

truly model the energy, enthusiasm, confidence and polish that the rest of the barbershop world seeks.

Thank you for making our experience as an audience so exciting and fulfilling. Sweet Adelines everywhere wish you continued success and achievement.

Sincerely yours,

Kathy Carmody
International President
Sweet Adelines Int'l

Bad Boys Of Barbershop

Dear beloved men of the Vocal Majority:

Though 11 years have passed since that remarkable summer in Salt Lake City, I think often and fondly of the greatest group of singers I have every known. Yes, every year around the Fourth of July, I let myself slip back to that week of wonderful music--to the very first time I heard someone "ring a tag", to learning the wonders of "woodshedding", to feeling the embrace of strangers who taught me what perfection in performance meant.

Indeed, you are the "Bad Boys of Barbershop"!! So "bad" that nobody can beat you. So bad that certain members of your group have left bodies of women in their wake. I mean, really, what woman COULD resist a man--or men--who sing with such passion? Who can create such overwhelming "overtones"?

Not me, that's for sure. (Yea, yea. Go ahead. Insert groupie jokes here!)

So on this, your 25th anniversary, I am thinking of you again and wishing that I was there. Wishing that I could be back to the Mormon Tabernacle and hear *You'll Never Walk Alone*. Hear *Danny Boy*. Hear so many songs that move me in so many ways.

My best love and luck to you all. I miss you. But in my heart, I can always hear you sing.

Sincerely,

Jennifer (Tucker) Barrs
Staff Writer
The Tampa Tribune
(Formerly of the *Dallas Times Herald*)

"Awesome, Only Moresome"

Dear Vocal Majority:

Thank you once again for inviting me and my husband to your rehearsal at Indianapolis. We know it was an open rehearsal so that included us, but we also had a personal invitation from our friend Graham Smith.

I was lucky to attend your rehearsal in Pittsburgh, but Les could not come because he was quite ill that night, so I was very pleased that he had the opportunity at Indianapolis.

After the Pittsburgh rehearsal, I said it was "awesome". Indianapolis was "awesome, only moresome". Many, many congratulations on your success, and thank you!

Love,

Yvonne Wakefield

Early Memories Of The Vocal Majority

Dear Jim and the Vocal Majority,

Jim, it was terrific to see you again! Time dims the memories of friendships . . . being with you made me feel so good . . . friends are friends forever . . . the welcome, truly, never ends.

I woke up early yesterday morning. Sitting in the quiet solitude I reflected on the previous evening 25th anniversary show/celebration. Who among us ever imagined this weekend when we started this group 25 years ago?

My first memories of the VM are vivid. I was a fresh college graduate from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks off to my first job at TI. On my first day of work I asked if there were any good singing groups in the Dallas area. I was introduced to **Jerry Bean** . . . he was ecstatic about the formation of a new Barbershop Chorus called the Vocal Majority . . . would I like to join him on Thursday eve?

Wow, what an evening! Singing, singing and more singing. Throughout that first month, March 1972, everyone was talking about "the dream"; we want to be as good as the **Louisville**

Thoroughbreds. We were talking about "the plan"; we want to be on the International stage in two years.

And there was "the action". Pitch perfection and vowel matching led by that great master **Brian Beck** . . . my first exposure to someone who could hear things we could only imagine . . . until later we could hear them too. The physics of music as taught by **Charlie White**. *The Vocalizer* written by Mr. Enthusiasm, **Bob Arnold**, it arrived every Monday, full of information, encouragement and excitement. The terrific, new music arrangements by **Jim Clancy**, *The Lord's Prayer* and *If I Ruled the World*.

And there was woodshedding, before rehearsal, during the breaks, and after rehearsal . . . in the different corners of Chapel Downs and in the bathrooms. Everybody loved to sing as much as I did . . . and they all could ring those chords!

I remember the tense excitement of getting "chartered" in time (barely) for the fall contest in Lubbock . . . under the direction of **Ray Anthony** we took first . . . if I recall correctly, almost half of the VM on stage were brand new barbershoppers! And then the excitement of San Antonio . . . we didn't win, but everyone was talking about us!

The **Dealer's Choice** won at International the summer of 1973 and energized the VM into a frenzy . . . if they can do it, so can we. Under the leadership of that extraordinary Jim Clancy we advanced to Oklahoma City and marched into Kansas City the summer of 1974!

The pre-performance guidelines still stick like glue in my brain; don't hurt the voices . . . no talking or singing on the bus . . . minimal talking when we get to Kansas City . . . hum lightly especially in the morning when we first get up . . . drink lots of water, if it is not coming out the other end you do not have enough . . . sing mentally, if you do not sing it right up here (pointing to the brain) it will not come out right here (pointing to the voice).

The contest was a rush! Thousands cheering when the curtain opened! Our exuberance when it closed! We had done it! We had performed at International! We had made it in two years!

I remember the comments of the judges . . . too much baritone . . . disappointment . . . but for me it was on to Minnesota to my new job with a Bronze

Medal on my mind and a song in my heart. (I often wonder if any chorus has ever placed so high at International in such a short life span.) I flew to Indianapolis to watch the VM win the next year . . . I had to be there to celebrate with all of you!

In Minnesota, it soon became apparent that there is a terrible downside to singing with the VM . . . after singing with the VM, it is virtually impossible to sing with any other chorus and really enjoy it. I had been to heaven and any place else isn't.

It has been a thrill to come back . . . seeing alums for the first time in twenty years . . . sharing fond memories. The current members made me feel so welcome with a smile and a handshake . . . most of them complete strangers and yet friends forever.

And the opportunity to sing with the VM again!!! To see that ever present smile of Jim Clancy as chords lock and overtones ring!!! I was in heaven!!!

I return to North Dakota with a smile on my face as I recall the past two evenings. That smile will, quite likely, remain in my heart forever!

With warm personal regards,

Clyde Eisenbeis

A Note from Kenosha

Dear Mark and The Vocal Majority:

Anniversaries are a very special time for everyone. On behalf of Society President **Tim Hanrahan**, Society officers and board members, I would like to extend, to you and your fellow Barbershoppers, heartiest congratulations on your twenty-fifth anniversary.

The Society is proud of your accomplishments. May the years to come be even more harmonious and successful.

"Let's Harmonize"

Darryl Flinn, Executive Director

Letters To The Editor

Send letters to the VM to **Gary Hennerberg**, VM Publications Editor, 4005 Meadow Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051; email GH2Meters@aol.com.