. Then came our present director, Dick Earnest.

The first President of the Stevens Point Barbershoppers was Leo Fobart, who

later went on to be president of the Land O' Lakes division for several years. He was a member of the first Stevens Point Quartette, the Point Pipers. After this he went on to be the Assistant Editor of the National Barbershopper magazine 'Harmonizer'.

The Stevens Point Barbershoppers became Class B Champions of the Land O' Lakes District in 1956. The group received many Certificates of Achievement Awards through the years, sometimes several years in a row.

Rehearsals were held at the Whiting Hotel in 1953. Next at the Elk's Club for several years. Then came our own Clubhouse on Harmony Lane. This building was built completely by members of the organization. Even the plans and blueprints were made up by talented members. All we had to put out money for was to buy the approximate acre of land, and hire the power shovel to dig the hole. Then our membership got together and put in every aspect of the building process. Those not experienced gladly volunteered their time as laborers. We have many pictures showing this process in action.

Our first mortgage on the purchase of this land was through a local bank, but after a time one of our long time members, Eric Konkol, took over the mortgage at a substantially lower rate of interest. On April 13th, 1991 came our mortgage burning ceremony. Now the building and land belongs completely to us. Harmony House is well noted throughout the territory for these facts and also for its comfortable facilities.

The Stevens Point Barbershoppers received awards for being champions of the Packerland Division in 1974, 75, 78, 79, and 80. We have done many singouts throughout the years and hope to go on doing so for many more.

Well, your editor made it through Christmas. I was in charge of the cooking in preparation for my children's arrival for Christmas Eve and found myself chopping onion to Gene Autry singing "Here Comes Santa Claus" and keeping time to the music pretty well. About half way through the song I realized what I was doing and thought better of finishing it out to the end. I managed to come through that unscathed, but with all that happy music emanating from the "oldies" station on my radio I still managed to keep a light heart in spite of the possibility of adding more protein to our evening meal.

It seemed like a rather lackluster Christmas season for me because I only had a chance to make a couple of our normal performances in the realm of community service. The weather just did not want to cooperate with our prescribed schedule. But, judging from the cards of thanks that came our way, one voice missing was not an issue.

Thanks to all who were able to participate and a special thank you to John Lay and Pat Rydberg for their fine directing job in each case.

Here are some photos from our 2008 Christmas Party. Wish we could publish them in color!



Our Director.



Assistant Directors Lay and Rydberg



One of the rare occasions when Ron bites his tongue!



I have no idea why I'm so serious.

John Gusmer Celebrates 50 Years In Waupaca

*By Angie Landsverk
Waupaca County Post*



John Gusmer was on leave from the U.S. Army in June 1957 when he made a trip from the east coast to the Midwest to see if working in Waupaca was something he might want to do.

In February of the following year he made the move, along with his wife, Carolyn and their son Ted. "We hadn't passed a car between Appleton and Waupaca." He recalls of that day. And what surprised them the most about that trip was that all the drivers were very polite.

Gusmer came to Waupaca 50 years ago to work at what was then called Filter Materials. He was the company's chief engineer and moved to the community to work with Harold Johnston. "By today's standards, the reality was that Harold started the company on shoestring?" Gusmer said. "One of my first jobs was to electrify the plant."

Gusmer would see many more changes at what later became known as Gusmer Enterprises. And the community has benefited in other ways due to his belief in the importance of service to others.

Gusmer learned these life lessons in Summit, N.J. in what he described as a bedroom community of New York City. "I had a normal childhood," he said. "I was always interested in airplanes and machines. I would build model airplanes. I was a little nerdy. It was my father's dream that I should go to MIT. I got there and studied mechanical engineering."

In 1914 Gusmer's father, Henry Svend Gusmer, immigrated to the United States from Frederica, Denmark. Henry joined his brother Aage, to import brewing supplies from Europe. They started a factory in Woodbridge, N.J., to manufacture wax coatings for wooden barrels and concrete tanks. Canadian breweries were the major market during the days of Prohibition in the United States. It was brewing friends of Gusmer's father who introduced Henry to Hilda Wallich, a music teacher in Detroit, who became Henry's wife.

After Prohibition was repealed in 1933, the brewing industry took off in the U.S. Henry and a friend, Bob Schock, started a brew house equipment company called Schock-Gusmer Inc. About six years later, Henry was introduced to Johnston, an Appleton papermaker who had ideas for making beer filters. Henry then put in money for half of the business. Gusmer's father died in 1950 after a heart attack. It was the same year that Gusmer graduated from a private school before beginning his studies at MIT. After graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering, he accepted a job with IBM and worked for the company about two years before being drafted.

Following basic training, Gusmer was assigned to Frankfort Arsenal, which was a civilian Army post located north of Philadelphia. During weekends, he courted Carolyn, who had also graduated and was working for the

NSA in Washington, D.C. They married in 1956 and rented an apartment near the arsenal. After two years of service, Gusmer found himself with two choices – return to IBM or consider a career at the Filter Materials plant in Waupaca.

By that time, Johnston had experienced heart problems and had asked if the Gusmer's wanted to purchase the remaining stock. Gusmer describes these early days at the plant as interesting, and that he convinced both Johnston and the Gusmer officers that he could handle the job. Within years he was elected president.

He and his brother, Bill who worked at the East Coast office decided the wine and distilling industries offered an attractive market and purchased the Cellulo Co. in Ohio, at a public auction in the mid 1960's. The plant remained open until 1981.

The Gusmer's moved into the California market in 1971 after finding a building in Fresno. The company's products had already been well accepted in the wine industry, but Gusmer said it was difficult to serve the California market without a local factory. When Gusmer's son Chris and niece Marla Gusmer Jeffrey became active in the business in the mid 1990's, they wanted to change name to Gusmer Enterprises so that all of the divisions would be known as that.

While there have been many changes since the company began, Gusmer said a phrase coined by his father continues to be the mantra of the business. That phrase is "service with knowledge." "Our salespeople are knowledgeable in the industry." Gusmer said, describing it as a relationship selling.

Retired since 1999, Gusmer continues to serve as a director and consultant. The biggest changes he witnessed in the past 50 years had to do with

automation and the move to sophisticated machinery.

In addition to sons Ted and Chris he and Carolyn have one daughter, Dorothy Kellagher. The couple have 10 grandchildren.

Being retired means Gusmer has more time to devote to service – something he has done since moving to the community. He has been a member of the Lions Club and continues to be a member of the Waupaca Breakfast Rotary Club. Gusmer was instrumental in Waupaca becoming a sister city to a community in Japan and he continues to be involved in that area as well.

His concern about social problems resulted in him agreeing to represent the Rotary in the Waupaca Prevent Child Abuse Committee which evolved into the Waupaca Family Resource Center. "I'm still on that board and provide financial assistance to the center when it's needed." He said. Always interested in airplanes, he continues to serve on the community's airport board.

Gusmer helped with the United Fund drive, served on the school board and was also involved in speed skating and in youth hockey in Waupaca. And those who know him well know he has a love of music.

"I always enjoyed singing", he said. "It started [my] senior year in high school when the choral director pointed to four of us and said, "you are the barbershop quartet. Here is the music. I'll teach." He sang with a quartet during college and helped start a chapter here in 1962. In the mid 1970's, he switched to the Stevens Point chapter and continues to remain active in it today.

In addition, Gusmer sings in the choir at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Community. "I've been in it probably since I moved to town," he said.

Gusmer who has received satisfaction from projects that have worked out well and from community service, says, "We're not here on earth very long. We want to leave the world a better place."

He has always thought of Waupaca as a friendly town, and further explains why he and Carolyn decided to move here. "When I was in the Army, I was thrown in with people from all over the country," he said. "I noticed the guys from Wisconsin were always friendly. They fit in with all the cliques. When I had the opportunity to move to Wisconsin, I had a very warm anticipation about that. And, it proved to be true. I really think Wisconsin people are very wonderful."

Canadian naval officer spends off hours singing barbershop

Published: Saturday, December 20, 2008 | 3:41 PM ET

Canadian Press: Bill Graveland, THE CANADIAN PRESS

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - You might say he's a member of a 'barber-ship' quartet.

Most days, Canadian Navy Lt. Brendan Ryan has his hands full working out of the OCCP (Operational Co-ordination Centre - Provincial) attached to the governor's palace in Kandahar city.

In his off hours, however, he pursues his true passion - singing barbershop.

"Back in 1991, I went to a CBC reunion at the station in St. John's and I saw a quartet on the stage there. They had acts from the past and that sort of thing and there was a quartet on the stage and I was just awestruck listening to these guys," said Ryan, a native of St. John's, NL.

"They told me a little bit about it and gave me a business card, and then about a year later I just showed up at a practice one day - and have been involved ever since."

"I come from a pretty musical family," Ryan chuckled. "It's in the blood."

There are any number of places a more typical musician would be able to ply his trade at Canada's myriad bases in southern Afghanistan. Not so for Ryan.

"Here, it's difficult - all you can do is go over your music. We have a website we put all of our written music on there," he said. "There's some learning tracks, so you can sing along with that stuff and learn new music off the sound tracks."

Ryan is a member of the Ottawa-based Capital City Chorus, which competed at an international championship put on by the Barbershop Harmony Society in Nashville last June. There are barbershop quartets and barbershop choruses, which can have as few as a dozen singers and as many as 150.

Barbershop is a form of a cappella, or unaccompanied vocal music, characterized by consonant four-part chords for every melody note. Each of the four parts has its own role. Generally, the lead sings the melody, the tenor harmonizes above the melody, the bass sings the lowest harmonizing notes, and the baritone completes the chord.

It's estimated about 80,000 people embrace it as a hobby worldwide.

Although many people equate barbershop with old ditties such as 'Down by the Old Mill Stream' and 'Let Me Call You Sweetheart,' it's not like that any more, Ryan said.

"It's come a long way," he said. "You're no longer singing stuff from the 1920s or 1930s - you're singing stuff that's from about two years ago."

The Capital City Chorus, which has about 100 members, finished 13th out of 18th at the Nashville competition after earning the right to go by winning Ontario first. And while Ryan was the only active military participant, he said there's a deep tradition of retired soldiers in barbershop.

Ryan admitted he has a hard time limiting himself to a single group of partners.

"I can sing a couple of parts - tenor, lead, baritone. It's like whatever quartet needs me at the time." In fact, said Ryan, there's a less-than-savoury term used to describe someone who can sing all the different parts.

"I'm a barbershop slut," he laughed.



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

January 29 Ed and Marilyn Christopherson

January 30 Dan and Mildred Schobert

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 6 John Hofmann
January 11 Mary Peplinski
January 13 Debbie Labandz
January 19 Charles Long
January 19 Dale Thompson
January 20 Marshall Lysne
January 30 David Quick



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PLAN FOR FUTURE EVENTS

**January 27 – February 1, 2009 Mid-Winter Convention
Pasadena, CA**

**May 1-3, 2009 LOL Spring Convention and International
Prelims**

**Packerland Division Contest
@ Stevens Point**

**May 9, 2009 (Sunday) Package Show – Tack Center in
Spencer, WI**

**June 28 – July 5, 2009 International Convention
Anaheim, CA**



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