

# Harmony takes more work than just singing

## Finding ways to help your chapter

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**W**hat can you do to help your chapter? Probably a lot more than you think! There are always the basics like learning notes, words and choreography. But once the chorus steps off the risers, there are literally hundreds of other jobs that must be done in order for the chapter to run efficiently.

While not all chapters require members to have non-singing jobs, most do. There are numerous ways you can contribute to the overall success of a rehearsal or performance. For example, there are physical jobs, such as riser setup and teardown, which may be better suited to more able-bodied members; there are technical jobs more suited to engineers, computer experts or office managers; and there are administrative jobs, suitable for everybody. Whatever your forte, there is definitely a slot for you to fill.

Still stumped? Here are some suggestions using the following abbreviation: SPEBSQSA. That's right, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America. Let our Society's initials prompt you to a multitude of jobs that can help your chapter.

- **Society.** What can you do to enhance your chapter's relations with the Society? Can you be the Society liaison or committee chairman? The Society has numerous programs — Young Men In Harmony, United We Sing, Harmony Foundation, and more — whose particulars are available on the Society's website <http://www.spebsqsa.org>. After learning which program you would like to try, approach your board of directors with your own ideas on the subject.
- **Preservation.** What are we trying to preserve? Can you learn the history of the Society, the history of your chapter, and even the history of barbershop singing? Can you present these facts to your chapter in an interesting and educational way (signs, pictures, website)? Maybe you'd shine as the chapter historian?
- **Encouragement.** This is one of the most important letters in our Society's name. "With a howdy and a handshake, we will start congregatin', I can't hardly wait until then!" are not only song lyrics, but the way we should all feel about our hobby. Ours is a fraternal organization that encourages one another to sing and become better singers. An arm around the shoulder, a phone call, a ride to rehearsal, or just a handshake and a hello, go miles in making the members feel that the barbershop chapter is "our home."

Sunshine committees, greeters, phone captains are all examples of chapter jobs – but they're really ways to encourage fellowship.

- **Barber Shop.** Yes, that's who we are and what we do (including those honored few of us who actually cut hair for a living), and we should always be proud of our hobby. One way is to help improve the chapter's image? What can you do in your community to enhance the wonderful hobby of barbershop? Answering telephones at charity telethons or singing at hospitals and nursing homes are just a few of the great "community services" that barbershoppers perform. Make sure that city hall knows! If you have any real barbers in your chorus, don't miss the photo ops by the old striped barber pole. They are great for membership drives.
- **Quartet.** We are a society founded by QUARTETS, and although there is much emphasis on choruses, we don't forget our roots. If you can spare a little time on rehearsal night, let your chapter quartets sing in front of the chorus, especially before contests. If you sing in a chorus, but have never been in a quartet, don't miss the opportunity to try! If you aren't ready to sing in a quartet, you can be the chapter's quartet liaison or quartet coordinator. Imagine yourself as Mr. Polecat, as you help every member learn the songs that will welcome them at any chapter in the world. Ask the Music Committee how you can help the chapter with quartetting in general. The discipline and practice of quartet singing can make the whole chorus sound better.
- **Singing.** We are a singing society. What can you do to be a better singer? Can you help others become better singers? Your chapter's Music Committee can probably use your help. Are you a music teacher, instrumentalist, or do you have other major singing experience? Can you arrange music, do warm-ups, and be an assistant director or section leader? Even if you can only help the guy standing next to you to be a better singer, your help will be invaluable.
- **America.** Well, if you live in the U.S.A., there are ALWAYS patriotic events to bless with music! Whether it's at baseball games, parades or a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, barbershop is a part of the American experience. Barbershop is our "homegrown" original music like jazz and bluegrass. It is uniquely American music, and is woven into the tapestry of our country. Most barbershoppers are very patriotic, and never hesitate to sing under the flag. What can you do to connect your hometown, county or state patriotic celebrations to your chapter? Is the mayor or governor not yet a barbershop fan? Convert them! What music do the local radio stations play on holidays? What can you do to share your "All-American Music" with the local public throughout the year?

Well, those are some suggestions. What part of SPEBSQSA appeals to you? For more suggestions, look at the SPEBSQSA web article "100 Ways to Help Your Chapter." It only takes one member to make a difference in a chapter. You can be that member!