

# Chord Rustlers

BARBERSHOP CHORUS OF BOZEMAN, MT

June 21, 2011  
Volume 4, Issue 5

## "The Old Chorale"



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### Upcoming Events

- ◆ **July 22-24**  
Harmony College NW
- ◆ **August 4-7, 2011**  
Sweet Pea Festival
- ◆ **Sept 30-Oct 1, 2011**  
District Contest  
Spokane, WA
- ◆ **November 11, 2011**  
Veteran's Day Show
- ◆ **December 13, 2011**  
Christmas Sing-a-  
round (tentative)

## Harmony College Northwest

A great opportunity awaits any who are interested in learning more about the barbershop hobby we enjoy so much. A comment from the web site follows:

*From Jerry... "This was my first time at HCNW. I now regret all those years I missed...The setting and the food were great. The knowledge base of the presenters was incredible. I can't think of any class that did not exceed my expectations. You gathered a lot of talented people to present. I had great opportunities to meet and converse with exciting, knowledgeable people and I came away pretty jacked up. I hope that I can transfer at least a portion of what I learned to our chorus."*

If you are "on the fence" about going, talk to someone from the Chord Rustlers who has gone to a previous HCNW program. The chapter is helping defray registration and transportation expenses. It is being held at the University of Puget Sound campus in Tacoma.

**Harmony College Northwest 2011 is July  
22-24 at the University of Puget Sound,  
Tacoma, Washington.**

<http://www.harmonycollege.org/>

DH



imagine. inspire. influence.

## Musical Notes



**Becoming more informed is a start to becoming a better singer. Millions of words have been written that attempt to make singers better. Tom Metzger addresses the task of tuning in an article I found in the Rapid City, SD newsletter, “The Voice of Rushmore.”**  
*Dan Hopper*

## TUNING ISSUES

*by Tom Metzger from owningthestage.com*

### Top five reasons you can't tune

Here's one for the singers, or really anyone who includes singing in their performances. If you're a close-harmony singer, you and your ensemble live and die on your tuning. With tight voicings, like four parts within an octave and a third, missing a note by a few cents can make the difference between beautiful music and nails down a chalkboard. No other aspect of the music is as critical as tuning. And tuning well is not easy! So whether you are a singer or a person who coaches them, this article is for you. These are my top-five. There are certainly more. You might have other favorites.

### Reason 5—You don't know what “in tune” sounds like

If you're beginning, and you didn't grow up harmonizing with everything (dial tones, vacuum cleaners, air conditioners, bathroom fans...), you might not know what “in tune” sounds like! Each interval, properly tuned, has its own distinct character or “texture”—an octave sounds very clean and free of beats. A perfect fifth is quite open but has a “flutter” in it, down low. Same with a major third, but the flutter is lower. Part of learning to sing close harmony is to discover all these musical textures. Just for fun, turn on your bathroom fan and sing a major scale, slowly, in that key. Notice what all the intervals sound like. You should get killer undertones on some of them! Now sing a semitone scale, and discover what all thirteen intervals sound like. When they're right, they kind of “lock in.” You'll be able to tell.

### Reason 4—You don't know what to tune to

Tuning is of course a relative thing. You don't just tune, you tune \*to\* something, and sometimes it's not so obvious what that something is supposed to be. I mean if you're tuning to the piano notes as you play the melody, you're trying to match those notes—simple enough. If you're singing the same notes as a bunch of other people in your “part”, like a bass section or an alto section, tune to them! (They will also be tuning to you, but let's keep this simple.) However, if you're supposed to be the only person singing a given note in an ensemble, you have to decide which of the other parts you're going to tune to. And it might not be the same person all the time!

Here's what I find works in practice. If you are the melody singer, tune to the tonal center almost all the time, and if you're a harmony singer, tune to the melody singer. Practice singing your melody part so that the intervals are correct, and yet the tonal center doesn't migrate up or down as you go. So if you start in the key of F and there are no key changes, you finish in the key of F! So most of the time, a melody singer can practice with a piano and be just fine (but see reason #2, below). (continued on next page)

**Reason 3—You can't hear what you're supposed to be tuning to**

Once you're in the habit of tuning to the ensemble, you really get in trouble if you can't hear them. It's like trying to drive on a road with no lines. Groups tend to rehearse so that they can hear each other well. Lots of quartets will stand and face each other in rehearsal, because it's easy to hear. Then they get into a performance situation and stand in a line for the first time, and the "end guys" can't hear everybody else! Predictably, the tuning goes to hell in a hand basket (as my grandmother used to say). This is what sound checks are for—make sure you can actually hear each other well on the stage in the venue where you'll be singing. If you can't, get it fixed! Ask for more monitors—whatever it takes! Nothing is worse than singing out of tune and not knowing it until the audience fails to applaud.

**Reason 2—You don't know what part of the chord you're on**

In close harmony singing, the piano notes just aren't good enough. The piano, you see, is "equal tempered," which means all the notes are evenly spaced, rather than tuned by ratio. It has to be that way, so that you can play in any key, but it's a compromise. Just intonation sounds better if you can do it, and that means your notes will fairly often be *\*quite different\** from the piano notes. Thirds and fifths feel like they need to be higher than the piano note (even though one of them actually doesn't). Dominant sevenths feel like they need to be lower than the piano note. So take a couple of pieces and analyze all the chords! Go ahead—it's not *\*that\** hard. If you need help, don't be too proud to get it. Go through your music and put a square around your note if you have a root, and a circle if you have a fifth. Draw an up arrow for a third, and a down arrow for a seventh. Or make up your own notation. Next time you get together with your ensemble, really go to school on the tuning. Don't let anything go by if it's not exactly right. Hard work, but well worth it!

**Reason 1—You're not singing well enough**

The **NUMBER ONE** reason why ensembles fail to sing in tune is that they are singing too heavy, with too much pressure, and that drives the pitch down. Often this is because they're trying to sing loud, and I can't overstate this—singing loud is just not important compared to singing in tune. It might be fun to do, but we're making music here not power lifting. It's about musicality, not decibels. Do yourself a favor and develop the habit of singing with a truly relaxed and free tone, and not too loud. You'll hear better, and it's much more likely that your voice will actually go where you ask it to go! Finally, don't forget that the body is connected to the voice. If you're having trouble finding the tension in your voice, try looking somewhere else—your neck, your shoulders, your stomach. Make sure you keep your body relaxed and mobile as you sing, and it will do wonders for your singing!



**IMAGINE 50 MEN  
ON THE RISERS!  
YOU HOLD THE KEY!**

# Dewey's Dialogue for the Ageless



*“Oh give me a gale of the Solomon vale...”*

*Dwight Adams*



## THE SOLOMON VALE

I think I mentioned this before but, if so, no apologies. Doing *Home on the Range* the other night reminded me of its—to some people—surprising origin. It didn't come from some “Big Sky” country or some Wyoming range. No, it was written and first published in Smith County, Kansas! The road from Smith Center south is mostly flat with an occasional rolling hill. Maybe ten miles south of town is a historical marker announcing that this is the home of the song. It was written at Smith Center by the local dentist, one Brewster M. Higby. It was set to music by another man in town. There have been many versions, the one we sing being closest to the original, which had about six stanzas. One stanza went:

Oh give me a gale of the Solomon vale  
 Where the life streams with buoyancy flow  
 On the banks of the Beaver, where seldom if ever  
 Any poisonous herbage doth grow.

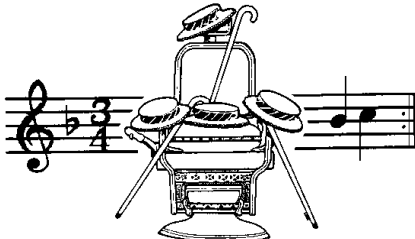
(The Solomon and the Beaver are nearby rivers.)

Now don't you feel enlightened with all this new information in your head? One additional bit of trivia: Porky Pig sang the song in a 1954 Loony Toons cartoon. *Dewey*

[If you want to know more about “*Home on the Range*,” check out [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home\\_on\\_the\\_Range](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_on_the_Range) A “whistling” version of “*Home on the Range*” on YouTube that will keep you humming or whistling all the daylong is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-K4ohgsO80> ] DH

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<b>Lead:</b> John Sheppard	406-924-4515
<b>Baritone:</b> Tim Lund	406-388-6232
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<b>Chorus Mgr:</b> Jerry Mollock	406-570-2468
<b>Librarian:</b> Jack Lehman	406-388-3121
♪ Committees ♪	
<b>Show Chairmen 2012:</b> Jack Lehman Dave Schrupp	406-388-3121 406-585-9493
<b>Tater Pig Chairmen 2011:</b> Jerry Mollock, Don Greer, Kevin Mattson	406-570-2468 406-586-7871 406-388-6232
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<b>Executive Vice President:</b> Don Greer	406-586-7871
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## Note from One of our Members

*Dan, rather than write an email to the Chord Rustlers, how about if you put this in the Old Chorale?*

Dear brother Chord Rustlers,

It was a treat to see Kevin and John at rehearsals of the Ambassadors of Harmony shortly before the annual June show. No doubt they've told you how awesome the chorus of 150 or so men sounds. The show Saturday June 18 was spectacular with singing and choreography that seemed perfect to me. I enjoyed it as a member of the audience. Although I submitted numerous audio recordings of me singing along with the chorus, I never did measure up to their standards and was not allowed to sing on the show. Of course that was disappointing to me. I still have some chance of singing on the Harmony Foundation show at Kansas City the last day (Saturday) of the international convention—but that will require learning a song that is entirely new to me, as well as passing muster on 3 or 4 songs the chorus has been working on since I arrived in mid February.

Linda and I will leave from Scott AFB about the 12th of July, driving to Gainesville, Georgia, for a family reunion with cousins from my mother's side of the family. Then we'll head back to Bozeman, where I look forward to seeing all of you again and singing with you. We should easily be home in time to help with Tater Pigs at Sweet Pea. My congratulations to all of you for doing so well at the division contest this spring.

*Frank L. Johnson, M.D.*

## I've Heard That Song Before

Music: Joseph Meyer, Lyrics: Herman Ruby Written in 1922, "**My Honey's Lovin' Arms**" is one of those classic songs that many artists use as a "filler" song on their albums. It has been recorded over the years by the California Ramblers (1922-Instrumental), Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti (1928), Cab Calloway (1931), Bing Crosby with the Mills Brothers (and Benny Goodman) (1933), Robert Mitchum (1957), and Barbara Streisand (1963), among others. Although these recordings are by notable artists, I could not find if any of the versions charted. Joseph Meyer is known for other great jazz classics, like "California, Here I Come," "Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie" and "If You Knew Suzie." He collaborated with notable songwriters Buddy DeSylva, Al Lewis, and Al Sherman and his music was used in a long list of movies. Herman Ruby also has a long list of movie credits. He wrote songs for *Three Little Words* "My Sunny Tennessee" (1950), *Blonde Cheat* "It Must Be Love" (1938), and *The Show of Shows* "If I Could Learn to Love" (1929). A rather unusual place for "My Honey's..." to show up in is in the movie *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*. It's mentioned in the credits, but you'll have a hard time finding it in the movie. It's the underscore for a flashback scene in which Bill is at his grandmother's birthday party. Since the actors are singing "Happy Birthday" over it, it's barely distinguishable. The song apparently is a favorite among barbershoppers, especially at contests. There are many YouTube videos of various barbershop choruses and quartets (both men and women) performing the song at contests. Look up the Waikato Rivertones' version (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6Ldqfaljxg>). These ladies put on a great show! An appropriate phrase from their website: "Be warned – Singing four-part harmony is seriously addictive!" How about Bing Crosby (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx-m0Fe7gCg>) What a great song!

*Compiled by David Wolfe from the San Angelo, TX "Concho "Capers" newsletter.*

## Who is this Chord Rustler?

Periodically, "The Old Chorale" will have an article describing a member's life and experiences.

When you contact Federal Express and want to know when your package can be picked up, when it will be delivered, and what it will cost, you are using a system designed by a member of our lead section.

Born in Lompoc, California, and raised in Boulder, Colorado, this 3-year member of Chord Rustlers has four children, two in college and two looking for jobs. He enjoys fly fishing, camping, and biking. His mom, as a young woman, left rural Alabama for the chance to work for her congressman in Washington, DC, where she met the man to become his dad, who worked for years as an operations manager at the Rocky Flats Arsenal in Colorado. He went to school at Abilene Christian University in Texas and was a software developer and product line manager for Texas Instruments. He sang with The Vocal Majority (two three hour practices a week!) for a year while he was in the Dallas area, before work returned him to the Rocky Mountains. Now he and his wife, Laura, run their own consulting business, applying system dynamics to management problems (ask him!).

Currently, Don Greer is our Executive Vice President. He enjoys the social aspects of our organization as well as the personal and performance skills that barbershop singing develops.

**Jerry Mollock**



"WE'RE TRYING TO TEACH HIM TO SING FROM THE DIAPHRAGM..."

### June & July Birthdays

June 7	John Robinson
June 14	Jesse Lee
June 19	Jerry Hovland
June 27	Frank Smith
June 28	Ray Stinnett
July 13	Gerry Mollock
July 17	Dewey Adams
July 21	Don Greer
July 21	Bayard Lewis
July 29	Bob Pfister
July 30	Patrick Donnelly

Chord Rustlers meet Tuesdays at Grace Bible Church, 3625 South 19<sup>th</sup>, Bozeman. Rehearsals are from 7:00–9:30 p.m. Guests are always welcome.

## Mission Statement — Bozeman Chord Rustlers

“The mission of the Chord Rustlers is to sing *a cappella*, four-part harmony, in the barbershop style, to support vocal music education of youth, and to provide audiences with wholesome entertainment for all occasions by men who enjoy musical and social camaraderie, desiring to share their love of music within the community, and who aspire to grow in musical excellence and preserve the tradition of four-part harmony singing.”



“The Old Chorale”  
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